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## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

### Taking next steps for a water and climate resilient world through capacity development of people and organizations

23 March 2023, 12:30 – 13:45 (EST) | ECOSOC Chamber, New York, USA

Organized by: Panama Ministry of Environment & UNESCO

Supported by: Chile, China, Dominica, Netherlands, Nigeria, Palestine, Spain, Sudan, Uganda, IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, UN DESA, UN-Water, UNDP CapNet, IAEA, SIWI, UNESCO International Centre for Water Security and Sustainable Management (i-WSSM), UNESCO Dundee Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science (CWLPS), UNESCO Centre on Integrated and Multi-Disciplinary Water Resources Management (CIMWRM), UNESCO Chair Water, Ports and Historic Cities, Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Water Partnership (GWP), ICOMOS-ISC Water, Waternet, Witteveen+Bos, Water Museums Network (WaMuNet) and AMCOW.

#### Background on the event

For development in water to be sustainable, investing in capacity development is an absolute must, a central part of game changers for our efforts, particularly on the education of our next generation of young water scientists and capacity of water training centers and networks. This side event, discussed capacity development as a key action to address the challenges towards achieving all water and climate-related SDGs, including through mitigation and adaptation. In the Side Event, the UN-Water SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative (CDI), recently launched and jointly coordinated by UNESCO and UN DESA, was presented. The session also addressed three key aspects for the success of capacity development processes: 1) Inclusion, in particular involving youth and women as water leaders at all levels and leveraging local (traditional and indigenous) knowledge; 2) Managing institutional change processes for policy development and implementation; and 3) Financing capacity building, particularly the need for long-term financial support, to make these processes successful.

#### Water Action Agenda

The organizers and participating institutions in the Side Event agreed to contribute to the Water Action Agenda by promoting actions and activities on [taking next steps for a water and climate resilient world through capacity development of people and organizations](#) which will directly contribute to the [UN-Water SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative \(CDI\)](#). Some countries' representatives made specific commitments to materialize this contribution, for example, Panama, which is hoping to become a pilot country in the Latin America and Caribbean Region in the framework of the CDI.

#### Key Issues discussed

- **Panama** is moving forward with the proposal to incorporate the competencies, learning and technological skills, innovation, communication, collaboration and values necessary for its population to overcome national and global challenges, especially climate change,

environmental sustainability, biodiversity loss, poverty and inequalities. For this reason, through the National Assembly of Panama, it was decided to approve Bill 862, which establishes the guidelines for the implementation of the Education for Sustainable Development Policy.

- **Chile** wants to advance in management-oriented solutions that involve people and organizations, and in creating resilience in communities and society, for the governance and management of water resources. Chile have initiated experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the formation of basin councils, water tables, the strengthening of existing user organizations, indigenous consultation mechanisms, and promoting the training of new actors. These are capacities that each government must foster and generate the means to do so.
- **Sudan** hosts an active UNESCO Category II Regional Center for Capacity Development and Research in Water Harvesting (RCWH) and the UNESCO Chair in Water Resources. Capacity development has always been the most important actions of RCWH and the UNESCO Chair for Water Resources in collaboration with many Centers in Sudanese Universities and the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources.
- **Spain** is passing on the experience and knowledge that have been acquired in Latin America Region, through the CODIA (Conference of Ibero-american Water Directors) training program. In addition, Spain supports the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) with a financial contribution to create a small support team in the UNESCO Division of Water Sciences.
- **China** is a chair nation in water education, one of five themes in IHP IX, and has been leading effort on student scholarship, young scientist leadership training, and capacity building. China will continue to commit supports and collaborate with all colleagues to accelerate its endeavour in these fronts.
- **Uganda** recognizes the importance of capacity development in water and related fields and considerable resources have been devoted to capacity building since the early 1990s. To localize capacity development, Uganda established a Water Resources Institute in 2018 as a centre of excellence to build the capacity of sector stakeholders and is currently using retired professionals to train, mentor, and support capacity development plans in the water sector.
- **The Netherlands** is continuing their support for capacity development of individuals through Institutions like IHE Delft as well as the capacity development of institutions in other countries through the Water and Development Partnership Program.

### **Key recommendations for action**

- Capacity development, ranging from awareness to individual training to institutional development, is the enabler to realize the necessary changes in people's mindsets. Improving the institutional capacity, which often focus on improving the capabilities of organizations and creating an enabling environment supported by policies, strategies, and legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Ensure that there's a bridge for young professionals to contribute and have an active role in decision-making. Additionally, enhancing capacity and public awareness through volunteering, community involvement, and youth-led organizations can create more opportunities for young professionals to make a difference.
- Creating more capacity development options for women to become a water leader at all levels may well be the game changer in the water sector we are looking for and empowering diverse stakeholders to rely on historic knowledge and traditional wisdom.
- Providing a platform for free exchange of knowledge, experience and data and promoting open access courses that disseminate new methodologies.
- Leveraging the power of academic research and institutions and facilitating capacity building through professional education courses, including developing games and digital tools for broad outreach to diverse communities.
- Build multi-sector/stakeholder connective capacity for improved coordination at several levels (National and Catchment).