



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

*The Voice of Children and Youth on Water for Sustainable Development;
Taking Action for Humanity and the Planet*

[Wednesday 22nd March, 10.00 - 12.15 EST, Virtual]

Organized by: Zero Water Day Partnership

Background on the event

Only 2% of stakeholder engagement at the UN Water Conference was from children and youth, yet they will face the consequences of decisions made today that will impact their livelihoods and life opportunities. The side event V146 was organised by the Zero Water Day Partnership within the framework of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat as part of the implementation of the 2021 Children's Call to Action to protect mountain areas against the impact of climate change,

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/mountain_partnership/doc/Children_s_call_to_action_to_protect_mountain_areas.pdf. Mountains are the water towers of the world. Everyday actions on water for sustainable development are collective actions to save the world's water towers, protecting and safeguarding humanity and the planet. Children, students and youth from schools in Bhutan, Germany, Malawi, Scotland, United Arab Emirates and United States of America presented their projects and delivered key messages for Action on Water for Sustainable Development. They were joined by speakers from Department of Land Resources Conservation Ministry of Agriculture (Malawi), Mountain Partnership (Italy), UNESCO Chair Global Health & Education (France), UNESCO World Heritage Site Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch (Switzerland) and local government (Germany).

Water Action Agenda

The Zero Water Day Partnership 'Saving the World's Water Towers (SWWT)' Campaign implements the Children's Call to Action launched at COP26 Climate Change Summit, Scotland in 2021. The campaign has been developed within the framework of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat. The SWWT connects advocacy and local action in schools and communities with others around the world. The SWWT campaign is framed by the five area actions of critical importance to humanity and the planet. The aim of SWWT is to empower

and enable children and youth to i. act now „do something now“, ii. measure and understand the challenges in a consistent and reinforcing manner, and iii. assess the impact of action as part of a lifelong learning process.

Expected Impact: The Zero Water Day Partnership 'Saving the World's Water Towers' campaign is grounded in Sustainable Development goal targets 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3. It promotes a consistent, coherent and mutually reinforcing approach to education for sustainable development and global citizenship education as part of a lifelong learning process. The Zero Water Day Partnership encourages each child and student to start and keep a lifelong learning diary to inspire them, give them ideas for partnerships and most importantly that with others they can realise the changes needed for the future of humanity and the planet.

The campaign enables and empowers children and students to learn with and from each other, and play an active and effective role in global advocacy through participation in international conferences, policy dialogue and decision-making.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Issues such as water and climate change are interconnected and interdependent,
- Children and youth in many countries and communities are already experiencing the impact of water insecurity and climate change so action is needed now,
- Access to school and learning will be distracted by climate change and issues around water quality and security,
- Schools are a setting for development, learning and play so have important influence on children's health and mental health,
- Children and youth should be given the opportunity and tools to establish international partnerships for action, with schools provided with resources and funds to support them.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Substantive and meaning engagement of children and youth in global policy discussions on sustainable development where they are active actors in decision-making and planning;
- Children and youth to accelerate the implementation of SDG 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3 across all education sub-systems in a consistent, coherent and reinforcing manner;
- Education for sustainable development and global citizenship education in schools should be aligned and support local government strategies and programmes for sustainable development;
- Mountains and glaciers as visual indicator for the health of our planet. Everyday actions on water for sustainable development in schools, at home and in communities will save the worlds water towers and collectively contribute to protecting and safeguarding humanity and the planet.