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## UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event – W46

### *Global Women and the Facets of Water: Strengthening Women's Efforts in the Water Action Decade*

23 March 2023, 8:00 – 9:30 EST, Virtual

Organized by: AlphaZULU Advocates, UK;  
College of Civil Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia;  
Centre for Social Sensitivity and Action, GIM, India;  
Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, NEU, Turkey; and  
Marine Crew Welfare, South Africa

#### **Background on the event**

Efforts of women and the impact they make in the development sector, particularly as concerns the water ecosystem, is globally under-reported and under-celebrated.

The event brought together women from various sectors, and men working with women, to share efforts and successes of women in the water ecosystem, as well as call for multi-stakeholders partnership for meaningful, realistic, achievable and measurable commitments to the Water Action Decade. Survey administered at the forum identified stakeholder representation from Government (15%), Academia (25%), Civil Society (25%), Major Groups (30%) and Professional Organization (5%).

#### **Water Action Agenda (awaiting link to the [Water Action Agenda database](#))**

- Action 1 - Between 2023 and 2028, support ten (10) women-led local campaigns and activities that promote knowledge and skills on water-related sustainable living for all. 4.7, 3.d, 12.5, 12.8, 13.3, 17.3
- Action 2 - Between 2023 and 2028, support ten (10) local initiatives that adequately address sanitation, hygiene and open defecation with gender-sensitive approaches. 6.2, 3.9, 17.3
- Action 3 - Between 2023 and 2028, support ten (10) female researchers/innovators to transfer their knowledge on water, waste and coastal water management through capacity building programmes. 6.3, 12.8, 14.a, 17.9, 17.3
- Action 4 – Between 2023 and 2028, support ten (10) women-led national and trans-boundary policy actions on climate change, water management, disaster resilience and marine pollution. 5.5, 6.5, 13.3, 17.3
- Action 5 - Between 2023 and 2028, create and facilitate a dedicated space for global women to share water action stories and experiences, annually reward excellence, and support aspiration of women

to private and public leadership roles that directly or indirectly involve water-management decision making. 5.5, 16.7, 17.3

### **Key issues discussed**

- Globally, water is recognised as a human right and essential for the realisation of other human rights; the hours women contribute to water and household management impact women's rights. Despite the critical role that women play in water resource management, they are largely excluded from decision making processes related to water management.
- In Solomon Islands, women are impacted the most by water shortage, poor water and sanitation services and these women face a number of challenges that influence their ability to manage menstruation hygienically and with dignity, consequently impacting other needs.
- In the UK, nature reserves and wetlands that have sustained communities for centuries with purified ground water are at risk of toxic pollution mainly due to Government's development project, and women are leading environmental justice efforts for affected communities.
- In Malaysia, increased impact of climate change and climate emergencies due to greenhouse warming and ocean acidification is stretching resilience of coastal communities and threatening sustainable livelihood and food security.
- Indonesia, being the country with the 4<sup>th</sup> largest population and also consisting entirely of islands, concentration of pharmaceutical waste discovered in local rivers raised concerns from women scientific researchers.
- In Pakistan, the complexities of the gaps and needs identified post-flooding called for gender-sensitive planning in early warning disaster risk resilience.
- Other issues include: sustainable management of the maritime and shipping sector which contributes huge emissions of carbon-dioxide due to facilitating 90% of world trade, as well as gender-inclusive development to increase women Seafarers from 2% out of 1.9million globally; water availability and wastewater management in the fashion and textile industry being the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in water consumption after agriculture, as well as ensuring decent work and wages for women in the industry which employs a large number of low-waged women.

### **Key recommendations for action**

- It is a critical time for inclusive and effective water conservation and encouragement of equal representation and participation of women in water management decision making processes, scientific research, technological innovation and implementation of local actions.
- The UN Water Action Decade (2018 – 2028) offers an opportunity for recognition, inclusion and representation of intersectional issues in the water ecosystem such as gender and culture.
- Aligned with the UN SDG framework, water initiatives should interlink other SDGs and partnerships should integrate cross-sectoral themes of water.
- Putting in place dedicated institutional mechanism for localising SDG implementation and developing a national roadmap, including for water action, to achieve all SDGs by 2030.
- Increasing local outreaches, campaigns and capacity building programmes to educate and build technical capacities of communities and groups on science-based solutions to water conservation.
- It is important that Government build a relationship of trust with stakeholder communities through extensive consultations and prioritising the well-being of people and planet over profit gains of the private sector in development plans and projects.