

## Key Messages and Outcomes

Several earlier precedents have been set in prioritizing youth in the development agenda such as the UN Global Youth Call for Post-2015 Agenda<sup>1</sup> and the UN Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change<sup>2</sup> which serve as a mechanism for global leaders to directly interact with young people across regions. Within the water sector, young people have been playing a significant role through grassroots activism, local interventions, entrepreneurial activities, and contributions to service provision in some of the most remote areas. They have also been performing cutting-edge research leading to social and technological innovations and have been actively engaged at the global level such as during COP27, the Dushanbe Water Conference and the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.

### Session 1 - What does Water Leadership look like?

- a. Opening remarks
- b. Profiles of water leaders - Leading the way

Alina

#### **Daniel Koto Dagnon, Réseau Béninois du Parlement Mondial de la Jeunesse pour:**

- Many education, entrepreneurship activities conducted, advocated the Benin state to adopt and consider the modern youth challenges.

#### **Rodrigo Mundaca, Governor of Valparaiso Region, Chile**

- Fighting for sanitation in Bolivia was (and continues to be) a long one. Indigenous movements have been making a point that water is a human right. Protection of water sources is being prioritised, now we need to prioritise management of the resources mainly because water is privately controlled. They have presented a constitutional amendment in 2022 to propose water as a human right, that was overturned. Priority for youth, and safeguarding rights of people, it is still a struggle. The basis of life, water itself is privatised in the country and we are fighting to reverse it as restore it (water) as a basic human right.

#### **Amrita Guatam, Drink Pani, Nepal.**

- Focused on cross-sectoral diagnostics, encouraging youth leadership data collection and analysis to support local water utilities. Digitisation as a key pathway to resilience. Bridging the gap between water utilities and communities, with youth in a central role and using hydroinformatics as the pathway. Assigned young water volunteers in water

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The\\_Global\\_Youth\\_Call.pdf](https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The_Global_Youth_Call.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/youth-in-action/youth-advisory-group>

clubs, field work sessions and bootcamps. Upgrade youth-led participatory model and contributing quality data where there is data scarcity.

## HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE MORE STAKEHOLDERS IN LEADERSHIP?

### **Laina Timberg, North American Youth Parliament for Water**

Engaging stakeholders will happen only through engaging youth, through rallies, conversations, knowledge exchanges. One should also look at how actions are not working, mostly because of insufficient resources and lack of financial investments and incentives for youth related initiatives.

### **Amrita**

Cannot leave anyone behind so emphasis on intergenerational dialogue and tapping the potential of youth. Respect each other's potential and balance the exchange of what each side can contribute. Social inclusion when considering technology, governance and other areas. Value the expertise of different generations who are working in the space.

### **Daniel**

People closer to the problem are closer to the solution so need to involve the stakeholder in all decisions and actions. "All that starts with them, must end with them."

### **Rodrigo**

On 27 July 2019, 174 countries ratified water as a human right, but not every country does so domestically. If monitoring is not done, how do we ensure such resolutions are enforced? It's not included at community level and at national legislation's. Decolonise the language, water is talked about as a resource, something that is polluted and needs to be protected. It is a common good, today peace and security are threatened by water.

"We need to defend water for life." (in Spanish)

## **c. Water leadership debates**

### **\*DEBATE 1\***

**Phil Duncun**

**Janene**

**Brroke Thompson**

**Gerardo**

## **Q1 - What is the biggest barrier to indigenous inclusion in water**

**Phil**

Valuing cultural knowledge, cultural way of life and the symbiotic knowledge of indigenous people with their nature is absent. Instinctive, spiritual knowledge is no ideology, it's very real

and it's less recognised. It needs more value, recognition and to talk differently about the knowledge itself. "*Culture is the very connector, like water.*" More integration of the indigenous knowledge and rematriation of women's knowledge in water governance processes is imperative.

### **Janene**

Biggest challenge in taking our rightful position in water leadership and governance is the colonial governments that continue to violate the rights and constitution of indigenous population. All rights directly controlled by water and need to decolonize the systems that allow abuse of water. Need respect that this is an element that is responsible for human rights. Solutions that ind groups bring are the right solutions for all people and our planet.

### **Gerardo**

More than 87 communities in Colombia with more than 64 languages. Lot of knowledge and experience exists within such communities and not just the scientific community. ILO conventions are there to protect indigenous knowledge but no monitoring of policies is done. It is the onus of the organisation to hold governments accountable.

### **Brooke (she/them)**

Lack of trust in indigenous leadership. Perpetuation of incorrect histories that support colonial narrative, while not acknowledging true histories of ind groups in collaborating. Fear of giving up power and seeds of change. The unknown change is uncomfortable but in allowing change and sharing water we gain more innovations and solutions.

## **Q2 what needs to be done?**

### **Janene**

Need to fully uphold and acknowledge the rights of all indigenous peoples and hold our governments accountable for the development of policies.

### **Brooke**

Mentorship and training of young indigenous people that needs to happen. For people currently in position of power, create mentorship programs and encourage youth leadership, help create pathways into these forums and int orgs like UN.

### **Gerardo**

Taking the initiative. Lots of voices that need to be heard, especially the people that did not make it to these forums. Need to go to these communities and bring these people here.

### **Phil**

People Appointed to committees are not indigenous and sometimes don't understand problems. Opportunities come from trust, honest conversations, actually listening and building relationships that create such opportunities. Champions can help create these opportunities by

having honest, in-depth conversations with indigenous groups. “When you go in-country the loudest voice you should hear is your heartbeat.”

### **Q3 how can we pursue enforcement of UN policies?**

#### **Phil**

Uptake of policies and integrations of these policies at a national and country level needed. Need to be more stringent and improve strategies for reporting back.

#### **Brooke**

The struggles for water security in my country was bad. When the UN rapporteur came, he documented everything, however, no action was taken. Seems to be losing trust in the UN. Fighting for water rights is not just for my country, it's for all the countries, so it's critical to make allies.

#### **Janene**

We, as young people, women and indigenous representatives, are the units of change in our government so we must hold our governments accountable.

#### **Gerardo**

Fundamental right to formal consultation( with indigenous communities)is not a formality . Need to go to these communities and get their inputs.

### **DEBATE 2 Gender and Water Leadership.**

Vika Kalokalo  
Bharti Kannan  
Andrea Nakova  
Anita Soina

#### **Q1**

**How can women play a bigger role in water leadership? Quota policy - Is this the right tool or the best tool to promote and advance women's participation and leadership in water governance?**

#### **Bharti**

Quota system in India is mind boggling, different areas need different quotas. In India, 33% of reservation for women in local institutions (Panchayat) bill passed. Calls on menstrual, sexual health remain limited. Even if women are on the decision making seat, they are wives of erstwhile sarpanch. The efforts towards menstrual health are very small and menial. When men take decisions on sanitary hygiene and say incineration, the practical challenges are not considered. We need meaningful quotas, that is where women are needed to make a decision based in their knowledge and experience, that's where they need to be, so that women lead a respectable and dignified life.

### **Andrea Nakova**

I have never been to a toilet in my school in 16 years of schooling. Lack of cleanliness. Human rights to water is not negotiable. Tax on menstrual products recently reduced and is thanks to women groups like hers. Large groups of women in her parliament voted against this tax reduction. So quotas may not make always sense. Need for active voices of women groups.

### **Vika**

Sometimes we have to check our privilege and our power as young women. Older women have less power and are mostly affected by lack of water, poor water supplies. The women and children are at the forefront of being affected by this water crisis. Water poverty is very high in Pacific islands but the global water crisis impacts all. Women affected socially, economically, ecologically and also the climate crisis. After they send the men to school, it is the women who take the buckets to source water and unpaid work, large cost on women bodies and violence against women and lgbt persons who take on this burden. Must include women in the decision making process, since women on the ground are the ones who face the problems. Just include every single one, including men, community leaders, grassroots communities to regional to national to global levels.

### **Anita Soina**

There is a women representative for women, youth and indigenous communities. Her (Anita) country's minister listened to the needs of women and implemented measures. An initiative in India on converting buses to toilets with internet and emergency services mechanisms. Hence, Women-led innovations that are working.

### **DEBATE 3 Government leadership in the water sector**

Khalil Zaidat

Philippe Rio, Mayor of Grigny

Gabriela Calderon

### **Q1 - Should ownership rest at national or local level.?**

#### **Zaidat**

Awareness raising is of paramount importance for management and use of water. Water sector suffers from interventions from Israeli authorities that is a violation of universal declaration on the matter. Need to quadruple or 10x efforts in Palestine to achieve SDG 6, let alone the other SDGs. Water borne diseases and poor sanitation in general an issue. Interventions by Israeli authorities and climate change impacts all impact water services and sanitation. Unregulated cesspits and sanitation will have an undesirable impact on the environment and water reserves.

#### **Gabriela**

Water governance in Argentina is complicated. There is a water resources law on national level but it is not regulated. Provinces have water laws and local governments are responsible for planning their own water policies but depend on the national government for implementation.

## **Q2 - Public ownership or private entity in managing the water?**

### **Philippe**

Local public services are a concrete and effective alternative that allows access to water, preservation of water services. In France they are bringing water back to the municipal level and because water is political they believe that it should not be possible to be profiting on water which is a basic human right. A powerful movement where public services are having a longterm vision instead of short term thinking. Local public services promote cooperation rather than competition. European Aqua Publica allows for a sustainable management and transparency in management. "Water can be a speculative good that is subject to market speculation."

Twitter hashtags:

#WaterAction

#FillUptheGlass

#WaterLeadership

#Inclusion

#WaterActionAgenda

## **Session 2 - Building commitments and accelerating action**

- a. Framework for building commitments
- b.
- c. Accountability for the Water

Mariana Dias Simpson

Maria Mercedes Kuri

Daniella Bostrom Couffe

### **Mariana**

Strengthen accountability in the work and demystifying the process of accountability. Few commitments relate to gender and they all come from civil groups. No commitments on indigenous people.

### **Maria (UN1FY)**

Evidence-based policy document that included a large-scale survey on youth perspectives in water and climate challenges. 5000 responses from youth showing the main concerns across the globe: Poor water quality, lack of access to water but also lack of coordination among different sectors and need for awareness raising. Also a series of workshops to develop solutions for not only governments but international organisations and civil groups including youth groups. Asking for 30% representation of people under 30 in water governance by 2030.

### **Daniella**

On the Water Action Agenda: Need also for small actions, getting children involved in everyday actions. Children around the world started folding origami birds: 8000+ birds received on children's commitments. Jul 17 event dedicated to water, to do analysis on progress across

sectors, share success stories and lessons learned, enable us to make new commitments. Water does not have its own intergovernmental process but needs to be integrated into other processes (e.g. Climate with COP). SDG 6 Synthesis Report.

## **PANEL 2: Implementing commitments**

Representative from the Dominican Republic delegation  
Silvia Cardascia, Asian Development Bank  
Kenneth Alfaro, Red de Jóvenes por el Agua Centroamérica

### **Dominican Republic representative - “Oreno?”**

Many women and young people are involved in organisations that relate to farming. Work with UNESCO to create a network of facilitators who will be certified. Training people in methodology and use. Work with OAS to develop a program called ‘Young Water’ allowed creation of education materials on water with UNESCO. Education program in place on water at his institution and a program called Culture of Water that has been in place since 1988. Workshop with children on how water is created, conserved etc. Focus on culture of water and need to protect our environment and water resources. Women are involved in DR and working with organisations in Haiti where there is further involvement of women in all areas of water. Women leaders in DR provide the necessary space to make all happen.

### **Switzerland - Elysa Vaillencourt(sp?)**

Financial commitment by Switzerland to ISW for 10 years, starting from 2024. Global Youth Movement for Water was formulated in 2022, currently with 370 organizations and allies, with a sole aim to empower and connect youth networks to create reliable stakeholders and changemakers with the overall goal to make the goal of water for all.

### **Asia - Silvia Cardascia**

Women and girls are primarily responsible for fetching water. 16 million women spend 50 million hours each day collecting water in India. Feminization of agriculture sector, where workforce primarily women. Lack of credible data on the baseline of inclusion of women makes it difficult to track progress. ADB commits to better measure and tackle progress, enhanced data collection and establishing baseline while enhancing womens leadership. Form a multi stakeholder platform that includes womens views. Promote gender equity in the water sector, gender mainstreaming.

### **Costa Rica delegation**

Working on declaration for different authorities. Youth need to fight to be better understood by the government, who seem distant from reality on the ground. Hence, the goal is to further involve governments in Latin America. Government policies need to be more participatory, every effort needs to be made on a national level. Youth need to be involved more frequently and directly. Youth are envisaged to play a leading role in awareness raising. Innovation at the heart of all concerns.

## PANEL 3 - Accountability in the Water Action Agenda

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

Léo Heller

Catarina de Albuquerque

Note: The first panel that includes all three Rapporteurs on HRWS

### **Pedro Arrojo-Agudo**

The citizens must have relevant and useful information, as well as a say (and hand) in public policies. Public policies that are participatory and transparent. This must include the most disadvantaged groups, those that find themselves on the periphery. We must listen to these population groups. People want to participate and they want access to information. This is a right that must be accompanied by legal obligations.

### **Leo**

Accountability is one of the key principles for HRWS. The water sector does not understand this term, accountability. Responsibility - need to identify and understand the roles of each actor. Responsiveness - those responsible need to be proactive in responding to demands in an accessible way. Enforceability - people must be forced to be accountable.

### **Catarina**

At the national level, civil society orgs (including informal water committees) need to play a role in looking at the commitments coming from the global water action agenda and see how it is being followed on a national level. There is a difference between voluntary and legally binding commitments. Much of the UN mechanisms are very distant from realities on the ground in many countries. (In places you cannot see on the map.)

### **Pedro**

Information and access to information the priority for inclusion of all groups. Water rights defenders can be engaged in an advisory group with other groups (ngos, social movements, indigenous groups) to include communities that have difficulty in getting their voices heard.

### **Leo**

The WASH services are the services that are perhaps the most unequal worldwide. To face inequalities, we need to develop policies that take into account diversity of groups and not homogeneity.

### **Catarina**



Creating multi stakeholder spaces at the national level can ensure participation of voices of groups that are not heard, don't have rights in practice. The information must trickle up from these communities and unheard voices.

### **Session 3 - Beyond the 2023 Water Conference**

The UN 2023 Conference on Water presents a unique opportunity for youth to engage directly in the process. For meaningful youth participation to move beyond proclamations for engagement and become reality, the conference must actively find ways to integrate young people in the conference proceedings and connect with their local decision makers.

#### **• Closing remarks by Sarah Oey, Dutch Ministry Youth Representative on Sustainable Development & 5 mins)**

**Sarah:**

We don't have a water crisis, it's a management crisis. Continuous engagement, conversations and interactions is needed. Acknowledge the importance of nature, encourage inter-generational dialogues. I am here to listen and learn from you. Only after an understanding of the bigger picture, can we move forward.

#### **Mayor Aboutaleb of Rotterdam**

*"Change the existing framework that terms water projects as bankable. If water is a human right, how can water projects be 'bankable'"* We should be ashamed to say that millions of people lack access to water. Water is not and should not be a political game. Speaking about water once in 50 years, how important is it really.?

#### **• Close of session, Amy Syvrud, SDG 6 Global Focal Point, Major Group for Children and Youth; Principal Consultant, Aither (2 mins)**

- don't stand in front of us. Stand beside us.
- Don't say quiet, speak up.
- Fill up the glass.