



UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

W77 - OFFICIAL SIDE EVENT Women in Water Latin America and the Caribbean Position Statement for a Regional Action Agenda

601 Lexington Avenue (etc.venues) - Acquisition Suite, N.Y
Friday 24th March, 13:00-14:30 hrs

Organized by:

Grupo de Mujeres en Agua de Latinoamérica y el Caribe/Community of Women In Water (CWiw); Valuing Water Initiative; Consejo de Cuenca Río Bravo; Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano; Fundación Suwo Di/ Youth for Water Network Central America; Coastal Solutions Fellows Program at Cornell University; Cooperativa de Aguas el Patagual; Red Agua Ecuador; Adaptation Latin America; Asociación Mexicana de Hidráulica (AMH); ONGAWA, Ingeniería para el Desarrollo Humano; International Water Association (IWA); UNESCO / Programa Hidrológico Intergubernamental para América Latina y el Caribe (PHI-LAC); Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL) - División de Recursos Naturales; Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECID)/Conferencia de Directores Iberoamericanos del Agua (CODIA); Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)

Background on the event

The event aimed to convene and highlight the proposals of LAC women and organizations for a regional agenda to be proposed to regional and national leaders and organizations, so that specific mechanisms can be established to strengthen the role of women in spaces of decision and action. This event attracted the attention of 30 attendants and 100 people from at least 15 countries¹ who registered to attend in person or virtually. The programme of the event encouraged the participation of the diversity of women voices and countries, from a *cross cutting, intersectional, multisectoral and intergenerational approach*.

Key Issues discussed

- Contributions from multilateral agencies:
 - Silvia Saravia from the ECLAC shared the diagnosis of gender and water in the region, the challenges, opportunities and 4 main gaps in: i) access and infrastructure for water and

¹ Argentina, Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay

sanitation, ii) water collection and management, iii) access to water for agricultural production and iv) governance.

- Marina Rubio from UNESCO, invited to get involved with the UNESCO Chairs on Water and Women in Brazil and Dominican Republic, the initiatives of the LAC Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and the use of the existing tool box on "Water and Gender Equality".
- As moderator, Anamaria Nuñez Zelaya from IDB invited the participants to join to the new IDB initiative "Mujeres Aguas Arriba".
- Vision from Woman Leader in National Water Authorities:
 - Though a written message, Karima Lince, Water Security Director from the Ministry of Environment Panamá, recognizes there still way ahead for women in decision-making in LAC Water Authorities Organizations. She also sees opportunities of participation on river basin committees -also for indigenous people- and through the call of the Regional Action Agenda about Water and Gender, as an opportunity to join traditional and new capacities in order to manage common resources.
- Assessing diversity of LAC's water women voices:
 - Josefa Asmussen (ONGAWA Chile) presented the situation of Human Rights to Safe Water and Sanitation of **rural water women** from Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Ecuador and their claim for meaningful participation at different scales. Regarding to **intergenerational empowerment** Diana Ulloa reflected on the creation of the *Latin America Youth Water Coalition* and how youth should develop their own ways to improve personal leadership skills, join or create spaces where other women support them and adapt or create new ways to lead and manage participatory processes, and Marina Batalini (IWA) -as a young Latin American woman in Brazil- explained her work teaching, supporting capacity strengthening of other women and participating in decision-making processes as the conference itself, with the support of scholarships.
 - Marissa Mar Pecero read the proposals of the Group of Women in Water in LAC -as a result of a participatory process previously developed among this group of about 70 women-, to be considered in the building of a specific regional agenda to achieve gender equality in the water domain
- Women attendants
 - Four women from Guatemala ("Consejo de Mujeres Indígenas y Biodiversidad"), Paraguay and México ("SENDAS A.C" and the Municipality of Berriozábal, Chiapas), emphasized the importance of rural, indigenous and activists representation and the need of lifelong learning, working together and keep participating in events like this.

Key recommendations for action

- 1) Following the themes of the five interactive dialogues, the **Group of Women in Water in LAC recommends;**
 - Water for health: the community proposes to increase investment by prioritizing rural areas and strategies specifically focused on closing gaps, considering cultural, gender, and intersectional aspects, and incorporating hygiene, menstrual health, circularity strategies, and water reuse.

- Water for sustainable development: water for **agriculture** is one of the most critical areas of action, therefore we particularly recognize the link between land ownership, access to water, the roles of women as producers, marketers, and generators of goods and the need to create local production and distribution strategies to reduce water footprints and to guarantee food security.
- Water for Climate, Resilience, and the Environment, it's important to design and implement mechanisms that incorporate the differential impact of gender in strategies to deal with climate change. Also, recognizing the role of women in the conservation of ecosystem services.
- Water for Cooperation, it's relevant to guarantee the substantive presence of women throughout the cycle of projects and policies. That could be possible by strengthening women's participation, allocating specific resources for their qualification, creating networks, and the generation of specific indicators to monitor the implementation of the gender perspective.
- On the Water Action Decade and the 2030 Agenda, the community promotes addressing the gaps already identified, which are concentrated in rural and difficult-to-access areas, and convert these gaps into specific goals, measure the progress of countries in closing these gaps, and accelerate compliance by addressing them transversally.

(The full version of the document with signatures will be published, but it can be asked to cwiw.lac@gmail.com)

- 2) UNESCO and ECLAC presented their formal Calls to Action: the first one for the “Global multi-stakeholder action to accelerate gender equality in water”, and the second on the “Regional Water Action Agenda”. **Both of them are considered very important documents to continue the discussion and adaptation of a specific Women in Water Latin American and Caribbean Regional Action Agenda.**
- 3) All the speakers agreed to continue working together in a common platform to strengthen ties, working in networks and continue to facilitate participation and evaluation of the challenges discussed. For this reason, the **commitments** mentioned in this session were:
 - To share and promote LAC women's participation in initiatives of organizations as IWA or IDB's “Mujeres Aguas Arriba”.
 - To organize two yearly LAC regional meetings along with the Community of Women in Water.
 - To organize a similar event in the next UN Water Conference or similar platforms to continue discussions and monitoring joint efforts.