



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

[Achieving Gender Equality in a Context of the Water Crisis]

[24 March 2023, 9 am ET, Virtual]

Organized by: [UN Women, UNEP-DHI]

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The event opened with an overview of preliminary findings from a forthcoming UN Women [Spotlight paper on SDG 6](#). The presentation emphasized that at the crux of the water crisis is the philosophical difference between water as a sacred resource, with rights unto itself, and the consumerist view of water as a commercial resource which fuels the overuse, damage, and inaccessibility that women and girls disproportionately grapple with today. Among the most vulnerable to water poverty are women and girls at the intersection of compounding forms of socioeconomic inequality, and the paper uses the latest data to show how this plays out across the globe.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The Netherlands, co-host of the Water Conference this year, provided a strong intervention on the need for a gender lens in addressing the water crisis. The country has a history of integrating gender considerations into their climate policies and emphasized in their intervention the need for more cooperation across development actors, and a more concerted effort to foster locally led adaptation which would yield action with a stronger gender lens.
- Next, UNEP-DHI provided an overview of their work measuring SDG indicator 6.5.1, which tracks implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Data were collected through a country self-assessment questionnaire, which includes specific questions about gender mainstreaming. In the 2020 survey, over 50% of countries reported limited or no achievement of gender objectives in their IWRM policies, strategies, and mechanisms. An analysis of the qualitative responses showed that countries reflected that there is a lack of dedicated budget for gender mainstreaming, and absence of women in key decision-making roles in water management. Based on the

complete database of country surveys, UNEP-DHI was able to identify seven key enablers of gender mainstreaming within WRM, including but not limited to strong buy-in by executive leadership, explicit integration of gender into water laws and policies, and earmarked funding allocated for gender mainstreaming in WRM.

- Finally, a government representative from Niger reported on their country's specific experience the gender and water nexus. The primary gender-related challenges in WASH identified include strengthening the technical and institutional capacities of communities for management of municipal WASH services, cultivating political support and advocacy at the local level to gain funding, and garnering support to carry out communal project management. In addition, more support from development partners is needed in realizing WASH infrastructure and establishing municipal WASH services,.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

Amongst other recommendations, the forthcoming UN Women report findings emphasize that women's grassroots organizations play key roles in responding to the global water crisis and managing its fallout and more efforts are needed to integrate their perspectives in the broader public discourse, as well as in the design and planning of programmes, and in policy implementation.