

Planned Remarks: Elizabeth A. Koch on behalf of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network

2026 United Nations Water Conference Preparatory Process/ Organizational Session to make updated recommendations to the General Assembly on the themes of the interactive dialogues

Monday, March 3, 2025 | ECOSOC Chamber UNHQ 10:00-13:00/15:00-18:00

Your Excellencies, thank you for the opportunity to share inputs and recommendations today.

My name is Elizabeth Koch, I am a Senior Manager at the Environmental Law Institute and the Process Support Team Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network is a community of water diplomats, decision-makers, and experts focused on transboundary water cooperation in some of the most water-insecure and conflict-sensitive regions of the world. Originating in the Nile in 2017, the Network is today a community of dozens of partnering institutions and hundreds of active expert-members in the Nile, Central Asia-Afghanistan, Southern Africa, North America, the South Caucasus and beyond.

As part of the 2023 Conference, in partnership with more than a dozen institutions, river basin organizations and Indigenous and local communities, the **Women in Water Diplomacy Network made a commitment** and participated broadly in Conference.

Building on this commitment, we highlight **three of our community's mission-critical recommendations** today:

1. **We can't measure what we can't see.** The Women in Water Diplomacy Network encourages the Conference to adopt specific and transparent goals for inclusion and resource a mechanism to collect disaggregated data to create indicators for monitoring participation goals.
2. **Resourcing.** Many in our community would not have been able to engage at the 2023 Conference without the targeted financial support provided by the Netherlands' Stakeholder Engagement Fund and coordinating communities like the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. The Network encourages the Conference to ringfence resources to directly target support towards the effective collective engagement of women water experts, Indigenous water experts and next generation water leaders.
3. **Finally, with regards to the interactive dialogue themes**, the Network recommends the Conference to *emphasize water diplomacy as a strategic tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding*; and ensure that *all* dialogue themes are designed and enabled to ensure inclusive and diverse perspectives.

On behalf of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and our partners, we stand-ready to support and partner to advance these targeted approaches to effectively, sustainably, and inclusively achieve our shared goals for the next UN Water Conference.

Thank you