

# Women in Water Diplomacy Network After Action Report



The Water Diplomacy Symposium and Network  
Engagement in the UN 2023 Water Conference



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023



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### Layout

SIWI

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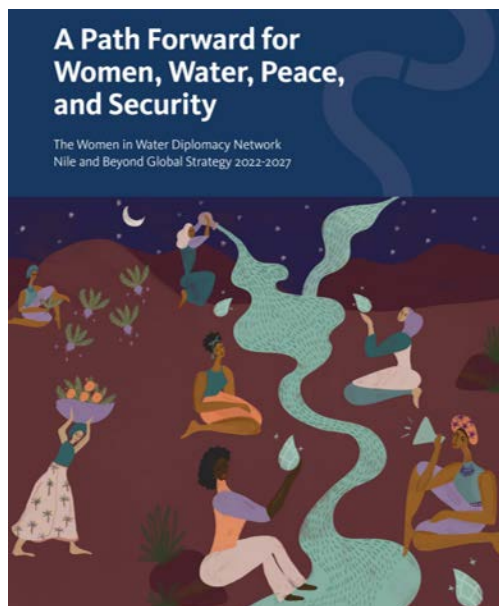
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## Executive Summary

In August 2022, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network launched the [‘A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security’](#) Global Strategy at the World Water Week. The Global Strategy is built around Five Strategic Pillars harmonizing prioritized actions across the growing global Network to advance the Network’s overarching objective **to improve gender equality in high-level decision making in transboundary basins with focus on women’s leadership in regional dialogues around shared waters - with resultant positive implications for**



*regional peace and human security.* Strategic Pillar Four aims to ‘*contribute to elevating dialogue, knowledge, and experience around the intersecting themes of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network (i.e., women, water, peace and security) as part of basin wide, regional, and global dialogue processes.*’ Pillar Four specifically identified **the UN Water Conference in New York in March 2023 as a strategic and prioritized milestone for collective Network engagement** to tangibly impact the trajectory of water and peace related discourse in transboundary basins globally. As such, the Network’s engagements at and around the UN Water Conference specifically aimed to:

- Contribute to knowledge and experience around the intersecting themes of women, water, peace, and security at the UN Water Conference in March 2023;
- Strengthen the representation and influence of women water diplomats in water and climate global dialogue process;
- Contribute to fostering a more inclusive dialogue space by elevating the collective positive visibility of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network; and
- Engage with, hear from, and support young water professionals with a focus on young women water professionals.

A broad spectrum of engagements were planned at and around the UN Water Conference to support the achievement of the above objectives including:

- A. **November 16, 2022**: The Network hosted an **online Accreditation Q&A session** for Network Members seeking accreditation to participate in-person at the UN Water Conference.
- B. **December 2, 2022**: Network Process Support partner institutions including the Environmental Law Institute, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and the University of Arizona provided **support and space on their institutional accreditation lists** for Women in Water Diplomacy Network members and supporters seeking to participate in-person at the UN Water Conference.
- C. **January - February 2023**: Application and award of Women in Water Diplomacy Network **official UN Water Conference side event inside the UN headquarters**.
- D. **February 21, 2023**: Women in Water Diplomacy Network's **Voluntary Commitment** to the UN Water Action Decade '*A Rising Tide*' accepted and included in the UN registry of commitments.
- E. **February - March 2023**: **Resource mobilization, partnership building, and visa support** to enable in-person participation for Network members including award of subsidy from the Netherlands Stakeholder Engagement Fund, as well as partnership and resource allocation from the International Joint Commission, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
- F. **March 8, 2023**: Women in Water Diplomacy Network annual online **International Women's Day event** focused on Network preparations for the UN Water Conference.
- G. **March 20, 2023**: Women in Water Diplomacy Network partnership with Columbia University's Harriman Institute in hosting the '*Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security – Elevating Central Asian Voices from across the Women in Water Diplomacy Network*' event as part of the [New York Water Week](#) Program of public events in parallel to the UN Water Conference.
- H. **March 21, 2023**: Women in Water Diplomacy Network and partners hosted a full day **Water Diplomacy Symposium** bringing together over 80 water diplomats in advance of the UN Water Conference. **This event served as the Network's focal engagement.**
- I. **March 21, 2023**: Women in Water Diplomacy Network Development Partners meeting.
- J. **March 22, 2023**: Xanani Baloyi representing SIWI and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network was an invited speaker at the **Water, Peace and Security in Africa** session convened by Finland and the African Union convened in the UN's ECOSOC chamber.



- K. **March 22, 2023:** [Women in Water Diplomacy Network side event](#) in the UN Headquarters as part of the official program of the UN Water Conference.
- L. **March 23, 2023:** The Women in Water Diplomacy Network **co-convended a UN Conference side event with Tajikistan and Basin Women’s Forums** entitled ‘*The Role and perspectives of women's participation in Integrated Water Resources Management in the Tajik Syrdarya and Kafarnigan River Basins and Nile Basin.*’
- M. **March 23, 2023:** Elizabeth A. Koch represented ELI and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network as a speaker as part of **Devex Summit WASH Works 2023** ([devex.com](https://www.devex.com/)).
- N. **March 23, 2023:** The Women in Water Diplomacy Network, ELI, SIWI and others **co-convended an informal evening mingle event for women in water** with the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance hosted by the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York.
- O. **March 24, 2023:** The Women in Water Diplomacy Network **co-convended a UN Conference side event with the World Bank** entitled ‘*Concrete Path to Empower Women, Youth and Indigenous Persons to Accelerate Global Water Security in the Water Action Decade.*’
- P. **March 27, 2023:** Women in Water Diplomacy Leadership Council Member Yodit Balcha conducted an invited seminar including highlights on the UN Water Conference at the Nicholas School of the Environment, **Duke University.**
- Q. **March 28, 2023:** The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center held a special webinar featuring impressions and takeaways from the United Nations 2023 Water Conference.

The two seminal focus events which anchored the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s engagements at the UN Water Conference including the pre-conference Water Diplomacy Symposium and the Network’s official side event in the UN Headquarters. **The March 21, 2023 Water Diplomacy Symposium** was convened by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in partnership with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the International Joint Commission (IJC), the Lincoln Institute of Land



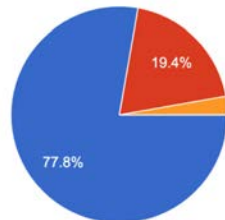
Policy, and the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center. The Symposium served as the focal engagement for the Network at the UN Water Conference providing space and opportunity for extended dialogue and interactions among assembled water diplomats attending the UN Water Conference. Over 80 people participated in the Symposium, including Network members, experts, and supporters from the Nile, Central Asia-Afghanistan, the Americas, Europe, and Asia, as well as representatives of government agencies and development organizations such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the United States Department of State and Department of the Interior, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the World Bank, among others. The specific objectives of the Symposium were to enable networking, foster partnerships, and encourage information exchange amongst the formal and informal water diplomats attending the UN Water Conference, with a focus on critical themes related to transboundary basins globally, and water insecure and conflict sensitive basins in particular. Further the Symposium sought to particularly elevate voices of women water diplomats, Indigenous leaders, and young water professionals - all communities often excluded from high level water diplomacy dialogues - and emphasize the critical value of a diversity of voices in advance of the high-level policy dialogues and events taking place at the UN Water Conference. The Symposium particularly served to build relationships and foster partnerships across the growing Women in Water Diplomacy Network and community of supporters and partners ensuring strong engagement at the Network events throughout the UN Water Conference program and side events. For the full program of the Water Diplomacy Symposium including short biographies of all speakers and participants please see Annex 2.

The Water Diplomacy Symposium provided a critical opportunity to collect feedback and inputs into the Network's engagements. Approximately 50% of Symposium participants provided input into the Symposium's evaluation, offering significant and valuable feedback on the Symposium as well as future Network engagements. Responses indicated that the diversity of experience, regions, and scales of engagement of the water diplomats attending Symposium was extremely valuable with many comments indicating the particular value of listening and learning from the many Indigenous experts who shared experience during the Symposium, with one respondent indicating that *'I was very impressed with the diversity of speakers and participants and found the insights of the Indigenous leaders extremely valuable.'*

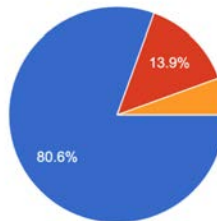
*'I was very impressed with the diversity of speakers and participants and found the insights of the Indigenous leaders extremely valuable.'*

While 75% of respondents indicated that their participation in the Symposium provided opportunity to increase professional knowledge of key issues related to water diplomacy, gain new ideas to support inclusive water diplomacy processes and approaches, share stories and peer learning, and provided an enhanced feeling of community and shared mission, 83% indicated that the event provided positive energy and enthusiasm, and **91.7% received new valuable connections through networking with the assembled participants.**

**97.2%** of respondents indicated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that "Today's Water Diplomacy Symposium was relevant and applicable to my professional work"



**94.5%** of respondents indicated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that "Ongoing engagement with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network was relevant and applicable to my professional work"



Many expressed gratitude and value for the comradery experienced during the Symposium with feedback such as: *'I have always been a women's rights advocate. Learning about this network opened my eyes and allowed me to see that we are stronger if we are together and that we are stronger if we support each other. Thank you so much for the opportunity to join the Symposium and the network.'* In addition to new expert contacts, many survey respondents indicated that their participation exposed them to new tools and approaches, *'I feel better equipped to understand the roles of women in water governance and diplomacy'*. Many respondents indicated the value of both the formal program sessions as well as the informal breaks, *'The atmosphere of the event contributed to the platform of different voices in the global fora. The event facilitated connection and camaraderie that supports participants going into the UN Conference and engenders even greater support to representation in decision making. This is a great example of how to build momentum and impact!'* When asked to elevate





aspects of the Symposium participants would change almost all respondents requested **more time for discussion** with several noting the need for a larger venue. Respondents likewise offered up specific ways in which they would report back and share their experience with their communities and networks such as, *'I would like to write a note reporting on the Symposium and main takeaways in Spanish, so that I can share the message with my peers.'* Overall, survey respondents also expressed

*'This is the most empowering professional community I've ever had a chance to participate in.'*

thanks to the consortia of co-convenors for enabling the experience exchange opportunity such as *'A great use of my time!! Thanks to all the organizers,'* and *'Keep up the amazing work! Happy to contribute the best way I can. This is the most empowering professional community I've ever had a chance to participate in.'* Further details on the results of the Symposium's evaluation and participant feedback can be found in Annex 1.

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network hosted its official side event on March 22 at the UN Headquarters. The side event entitled *'Elevating Critical Voices in Water Diplomacy'* was co-convened with a broad consortium of partners including River Basin Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Universities, and academic institutions as well as other networks and young professional forums. The side-event put focus on the critical importance of inclusive water diplomacy processes and the linkages between women, water, peace, and security, as well as the value of water to peace and human security. The filled to capacity side event raised numerous key issues at the core of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's objectives including the importance of evidence based research and data including the need for greater collection of sex-disaggregated data, linkages to inclusion in water and sustainable development and the durability of peace and prevention of conflict relapse, the disproportionate effect of climate change and water insecurity on women and the dearth of women involved in formal decision making, and the important role of water

diplomacy for peace and security. Consortia partners closed the side-event by reading aloud the **call to action** ['A Rising Tide' voluntary commitment to the UN Water Action Decade submitted on behalf of the Network.](#)



As in the first Global Network Forum, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network provided hard copies of the strategy as well as the ‘A Rising Tide’ Network Symbol to participants engaged in the Network’s activities during the UN Water Conference. The collaboratively designed gold ‘clip’ was worn by members and supporters of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network throughout the UN Water Conference to bring collective positive visibility to the cause of equal participation and influence of women in water related decision making.



The symbol’s wide and high level adoption by the Network and its growing base of support throughout the UN Water Conference proved particularly catalytic in bringing attention to the boundary crossing movement for gender equality in transboundary water decision making, as seen in the wide range of actors who adopted it including (clockwise from left to right) **Linda Thomas Greenfield**, US Ambassador to the United Nations, **Deb Haaland**, US Secretary of Interior and other senior women water decision makers in the US delegation, **Phan Thi Thu Huong**, **Saengrewee Suweerakan**, **Rojieka Mahin** representing Indigenous communities in Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia respectively, **Johanna Sumuvuori**, State Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, **Chairwoman Amelia Flores** of the Colorado River Indian Tribes and **Governor Stephen Roe Lewis** of the Gila River Indian Community- and many others!

### Overarching Findings and Outcomes of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network engagements at the 2023 UN Water Conference:

- Fostering inclusive dialogue and decision-making processes remains very challenging and requires **targeted resources** and dedicated staff to actively erode and remove barriers in support of broad participation of marginalized voices. Barriers to inclusive participation are well known, rigid and persistent and must be anticipated as part of process design.
- The Women in Water Diplomacy Network's **strong partnership with young professionals and Indigenous water leaders** has proven to be particularly valuable and impactful for Network members and the Network's objectives. There are many opportunities and positive outcomes in fostering a strong coalition of mutually supportive water experts collectively striving for inclusion in decision making. This has been frequently demonstrated through the joint engagements of various women in water related networks but also between various stakeholder communities historically marginalized from high level decision making in the water sector.
- While actively working to **bring new voices into high level water dialogues** and debates like the UN Water Conference is essential, significant benefits for broader inclusion efforts can also be leveraged by supporting voices and actors long established in the water sector to create space for the next generation of water leaders.



## Preparing a collective engagement at the UN Water Conference: Focused erosion of barriers to participation

In advance of the UN Water Conference the Women in Water Diplomacy Network invested considerable time and efforts in addressing the many barriers faced by Network members and supporters in



participating at the UN Water Conference itself. The Network hosted an **online Accreditation Q&A session** for Network Members seeking accreditation to participate in-person at the UN Water Conference on November 16, 2022. This event featured several representatives closely aligned with UN Water Conference planning processes including a detailed presentation on participation processes from **Josh Newton**, as well as inputs from **Ambassador Tanja Miškova**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy, Slovenia. This online information session was attended by dozens of Network members as well as representatives from Indigenous communities from around the world who were able to learn more about the process and have their questions informally answered by knowledge sources involved in the UN Water Conference.

To further support Network members and supporters to receive accreditation Network Process Support partner institutions including the Environmental Law Institute, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center provided **support and space on their institutional accreditation lists** for Women in Water Diplomacy Network members and supporters seeking to participate in-person at the UN Water Conference. These efforts demonstrated the strong institutional commitments to actively expanding the diversity of voices present and available to directly share their insights at the UN Water Conference.

In January-February the Women in Water Diplomacy Network shifted focus from supporting Network member accreditation to **ensuring strong Network representation in the official program of the UN Water Conference**. Specifically,



this included the preparation and **submission of an official on-site side event application, as well as an official Voluntary Commitment to the UN Water Action Decade on behalf of the Network and its growing partners.** From more than a thousand side event applications submitted, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's was selected to host an on-site side event on the afternoon of the opening day of the UN Water Conference - World Water Day. The Network's Voluntary Commitment - based on the Global Joint Statement released by the Network as part of its 2022 Global Strategy - was accepted and included in the UN's registry of commitments on February 21, 2022 and is available [here](#). The Network was grateful for the strong support from a broad consortia of partners who partnered with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the side event and Voluntary Commitment submissions including: the Red Dot Foundation, the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM), the Orange Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), the Okavango Basin Commission (OKACOM), the International Joint Commission (IJC), the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), UNDP Cap-Net, UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC), Central Asia Regional Environmental Center (CAREC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Bank Equal Aqua, The Environmental Peacebuilding Association (EnPax), the Sudanese Youth for Water Parliament, the Community of Women in Water – Latin America, Women Plus Water at the University of Saskatchewan, IHE Delft, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, and the Global Diplomacy Lab Secretariat at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

During this preparation stage the Women in Water Diplomacy Network also welcomed **new partners** who joined the shared effort to co-convene the March 21, 2023 Water Diplomacy Symposium. The Environmental Law Institute and the Stockholm International Water Institute welcomed **the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, led by Dr Sharon Megdal, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, led by Faith Sternlieb, and the International Joint Commission led by Kathey Lee-Galvin and Susan Daniels** - all of which contributed time and institutional resources to ensure the Water Diplomacy Symposium's success. The Women in Water Diplomacy Network was also grateful to the Scandinavian House venue in New York City, which afforded the Network an excellent location and support for the Symposium at a reduced rate.

With accreditation applications submitted, the Symposium planning processes coming together and the official side event at the UN Conference secured, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network put additional focus on **resource mobilization to provide travel grants to Network members and supporters, as well as dedicated support for participants to secure visas** in a short period of time. The Women in Water Diplomacy Network was thrilled to be awarded a subsidy from

the **Netherlands Stakeholder Engagement Fund** in the weeks in advance of the UN Water Conference. As co-host of the UN 2023 Water Conference, the government of The Netherlands emphasized the importance of inclusiveness in the preparatory activities on the road to the Water Conference and on a meaningful participation of all groups, also of those whose voices are usually not heard in UN Conferences. The government of The Netherlands acknowledged that targeted actions are needed to ensure that the needs and best practices of youth, women's groups, Indigenous, and other grassroots groups, within and beyond the water sector, can be shared and will influence the results of the UN Water Conference and established the Stakeholder Engagement Fund to provide the targeted resources to back-up these objectives. The Environmental Law Institute was able to utilize the subsidy to provide travel grants, fill resource gaps, and produce materials to add value to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's participation at the UN Water Conference. On March 8, 2023, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network hosted its annual **International Women's Day online event** which offered an opportunity to share updates on the Network's engagement plans at the UN Water Conference while highlighting some of the particularly persistent participation barriers (predominately visa related) that the Network was unfortunately unable to overcome.

## March 20, 2023 New York Water Week Event in partnership with Columbia University

In the days leading up to the UN Water Conference, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network partnered with Columbia University's Harriman Institute to host a public event as part of the [New York Water Week](#). The event, entitled *['Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security – Elevating Central Asian Voices from across the Women in Water Diplomacy Network'](#)* put explicit focus on elevating young professional voices from across Central Asia. The evening event attracted the participation of about 40 participants in person, with additional participants joining via the livestream. During the event, **Justin Burke**, Lecturer of International and Public Affairs, Harriman Institute at Columbia University welcomed participants and introduced the session. **Xanani Baloyi**, Process Support Team member for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network at the Stockholm International Water Institute introduced the Women in Water Diplomacy Network walking the assembled students, alumni, and interested public through the inception and development of the Network from the Nile Basin, to Central Asia-Afghanistan and elsewhere. **Dr Saule Ospanova**, Senior Environmental Affairs

Advisor at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) provided additional reflection and motivation for the development of the Network. An interactive panel of Network Members followed facilitated by **Valeriya Orlova** from the Central Asia Regional Environmental Center (CAREC), with panelists including **Aziza Sharofova Khamza kizi**, Chief Expert, Center Ecological Expertise of the State Committee of Uzbekistan, **Shohida Tulieva**, National Coordinator for Gender and Social Equality, Water Resources Management, Tajikistan, **Cholpon Aitakhunova**, Co-lead, Central Asia Youth for Water, Kyrgyzstan, **Lyazzat Syrlybayeva**, Co-Lead of the Central Asia Youth for Water Network, Kazakhstan, and **Meerim Seidakmatova**, Integrated Water Resources Management MA student, Kazakh-German University, Kyrgyzstan. Following the panel discussion, session participants were invited by Justin Burke to raise questions and share experience in an informal and engaging dialogue. The full recording of this event can be accessed at: [A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security - Columbia University Event](#).



# March 21, 2023 Water Diplomacy Symposium

## Introduction



The Water Diplomacy Symposium was opened by **Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager of International Programs at the Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. She began by acknowledging the Lenape People, on whose land the Symposium was held, and she welcomed the diversity of participants who represented over 30 countries and included approximately 70% women and nearly 20%

young professionals. Elizabeth further recognized the absence of many stakeholders and partners who were unable to join the in-person event owing to persistent barriers including accreditation barriers, the lack of sponsorship, and challenges with obtaining visas. She further highlighted the *'herstory'* of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, including its 2017 launch in the Nile Basin, the 2021 initiation of the Central Asia-Afghanistan Network, as well as the 2022 Global Network Forum and launch of the Network's Global Strategy publication, '[A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace, and Security.](#)'

## Welcome Remarks

Three welcome addresses followed the introduction:

**Johanna Sumuvuori, State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland**, shared Finland's history in peacebuilding and highlighted that conflict prevention and resolution remain high priorities at the national level. Noting that the roles of water diplomacy and civil society activities, which bring peace mediation expertise, are central to these aims as is the continued championing of human rights. She encouraged action at and after the UN Water Conference through networking and information sharing.







**Julien Katchinoff, Water Team Lead at the Office of Conservation and Water in the United States Department of State,** touched on several steps the US government has taken to elevate global water priorities including the publication of

the US Global Water Action and Strategy in 2022. He indicated that water resources are increasingly under pressure from not only climate change but institutional factors such as shifting budgets. Nevertheless, he cited there is excitement around new technologies such as remote sensing and the influx of new voices such as women leaders in the decision-making on transboundary issues.

**Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare (Canadian Section) and Commissioner Robert C. Sisson (US Section) of the International Joint**

**Commission (IJC)** presented their welcome remarks together. Both spoke on the evolution of the Boundary Water Treaty that was first



established 111 years ago in 1909, with Commission Phare noting that women were not included in its signing. Shared benefits remain fundamental to the work of the IJC, as does advancing conflict prevention through science-based thinking and public engagement. Commissioner Sisson emphasized that when concerns are raised on the shared waters between US and Canada, the IJC's approach is to not focus on where issues originate and instead move forward to work objectively without government influence. Commissioner Phare added that they have been working to improve inclusivity, particularly for Indigenous Peoples - supporting policies to adhere to the principle of "*nothing about us without us*".

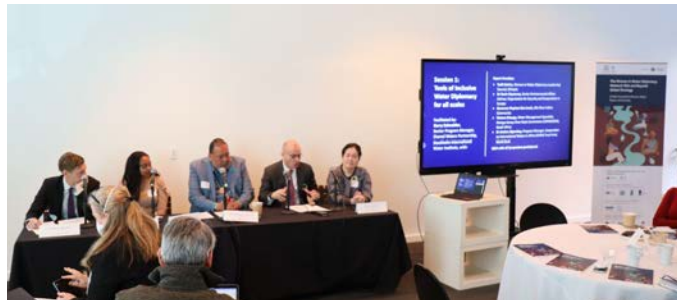


## Sessions

The bulk of the Symposium focused on four panel sessions where participants came together to share perspective on several key themes of central importance to water diplomacy engagements in a diversity of basins around the world. The Symposium program also provided opportunity for informal discussion and networking in several coffee breaks as well as a group lunch.

### Session 1: Tools of Inclusive Water Diplomacy for all scales

The first session, ‘Tools of Inclusive Water Diplomacy for all scales’ was facilitated by **Kerry Schneider**, Senior Program Manager of the Shared Waters Partnership program



at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). The four panelists included: **Yodit Balcha** of the Women in Water Diplomacy Leadership Council; **Dr Saule Ospanova**, Senior Environmental Affairs Advisor at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; **Governor Stephen Roe Lewis** of the Gila River Indian Community; **Dr Anders Jägerskog**, Program Manager for the Cooperation on International Waters in Africa (CIWA) Trust Fund, World Bank; and **Ambassador Igli Hasani**, Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

Ambassador Hasani started off the conversation by highlighting OSCE’s role in inclusive water management in Eastern Europe and the role of women in ensuring a gender balance in water management, with many young female leaders having strong technical backgrounds. Yodit Balcha noted the value of having informal ties with negotiators from other sides. Speaking of her experience as a negotiator for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ms. Balcha emphasized the value of presenting oneself carefully as part of the diplomacy team and the importance of inclusivity and shared fears and hopes in contexts where negotiations are between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Governor Lewis spoke of fostering inclusivity and consensus through valuing local ecological knowledge and via teaching, such as in schools, spiritual ceremonies, and conservation efforts. He identified water as an equalizer that can help include the 30 tribes across the Colorado River Basin that have been historically left out of water decision making. He also touched on using innovative means of ‘*forced inclusion*’

such as lawsuits to get a seat at the table and also bringing innovations such as drip irrigation and lined canals to frontline communities.

Dr Jägerskog underscored that in the context of multilateralism, advancing transboundary cooperation in an inclusive manner can be challenging, but investments in long-term engagements, inclusive participation, and networking are necessary to make progress in a way where voices are heard. Inclusive approaches in transboundary water management are critical to supporting sustainable development, climate resilience, and biodiversity preservation. He also highlighted CIWA's male champions program and its gender sensitive programming as two examples that promote inclusivity. Dr Ospanova identified hard and soft diplomacy tools that have strengthened capacity and increased inclusivity in Central Asia and Afghanistan. In particular, she noted confidence building measures and integrating youth.

## Session 2: Effective Consultation and Community Engagement in Water Diplomacy Processes



The second session, 'Effective Consultation and Community Engagement in Water Diplomacy Processes,' was facilitated by **Dr Sharon B. Megdal**,

Director of the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center. Panelists included **Lyazzat Syrlybayeva**, Co-Lead of the Central Asia Youth for Water Network and Women in Water Diplomacy Network member from Kazakhstan; **Commissioner Henry Lickers** (Canadian Section) of the International Joint Commission; **Chairwoman Amelia Flores** of the Colorado River Indian Tribes; and **Phera Ramoeli**, Executive Secretary of the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM). The panelists started out by sharing their personal backgrounds and how they came to hold their current positions. Commissioner Lickers spoke of growing up in the Sixth Indian Nation Reserve, Chairwomen Flores acknowledged the mentoring of elders from Mojave, Hopian, Navajo, and other tribes, Lyazzat Syrlybayeva highlighted the geography of Central Asia and the upstream-downstream relations within the region, and Phera Ramoeli provided background on the Okavango and the strategies required to minimize conflict touchpoints in southern Africa.

Regarding obstacles to inclusion, Lyazzat Syrlybayeva spoke of the common Soviet past across Central Asia and how cultural identities and gendered expectations can create barriers for youth and women participation. Reflecting on how to strengthen consultations, Phera Ramoeli noted that a strategy that identifies target beneficiaries and engages them is a useful way is necessary to stay connected with local communities. He also identified the value of both targeted and mainstreaming gender plans. Chairwomen Flores noted that tribal governments have to work with the federal government rather than states, and that inclusion only came in dire times such as droughts. She emphasized that the tribes made themselves known through hiring water lawyers and technical experts, as well as spending tribal resources to collect data. She highlighted that diplomacy is critical, as states often actively oppose tribal water rights and fail to acknowledge local tribes as co-sovereigns. Commissioner Lickers rounded out the discussion by adding that respect and equity must be balanced in treaties and that effective consultations require consensus, not necessarily total agreement.



### Session 3: The Power of Information Exchange

Following a lunch break that allowed participants to network, the third Symposium session, ‘The Power of Information Exchange,’ was facilitated by **Dr Faith Sternlieb**, Associate Director for Stakeholder Engagement for the Internet of Water Initiative at the Lincoln Institute’s Center for Geospatial Solutions. Panelists included **Sylvester Anthony Matemu**, Executive Director of Nile Basin Initiative; **Dr Dinara Ziganshina**, Director at the Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination; **Dr Melissa McCracken**, Assistant Professor of International Environmental Policy at the Fletcher School at Tufts University; and **Dr Sharon B. Megdal**, representing the Water & Tribes Initiative and the Colorado River Basin Leadership Team.



Dr Sternlieb began the conversation by introducing the Internet of Water and underscoring that data is inherent in all five pillars of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Global Strategy. Sylvester Anthony Matemu expressed his appreciation for the attention on the Nile River Basin at the Symposium and detailed many facts and data points to illustrate the might of the Nile, including that it concerns 272 million people across 11 countries. He also spoke to the importance of reliable and accessible data, which can then help support women, who are often the primary decision makers on water.



Dr Ziganshina shared that her organization collects, processes, and distributes information on water related resources in Central Asia in addition to providing training and forecasting. She underscored the importance of building trust with those that information will be shared with as part of the process. Dr McCracken provided details on the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database and the steps that go into collecting international data, analyzing treaties, and sharing those findings publicly. Dr Megdal indicated that the Water & Tribes Initiative is a collaborative that works to enhance tribal capacity by connecting tribes to resources and information such as through policy briefs that detail, for example, which water rights have been settled as well as those that have not yet been reconciled. She also expressed that tribal communities continue to face hurdles in accessing clean water but that reports and webinars that answer key questions can be useful to communities and their partners.

Dr McCracken added a global perspective to the conversation, noting that the examples in the transboundary dataset are publicly available to all, which can enhance trust when it comes to data collection and sharing. For certain contexts, however, it might be difficult to ask for open and transparent data. Dr Ziganshina shared that it can be important to focus on how to communicate information because data can be interpreted in multiple ways — both locally and between nations. Sylvester Anthony Matemu echoed the challenges of having *'unruly'* data by sharing details about the Nile River Basin and that despite providing guidelines for data collection and management, sovereign states ultimately determine how they will provide information. He also noted that negotiations are highly dependent on many types of information, including how water is utilized. The session wrapped up with a reflection on data sovereignty and the role of government policies in supporting data infrastructure.

## Session 4: Managing for Uncertainty in an Era of Climate Change

The fourth and last session, ‘Managing for Uncertainty in an Era of Climate Change,’ was facilitated by **Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo**, Department of the Interior, United States. The panelists included: **Ambassador Tanja Miškova**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy, Slovenia; **Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner** of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), U.S. Section; **Commissioner Adriana Reséndez Maldonado** of the IBWC, Mexico Section; and **Zafar Makhmudov**, Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), Tajikistan.



Assistant Secretary Trujillo opened the conversation by sharing that Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Indigenous US Secretary (of any Department) and leading women water diplomat will deliver the United States’ national address at the UN Water Conference highlighting the US Water Team’s strong national women leadership. Turning to river and basin experiences with uncertainty, Ambassador Miškova acknowledged the path of cooperation for the Sava River and the presence of a vibrant youth department in its commission sharing the importance of water and the Sava

agreement in building peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia countries. Zafar Makhmudov spoke of the deterioration of the Aral Sea and how the region’s sustainable development is codependent on sustainable water management from all Central Asian neighbors. He added that CAREC has enabled Central Asian countries to engage in dialogue, planning, and fostering a regional vision while building trust across borders. Commissioners Giner and Reséndez Maldonado both offered background details on the 3000km long shared river borders between Mexico and the US, highlighting that since the IBWC water treaty was signed by both countries in 1944, this is the first time the Commission has been led by two women.

Ambassador Miškova identified that having a flexible river basin arrangement can help communities respond to challenges. At the same time, disasters can lead to establishing new tools and arrangements, such as the flood forecasting measures that were initiated following a disaster in Bosnia. Zafar Makhmudov also echoed the value of flexibility in regional strategies in the face of climate change. He noted that regional action and clear communication are important factors to help bring countries facing similar challenges together to discuss joint issues. Commissioner

Reséndez Maldonado spotlighted the ongoing drought in western United States and the over allocation of shared waters. She identified areas where the US and Mexico are working together to share modeling and forecasting information. Commissioner Giner added that the joint team has been working to gather data such as through stakeholder interviews to help both sides get reliable information as rainwaters become less and less predictable.

## Closing

**Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager of International Programmes at the Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network expressed thanks once again to all the participants and co-convening partners for supporting and enabling the rich Symposium discussions to take place and highlighted the breath of engagements hosted and co-convened by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network taking place throughout the UN Water Conference both inside and outside of the UN Headquarters. Elizabeth concluded by encouraging all partners to continue to engage and support the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and inclusive transboundary water diplomacy.



**UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE**

**Women in Water Diplomacy Network Engagements at the UN Water Conference 2023**

**JOIN US!**

**Monday, March 20, 2023 | 18:00-19:30 | Public Event with in-person and online participation**  
 Women in Water Diplomacy Event at Columbia University featuring Network Members from Central Asia-Afghanistan. **Details and Registration here:** <https://harriman.columbia.edu/event/a-path-forward-for-women-water-peace-and-security-elevating-central-asian-voices-from-across-the-women-in-water-diplomacy-network/>

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023 | 8:30-17:00 | Invitation-only Water Diplomacy Symposium**  
 Full Day Water Diplomacy Symposium for participating Network members, partners and supporters. **Capacity of this event has been reached. For details please contact Koch@eli.org.**

**Wednesday, March 22, 2023 | Official UN Water Conference Side Events inside the UN HQ**  
 Women in Water Diplomacy Network featured in Official Side 'Water, Peace, and Security in Africa' | 11:00-12:15 | ECOSOC Chamber | Convened by Finland, African Union Commission, Switzerland, Senegal  
 Women in Water Diplomacy Official Side Event 'Elevating Critical Voices in Water Diplomacy' | 15:30-16:45 | Conference Room A | **Details here:** <https://www.eli.org/events/elevating-critical-voices-water-diplomacy>

**Thursday, March 23, 2023 | Side Events outside the UNHQ!**  
 Women in Water Diplomacy Network featured at Devex WASH Works Symposium | 14:00-15:00 | In-person with online participation options. **Details and Registration here:** <https://pages.devex.com/WASH-works-2023.html>  
 Women in Water Diplomacy featured in Side Event 'The Role and perspectives of women's participation in Integrated Water Resources Management in the Tajik Syrdarya and Kafarnigan River Basins and Nile Basin', 9:00-11:00 at 15 West 38th Street, 4th Floor | In-person with online participation options.  
**Online participation link here:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81064225055?pwd=dVhRTlppQkF6NC9lZ05EOVp6R0Jldz09>

**Friday, March 24, 2023 | Official Side Event outside the UN | In-person with online participation**  
 Network co-convening side event with the World Bank 'Roundtable: Empowering Women, Youth and Indigenous Persons to Accelerate Global Water Security in the Water Action Decade' | 8:30-10:00 | Riverview Room, Hilton Millennium | **Details and Registration here:** <https://worldbankgroup.zoom.us/j/81064225055?pwd=dVhRTlppQkF6NC9lZ05EOVp6R0Jldz09>

The Symposium concluded with brief remarks from **Jessica Troell**, Senior Attorney and Director of the International Water Program at the Environmental Law Institute. She applauded the participants for actively engaging in the day's events and encouraged the gathered formal and informal water diplomats to engage with and support the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security.' She further encouraged all participants to enjoy a transformative UN Water Conference and ensure that events and discussions taking place throughout the week address the needs of all of society.



## Women in Water Diplomacy Network Development Partners meeting

Directly following the Water Diplomacy Symposium, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network convened a closed development partner meeting to explore a **harmonized approach to resource mobilization in support of the Network's Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security.'** To support the discussion, the Women in Water Diplomacy Process Support Team developed and circulated a full proposal for the implementation of all activities prioritized in the five-year Global Strategy. As no single development partner is likely to have resources to support the full program of activities identified in the strategy, the proposal enables pathways of partnership and support at the activity, theme (pillar), or full strategy level. Building on the Shared Waters Partnership model, the aim of the development roundtable meeting was to identify opportunities and resources to support the objectives of the Global Strategy through a **collective resource mobilization approach** and together alter the status quo for transboundary water cooperation through targeted support of women water diplomats at the frontlines of water insecure basins globally. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Shared Waters Partnership supporting coalition including the **United States Department of State, the Government of the Netherlands, Sweden's Sida, and UNDP** alongside additional development partners who have supported specific engagements of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network such as the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, and the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe.**





## Women in Water Diplomacy Network represented at high level official side event convened by the African Union and Finland

On March 22, 2023, Xanani Baloyi represented SIWI and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network at the ‘*Water, Peace and Security in Africa*’ side event convened by Finland and the African



Union in the UN’s ECOSOC chamber. This side event elevated the intersections of water, peace, and security as part of the UN 2023 Water Conference, raising awareness of water, peace and security related risks through exchange of experience and good practices. The side event was moderated by Mr Antti Rautavaara, Special Envoy for Water at the Centre for Peace Mediation in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland who was proudly wearing his Women in Water Diplomacy Network ‘Rising Tide’ symbol. Antti invited the high-level panelist to share views on both water cooperation success stories and the way forward with focus on what is needed to enable water to act as a catalyst for peace and security in Africa. Xanani expressed her thanks to the organizers for the honor to join the high-level panel representing both women and young water diplomats. She highlighted the Women in Water Diplomacy’s Global Strategy, noting that the Network stands at the confluence of the water, peace and security *and* the women, peace, and security agendas. Xanani further highlighted that women are frontline managers of water and while the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and its partners have made great strides in supporting women’s leadership in dialogue and peace mediation processes in boundary-crossing basin communities - much progress is yet needed. Asked to delve deeper into the way forward, Xanani echoed the Network’s Voluntary Commitment to the UN Water Action Decade and inviting communities of practice, experts, and partners to support the ‘Rising Tide’ of women in water diplomacy by taking urgent action to remove gendered barriers to equal participation in water, peace, and security dialogues and decision-making.

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network Official Side Event at the UN Water Conference



The Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s official side event took place on the first afternoon of the UN Water Conference during a full house event in UN Headquarters. The side event entitled ‘*Elevating Critical Voices in Water Diplomacy*’ was co-convened

with a broad consortia of partners including the Red Dot Foundation, the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM), the Orange Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), the Okavango Basin Commission (OKACOM), the International Joint Commission (IJC), the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), UNDP Cap-Net, UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC), Central Asia Regional Environmental Center (CAREC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Bank Equal Aqua Initiative, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association (EnPax), the Sudanese Youth for Water Parliament, the Community of Women in Water – Latin America, Women Plus Water at the University of Saskatchewan, IHE Delft, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center, and the Global Diplomacy Lab Secretariat at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

The filled to capacity side event brought focus to the critical importance of inclusive water diplomacy processes and linkages between women, water, peace, and security, and the value of water to peace and human security. The event began with warm welcomes from **Phera Ramoeli**, Executive Secretary, Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and recognition



of a range of high-level participants joining the side event. **Elizabeth A. Koch** from the Environmental Law Institute and **Tais Reznikova** from CAREC followed with an introduction and overview of the **Women in Water Diplomacy Network**, the Network's *'herstory'* and objectives. A high-level panel putting focus on the critical value of inclusive water diplomacy was introduced by **Ambassador Igli Hasani** and moderated by **Dr Saule Ospanova**, both of the OSCE and including expert panelists **Johanna Sumuvuori**, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland; **Yodit Balcha**, Women in Water Diplomacy Network Leadership Council, Ethiopia; **Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare**, International Joint Commission, Canada, **Yogita Upadya Mumssen**, Practice Manager, Water Global Practice, World Bank, and **Dr Kathryn Bryk Friedman**, North American Arctic Policy Advisor at the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. A short presentation from **Dr Irena Creed**, Vice-Principal Research & Innovation at University of Toronto Scarborough focused on *'Water intelligence: A prerequisite for addressing global water crises,'* and the launch of a new book recognizing Women Water thought leaders from India to Canada by **ElsaMarie Dsilva**, Red Dot Foundation followed.



The session concluded with a call to partnership and shared action to transform the status quo, elevate women experts and decision makers, and foster inclusive decision making in critical water and climate dialogues – with a shared reading of the *'A Rising Tide of support for women in water diplomacy'* Joint Statement read by: **Kerry Schneider**, Senior Program

Manager, Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI); **Omais Ahmad**, Third Pole; **Aziza Sharofova Khamza kizi**, Network representative from Uzbekistan; and **Viviane Kinyaga**, representing the Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission and a Women in Water Diplomacy Network Member from South Africa.

During the session many key issues were elevated including:

- Evidence based research and data indicates that the inclusion of women in negotiation processes increases the likelihood of durable peace accords, sustained peace, and prosperity following conflict.

- Women are disproportionately affected by armed conflicts, water insecurity, and climate change yet they are greatly underrepresented as negotiators, witnesses, mediators, observers, and signatories to peace accords.
- The persistent lack or absence of women’s meaningful participation in peace and security dialogues must be a high concern for all seeking sustainable peace and development.
- The need for water related mediation is growing every day as water insecurity affects communities North and South. We must actively work to elevate a diversity of voices in decision-making processes affecting all of society to enable us to deliver a more sustainable peace.
- Water diplomacy can help to prevent new conflicts from arising.
- The Women in Water Diplomacy Network and its partners are actively working to change the status quo around water and climate decision making processes and provide a tangible example of the critical importance of inclusive water diplomacy processes.

Further, the consortia of co-convening partners collectively recommended strong actions, specifically, the importance that women in all their diversity can equally and meaningfully participate at all levels of decision-making in themes of conflict resolution, peace, and security. An objective which requires targeted resources to overcome the persistent barriers to women’s equal participation in water and climate decision making dialogues and institutions, as well as the integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of water diplomacy. Unfortunately, Conference Room A did not allow for UN WebTV live streaming nor translation services. To enable Network Members and supporters to view the event proceedings (albeit without interaction) Network members recorded the event. Additional details on the Women in Water Diplomacy session at the UN Water Conference including the full program, presentation, and an informal recording is available here: <https://www.eli.org/events/elevating-critical-voices-water-diplomacy>.

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network featured in side-event co-convened by Tajikistan and Basin Women's Forums

On March 23, 2023, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network co-convened a UN Conference side event with Tajikistan and Basin Women's Forums entitled '*The Role and Perspectives of Women's Participation in Integrated Water Resources Management in the Tajik Syrdarya and Kafarnigan River Basins*



and Nile Basin.' In their introductory remarks, both **Muysara Bobokhanova**, Head of the Tajikistan Public Organization Association Women and Society and **Makhfirat Abdulloeva**, Deputy Head of the Tajikistan Representative Office of the International Secretariat for Water shared an overview of the Tajik experience of Basin Women's Forums (BWFs) established in the Syrdarya and Kafarnigan Rivers, concurring that BWFs are an effective platforms to discuss ways to enhance the role of women in water resources management and determine the prospects for ensuring the achievement of IWRM and the Dublin Principles. **Xanani Baloyi**, representing SIWI and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, and **Tais Reznikova**, from CAREC, presented perspectives on women's leadership in dialogue, transboundary water management, peace, and mediation processes in the Nile and Central Asia-Afghanistan. Xanani drew attention to the challenges of significant underrepresentation of women in the water sector and the rationale for coordinated women's engagement such as the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's effort to build more equal and inclusive participation and influence in transboundary water cooperation. Quoting a recent World Bank report, Xanani shared that '*less than 20% of water workers are women, and that women face gender-specific barriers to joining, staying, and growing in the sector, such as a lack of mentorship, role models, and networks.*' She concluded by highlighting the important role played by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in building self-confidence, developing peer networks, providing mentorship and sponsorship, and the role of male allies, all Network engagements which are further elaborated

'Less than 20% of water workers are women. And they face gender-specific barriers to joining, staying, and growing in the sector.'



in the Network's '[A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security](#) Global Strategy. The side event, which was attended by participants online and in person, concluded with an interactive question-and-answer dialogue moderated by Makhfirat Abdulloeva.

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network featured at the DEVEX Summit WASH Works 2023 on the side of the UN Water Conference



On March 23, 2023, on the sidelines of the UN Water Conference and as a continuation of the Devex WASH Works series, Devex brought together leaders in

person in New York City and online to discuss the ways in which water, sanitation, and hygiene efforts intersect with other development challenges, specifically in low and middle-income countries. **Elizabeth A. Koch** represented the Environmental Law Institute and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network as an invited speaker as part of the Summit session '*Water in Crisis*' alongside **Stefania Giodini**, Manager at Water Advisory & Innovation, Netherlands Red Cross, **Nicole Hark**, Deputy country director, Mercy Corps Syria and **Rolando Wallusche Saul**, WASH humanitarian team lead, Catholic Relief Service. Further program details, including the full recording of the Summit, are available here: [WASH Works 2023 \(devex.com\)](https://www.devex.com).

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network co-convoked an evening mingle for women in water



On the evening of March 23, 2023, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, ELI, SIWI and others co-convoked an informal mingle and networking event for women in water led by the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance and hosted by the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York. The event included welcome

remarks by Women in Water Diplomacy Network champions, International Boundary and Water Commissioners **Giner and Reséndez Maldonado** alongside US Assistant Secretary of the Interior **Tanya Trujillo** who shared their reflections on their long-standing collaboration and partnership. Introductions and welcomes were also shared by a range of women in water network representatives including **Elizabeth A. Koch** on behalf of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. The co-facilitators were grateful for the rapporteuring support from **Hadi Toure**, water engineer (Mali) and young water professional recipient of the International Water Association-Grundfos Foundation Youth Action for SDG6 Fellowship to the UN Water Conference. Throughout the event the assembled participants were able to share experience and enjoyed connecting with their fellow women water experts from around the world.



## Women in Water Diplomacy Network co-convened official side event in partnership with the World Bank's Equal Aqua Initiative

On the morning of March 24, 2023, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network co-convened a final UN Water Conference side event in partnership with the World Bank's Water, Social Inclusion, and Equal Aqua Program entitled '*Concrete Path to Empower Women, Youth, and Indigenous Persons to Accelerate Global Water Security in the Water Action Decade.*' During the session Network champion **Phera Ramoeli**, Executive Secretary of the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) provided an insightful introduction to the session's breakout group focused on adapting the Equal Aqua methodology from utilities to River Basin Organizations (RBOs) and voiced strong support for enabling RBOs to benchmark and track key indicators of gender equality across their operations. **Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager at the Environmental Law Institute and Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team Lead facilitated the RBO focused breakout group together with the World Bank's **Sarah Keener** where numerous Network members shared insights and expertise to inform the dialogue. Key points from the RBO breakout discussion included:

- OKACOM representatives **Phera Ramoeli** and **Tracy Molefi** shared examples of best practices for social inclusion and promotion of diversity in river basins in Africa including gender and social inclusion training for staff and governmental representatives, awareness raising campaigns in rural communities, inclusive disclaimers in calls for recruitment, and the appointment of gender equality focal points in each member state.
- **Ambika Vishwanath** Founder and Director of the Kubernein Initiative and a Transboundary Water Security and Diplomacy Specialist highlighted the challenges of benchmarking metrics in basins that lacked a formal institution mandated by riparians across a shared basin - such is the case in many basins in the world who do not have a formal RBO.

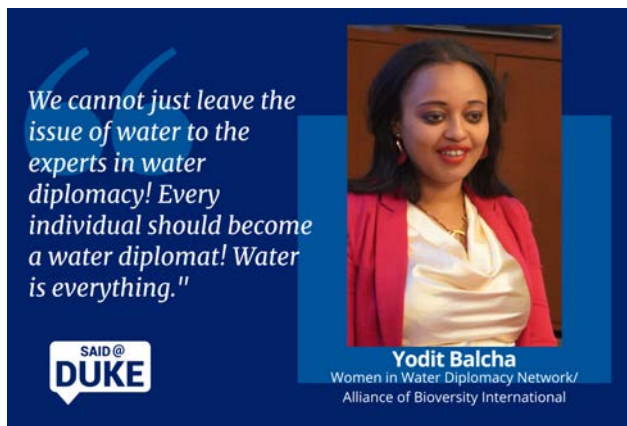
- **Verdiane Nyiramana**, Chair of the Nile Basin Discourse and Executive Director of the Women in Water and Climate Change Cooperation Network highlighted some improvements and the existence of gender strategies, but remaining difficulties to influence higher level leaders. She noted a disparity between civil society which urged the creation of regional coordinators and the importance of education and training.



Reporting back from the various breakout groups yielded several themes that cut across the various dialogues including the critical need to benchmark and set concrete targets for women’s representation in Water Resource Management (WRM) and RBOs, publish such data, and use it to track effectiveness. There was keen interest in further pooling knowledge resources and synergies across network organizations to accelerate progress. This was proposed to take the form of expanding the World Bank’s Equal Aqua to have a sub-set focus on RBOs/WRM institutions with a potential first step being to increase the number of organizations submitting benchmarking data and exploring ways to collaborate (i.e. in capacity building, leadership support, sharing research and tools). Participants also highlighted the opportunity to integrate these approaches into the World Bank’s recently announced Global Facility on Transboundary Waters Cooperation.



## Women in Water Diplomacy Network hosted at Duke University



Directly after the UN Water Conference, Women in Water Diplomacy Leadership Council Member **Yodit Balcha** conducted an invited seminar including highlights on the UN Water Conference at the Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University. In the event,

entitled *'In a Global Water Crisis - Everyone Must be a Water Diplomat'* Yodit shared her impressions from the UN Water Conference and discussed the major water and climate challenges facing Ethiopia today, the importance of inclusive water diplomacy, and provided guidance on how students could get involved in the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

## University of Arizona public webinar sharing impressions and takeaways from the United Nations 2023 Water Conference

On Tuesday, March 28, the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC) held a public webinar featuring impressions and takeaways from the United Nations 2023 Water Conference. The event's speakers included WRRC Director Dr Sharon B. Megdal, Udall Center Director and University of Arizona Professor Andrea K. Gerlak, and graduate student Wilzave Quiles Guzmán. In addition, special guests, including Colorado River Indian Tribes Chairwoman Amelia Flores, Gila River Indian Community Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, Colorado River Basin Water & Tribes Initiative Co-Director Daryl Vigil, Lincoln Institute Internet of Water Associate Director of Stakeholder Engagement Faith Sternlieb, and University of Arizona alumna Elia Tapia, shared their perspectives.

Each speaker took several minutes to talk about their experiences and takeaways from the UN Water Conference, mentioning various sessions they attended, interesting people they met, and exciting opportunities for future collaboration.

‘[the informal mingle and networking event for women in water] was spectacular, bringing together women of all ages from all parts of the world, working in all different areas of water.’

Dr Sharon Megdal introduced the webinar noting that throughout the UN Water Conference *‘women and the voices of women were a very significant and constant theme’*. Dr Andrea Gerlak reflected that *‘for me the most meaningful events were around women’s issues and Indigenous issues.’* Adding that the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s co-convened informal mingle and networking event for women in water *‘was spectacular, bringing together women of all ages from all parts of the world, working in all different areas of water.’* University of Arizona

graduate student Wilzave Quiles Guzmán shared that participating in the UN Water Conference was a catalytic opportunity, *‘as a woman I was able to confirm my desire of exceeding and continuing my work in the water field, and part of this was because of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, that both Dr Gerlak and Dr Megdal have been talking about - I got my pin right here. Through this Network I was able to learn from women and men that support gender equality in water data, cultural sciences, and the importance of including women in decision making processes and resolving water controversies in general.’* In her reflections,

Chairwoman Amelia Flores, shared that she was very impressed by all her co-panelists who joined the Women in Water Diplomacy Water Diplomacy Symposium, adding *‘especially my Canadian friend Henry Lickers of the Canadian section and Commissioner on the International Joint Commission - a very deep and spiritual man who you could approach and discussion one-on-one - he shared that we need Indigenous voices and stories that humanize the data. He gave three pillars in his speech including respect, equity, and empowerment.’* A recording of the webinar is available on the WRRC website [on this link](#).

In addition a great blog released on World Water Day highlighting the Women in Water Diplomacy Water Diplomacy

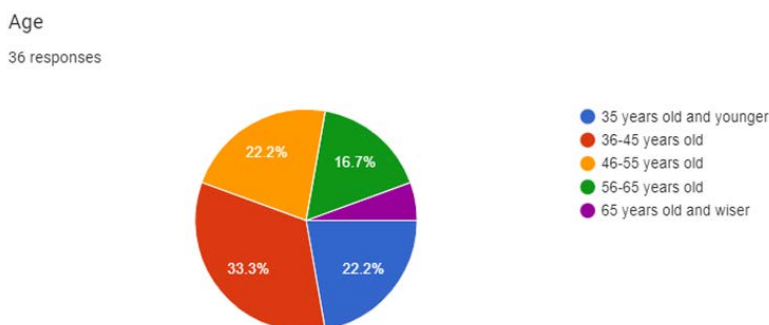
Symposium and the UN Water Conference by Dr Sharon Megdal is [available here](#).



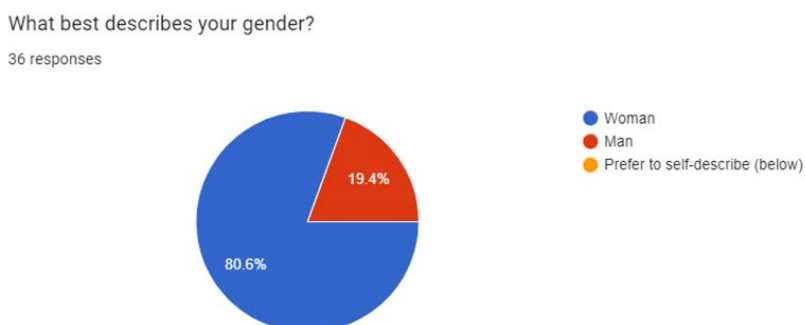
## ANNEX 1: Water Diplomacy Symposium Participant Survey Results:

Monitoring and evaluation are critical aspects of all Women in Water Diplomacy Network engagements. As part of the Water Diplomacy Symposium, anonymous participant reflections and responses were collected via a short survey. All respondents were made aware that aggregate response data as well as individual statements may be quoted *anonymously* in external communications and activity reports such as this After Action Report. Thirty-six (36) unique responses, representing about 50% of the participants of the Water Diplomacy Workshop (excluding participating co-convenor representatives), from more than twenty different countries were submitted. Please note that a small number of open responses were redacted to ensure anonymity of respondents or edited for English language clarity.

### Age Distribution of Symposium Participants:

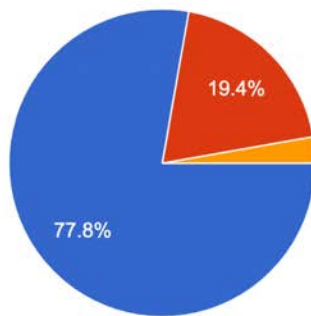


### Gender Distribution of Symposium Participants:

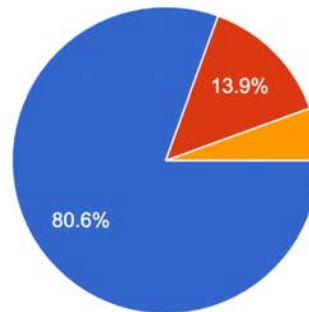


Survey respondents indicated a range of benefits of participating in the Water Diplomacy Symposium including the opportunity to increase professional knowledge of key issues related to water diplomacy (cited by 75% of respondents), gain new ideas to support inclusive water diplomacy processes and approaches (cited by 75% of respondents), sharing of stories and peer learning (cited by 75% of respondents), enhanced feeling of community and shared mission (cited by 75% of respondents), positive energy and enthusiasm (cited by 83.3% of respondents), and receiving new valuable connections through networking with participants (cited by 91.7% of respondents). During the four thematic sessions of the Water Diplomacy Symposium, participants indicated that they had the opportunity to gain insights and exposure to good practices of importance to water diplomacy at various scales (cited by 86.1% of respondents), effective consultation and community engagement approaches to water diplomacy (cited by 80.6% of respondents), approaches to data exchange amongst different types of stakeholders in a shared basin (cited by 55.6% of respondents), and approaches to water management in times of climate change (cited by 55.6% of respondents).

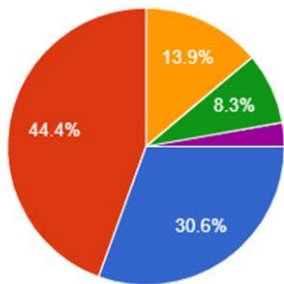
**97.2%** of respondents indicated that they “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that “Today's Water Diplomacy Symposium was relevant and applicable to my professional work”



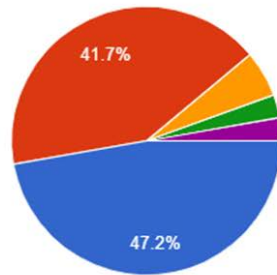
**94.5%** of respondents indicated that they “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that “Ongoing engagement with the Women in Water Diplomacy Network was relevant and applicable to my professional work”



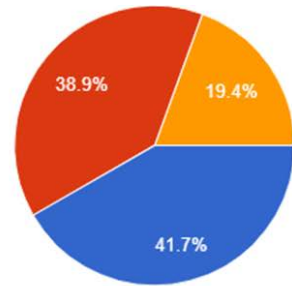
**75%** of survey respondents 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that the Water Diplomacy Symposium program provided sufficient space and opportunity to share my experience and knowledge:



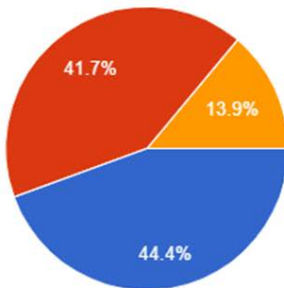
**94.9%** of survey respondents 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that the Water Diplomacy Symposium program provided sufficient space and opportunity to listen to the other participants and learn from their experiences and knowledge:



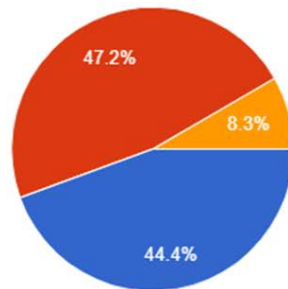
**80.6%** of survey respondents 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' I will be able to immediately leverage knowledge, skills, tools, or good practices gained from my participation in the Water Diplomacy Symposium in my own professional practice:



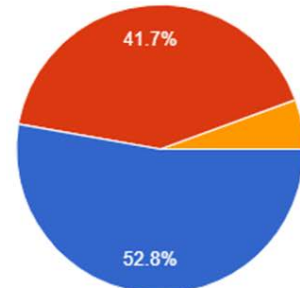
**86.1%** of respondents indicated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that "Events such as today's Water Diplomacy Symposium contribute to improved transboundary water cooperation at the *country level*."



**91.6%** of respondents indicated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that "Events such as today's Water Diplomacy Symposium contribute to improved transboundary water cooperation at the *basin or regional level*."



**94.5%** of respondents indicated that they "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that "Events such as today's Water Diplomacy Symposium contribute to improved transboundary water cooperation at the *global level*."





**Specific feedback from Symposium participants with regards to the valuable aspects or insights gained through participation in the Water Diplomacy Symposium included:**

- ‘Great networking!!’
- ‘It was a great opportunity for me, to our network Association to learn from others, for networking, and to advertise our network and Association.’
- ‘I guess that some issues on data and regarding inclusive governance framework have to be deepened.’
- ‘I appreciated the diverse representation and coalescence among needs and approaches.’
- ‘Being part of a strong women network gives you the encouragement to continue what you are doing and especially get the opportunity to learn and share experiences.’
- ‘The Indigenous perspectives and matters related to working with Indigenous communities were highly valuable.’
- ‘It was interesting to hear about these themes in the context of the panelists’ work. For instance, it also opened my eyes to some of the challenges with open data sources for the public and how there is a need to change dynamics for the general public to facilitate engagement and transparency.’
- ‘I could only participate in the first two sessions. Both were great, but would have benefited from a more structured interaction with the audience.’
- ‘The inclusivity and holistic outlook being championed by all is the way forward.’
- ‘The content of each session was great, but the main value of the Symposium for me was to make connections, network, and have time for discussions with Network members!’
- ‘I met different people working related to my profession and work; it was great networking time and I met different people, I learned a lot from other people’s water diplomacy experience opportunities, challenges, achievements...etc’
- ‘I was very impressed with the diversity of speakers and participants and found the insights of the Indigenous leaders extremely valuable.’
- ‘I have always been a women’s rights advocate. Learning about this network opened my eyes and allowed me to see that we are stronger if we are together and that we are stronger if we support each other. Thank you so much for the opportunity to join the Symposium and the network.’
- ‘This event provided great opportunities for new collaboration and exchange of experience.’
- ‘Experience exchange from different regions and stakeholders.’
- ‘Commitments of the participating organisations to support the women in water diplomacy network; importance of reliable and accurate data on water and gender for effective decision making.’

- ‘Enjoyed listening to all the presentations. Will be contemplating what the most valuable take-aways were as I review my notes.’
- ‘Appreciated the perspectives shared from those who sit at the table in making decisions about shared water resources.’
- ‘I am not alone!’
- ‘It was great to meet network members and learn in a comfortable safe setting about various advances women are making in the water space.’
- ‘As a communicator working on water, it is critical for me to understand the challenges and opportunities from those working in the field. I am always eager to learn more in order to tell those stories and share this knowledge the best way I can.’
- ‘Insights from the Indigenous communities on participation and values, different perceptions about data.’

**Specific feedbacks from Symposium participants with regards how they will apply knowledge, skills, tools, or best practices in your professional role(s) included:**

- ‘New collaborations!!’
- ‘By sharing the knowledge I acquired from the events with our network, by working hard to increase inclusion of women in water diplomacy...etc.’
- ‘I work on writing agreements and contracting systems for data sharing, but the decision is really made at other levels so there is no guarantee that technical staff are always heard.’
- ‘In my research and local action.’
- ‘I will apply tools of diplomatic communication and conflict resolution among different backgrounds.’
- ‘Particularly reflect on flexible frameworks and data stewardship from the last two panels.’
- ‘As my role is to work at a grassroots community level I always need knowledge and materials to confidently share with the community. This symposium has exposed me to different women and men with a lot of material which I will use back home.’
- ‘I have already cited some of the comments (with permission).’
- ‘My research looks at environmental justice in transboundary systems and several of the themes touched on this work in practice and how it can be improved. This work also considers representation.’
- ‘Draw upon the network for continued work and collaboration on information and data exchange to achieve greater diplomacy and contributions from women both tribal and otherwise.’
- ‘Advancing gender diversity in river basin organizations (at national, transboundary, and local levels).’

- ‘By arranging and presenting Seminars to our Association members, university students, and lecturers/professors...etc’
- ‘I will use the insights to provide improved support to the Global Network and inform my water tenure work through connections with Indigenous networks.’
- ‘As a professor, every day is an opportunity to share knowledge, skills, tools and best practices. Talking to my students about the Symposium, and the role of women in the UN Water Conference was the very first thing I did when I arrived back in my country.’
- ‘I will share the gained knowledge through the platform of the Basin Women’s Forum of the Syrdarya River Basin.’
- ‘Through stakeholder platforms at all levels.’
- ‘The approaches to develop women water communities.’
- ‘I took away insights from each of the presentations. I found the contributions from the Indigenous leaders especially insightful.’
- ‘I would research more about Indigenous people in my region and to apply the Colorado River Basin case.’
- ‘I have new brothers and sisters.’
- ‘Adapt some of the experiences to the Indian context that will be beneficial.’
- ‘I feel better equipped to understand the roles of women in water governance and diplomacy.’

**Survey respondents were asked to indicate the ‘best/most appreciated/enjoyed parts of the Water Diplomacy Symposium,’ responses included:**

- ‘Really it was incredible.’
- ‘The sharing and insights of Indigenous leaders and commissioners.’
- ‘Stories - how different professionals share their everyday achievements and challenges in a human language and many things resonate. I so loved the stories of the representatives of Indigenous communities from Canada and the US, the stories of the US-Mexico commission, all stories - were amazing! I was actively listening to every story during the whole event. I still struggle with networking, but each time challenging myself to go one step further 😊’
- ‘The sisterhood and the way the platform is shared by everyone.’
- ‘It was great to connect with like-minded individuals and to hear the realities, successes, and challenges on the ground.’
- ‘Breaks were essential for networking.’
- ‘Seeing the commitment of women in water diplomacy participants was the most important part to me.’
- ‘It was right-sized in terms of group size and length of program and the individual sessions.’
- ‘The atmosphere of the event contributed to the platform of different voices in the global fora. The event facilitated connection and camaraderie that supports

participants going into the UN conference and engenders even greater support to representation in decision making. This is a great example of how to build momentum and impact!

- ‘One-to-one experience sharing and knowledge exchange during breaks.’
- ‘The network and commitment.’
- ‘My favorite part was working with and meeting the experts on the panel I moderated and during breaks to get to know and make connections with other members of the network.’
- ‘The many breaks included to interact with participants!’
- ‘Networking time, Panel Discussion and Experience sharing ...etc’
- ‘The ability to meet with and learn from so many diverse women and supporters.’
- ‘Everything was amazing!’
- ‘I enjoyed hearing speakers’ stories about their relationship with water and water diplomacy and especially appreciated the powerful stories told by Indigenous participants. I also appreciated the multi-scalar approach the symposium took to water diplomacy and that the speakers presented on challenges and successes in water diplomacy from the local level to the basin level.’
- ‘Discussion at the basin level.’
- ‘Data and information sharing.’
- ‘Diverse panel discussions with great representation.’
- ‘I enjoyed meeting and hearing from the leaders from the different organizations.’
- ‘The emphasis on building community/network. Opportunities to mentor younger water professionals.’
- ‘The talks after the formal presentations.’
- ‘Meeting people.’
- ‘The joyful atmosphere and sense of community.’
- ‘The interventions from the Indigenous communities.’

**Survey respondents offered inputs on ‘what part of the Water Diplomacy Symposium should be changed or improved?’ with almost all comments highlighting the need for more discussion time.**

- ‘I guess more dynamic moments could keep the attention and the momentum.’
- ‘I would be happy to listen to a short lecture from Aaron Wolf next time 😊.’
- ‘Moderators must be allowed and encouraged to ensure that speakers stick to the allotted time and stick to the topic. This was not the case during this symposium, resulting in too little time for questions and that many participants chose to check their FBs instead of listening to overly long stories.’

- ‘More time for audience participation. There was so much expertise represented and little time for some discussion.’
- ‘More time for Q&A.’
- ‘We need more time for peer learning.’
- ‘A room that can accommodate everyone at the tables. Though we did this so that we could accommodate more people, it would have been better not to have people in the chairs on the sides.’
- ‘Perhaps the symposium could have focus group discussion to facilitate more exchange and sharing of perspectives.’
- ‘More facilitated and thematic pair/group discussions to the programme.’
- ‘More interactive opportunities going forward.’
- ‘It was frustrating not to be able to engage the audience more because I know they had questions and wanted to participate. Perhaps we can figure out a way to set time for speakers and set a time for audience engagement.’
- ‘Maybe interactive activities/ icebreakers could have helped to introduce people who didn't already know each other.’
- ‘Larger venue!’
- ‘Nothing in particular, perhaps growing the network =)’
- ‘Obviously it’s always difficult to stay on time and make sure that panels have time for interactive dialogue with the audience.’
- ‘I would suggest more discussion between panelists with participants, more questions and answers will be interesting.’
- ‘More time is required to allow Q & A.’
- ‘Some time for open discussion, maybe in groups by tables if time is not sufficient.’
- ‘Would be good to provide more time for questions and answers from the audience.’
- ‘To engage with the audience.’
- ‘Need more time!’
- ‘Fewer sessions, more time for networking.’
- ‘Nothing I can think of.’
- ‘I would have preferred a more interactive discussion with the audience.’

**Survey respondents indicated that they intend to report back to on their ministry/ organization/ institution’s participation in the Water Diplomacy Symposium, specifically through:**

- ‘By writing and submitting a back to office report.’
- ‘I will share within my network and also at the Ministry if allowed.’
- ‘Relevant to my research.’
- ‘I will make a personal blog to share my experience with my peers, colleagues and friends.’



- ‘Already highlighted through webinars. Will continue to share the work of the network with colleagues.’
- ‘Yes I will share with confidence what I learned from the symposium.’
- ‘We already hosted a webinar with several reporting on impressions and take-aways of the Symposium and bigger conference.’
- ‘I plan on contributing a blog post, reporting to my team in team meetings, and discussing experiences at a PhD symposium.’
- ‘Sharing with the inter-ministerial steering group.’
- ‘I have already participated in a webinar reporting on my thoughts and experiences at the UN Water Conference, including the Diplomacy Symposium. I have also shared my thoughts and outcomes with my internal team and would like to figure out how we can continue to support the Network. One key action we will be taking is planning a presence with our partners including the Network at the Colorado River Water Users Association meeting in December. Hopefully we can announce or launch the North American Network there and then, if we haven't already.’
- ‘Summary of key lessons learned/ key people met.’
- ‘By preparing, presenting, and submitting a back to office report, and by showing our role and contributions in the achievements of all five pillars of the strategy.’
- ‘I would like to write a note reporting on the Symposium and main takeaways in Spanish, so that I can share the message with my peers.’
- ‘When the After Action report is ready and published I will share it with my own organisation and partners.’
- ‘Positive outcome. Waiting for the report to be shared.’
- ‘The gender in water discussion in any basin should not be led solely by women and include all underrepresented groups and male decision makers.’
- ‘We will be having a debrief of ideas learned during UN Water Week and the side events and will assign follow up actions. We'll be reporting on this at Commission meetings.’
- ‘Informally.’
- ‘Will bring the ideas and learnings from other regions to the team and partners.’
- ‘A short summary distributed through relevant departments and diplomatic networks.’

**Finally, survey respondents elevated the following ‘additional comments, questions or issues’ to the co-convening organizers:**

- ‘A great use of my time!! Thanks to all the organizers.’
- ‘Thank you.’
- ‘It would have been nice if there were live tweets or social media posts for people to share during and after the event in addition to the summary report.’

- 'THANK YOU'
- 'Just to thank you for the opportunity to take part 🙏'
- 'Thank you!'
- 'Keep up the amazing work! Happy to contribute the best way I can. This is the most empowering professional community I've ever had a chance to participate in.'
- 'I am so grateful to be a part of the Network and will do whatever I can to support its growth and impact.'
- 'Is the network a growing community? Can we invite people to join?'
- 'It was an interesting event.'
- 'It was amazing!'
- '*Niawan Gowa* - Big Thank You.'
- 'Thanks for being such a brilliant organizer!'
- 'You did an amazing job! Keep up the great work!'

## ANNEX 2: Water Diplomacy Symposium Program and Participant Biographies

### Water Diplomacy Symposium Program

Time (EST)	Tuesday, March 21, 2023
8:30 - 9:00	<p><b>Registration and Morning Coffee</b>  <i>All participants are invited to register and network over coffee and light refreshments in advance of the formal start of the program. Participants are encouraged to bring materials to share as part of an information table at registration.</i></p>
9:00 - 9:20	<p><b>Introduction to the Global Water Diplomacy Symposium and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network</b>  <b>Elizabeth A. Koch</b>, Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network</p>
9:21 - 9:30	<p><b>Welcome Address: Johanna Sumuvuori</b>, State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Finland</p>
9:31 - 9:40	<p><b>Welcome Address: Julien Katchinoff</b>, Water Team Lead, Office of Conservation and Water, United States Department of State</p>
9:41 - 9:55	<p><b>Welcome Address: Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare</b> (Canadian Section) and <b>Commissioner Robert C. Sisson</b> (US Section), International Joint Commission</p>
9:55 - 11:10	<p><b>Session 1: Tools of Inclusive Water Diplomacy for all Scales</b>  <b>Facilitated by: Kerry Schneider</b>, Senior Program Manager, Shared Waters Partnership, Stockholm International Water Institute  <b>Expert Panelists:</b>  <b>Yodit Balcha</b>, Women in Water Diplomacy Leadership Council, Ethiopia  <b>Dr Saule Ospanova</b>, Senior Environmental Affairs Advisor, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe  <b>Governor Stephen Roe Lewis</b>, Gila River Indian Community  <b>Dr Anders Jägerskog</b>, Program Manager, Cooperation on International Waters in Africa (CIWA) Trust Fund, World Bank  <b>Q&amp;A with all Symposium participants</b></p>

11:10 - 11:25	<b>Break: Opportunity to stretch your legs and chat with the assembled water diplomats from around the world</b>
11:25 - 12:40	<p><b>Session 2: Effective Consultation and Community Engagement in Water Diplomacy Processes</b>  <b>Facilitated by: Dr Sharon B. Megdal</b>, Director of The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center</p> <p><b>Expert Panelists:</b>  <b>Lyazzat Syrlybayeva</b>, Co-Lead of the Central Asia Youth for Water Network, Women in Water Diplomacy Network member, Kazakhstan  <b>Commissioner Henry Lickers</b>, Canadian Section, International Joint Commission  <b>Chairwoman Amelia Flores</b>, Colorado River Indian Tribes  <b>Phera Ramoeli</b>, Executive Secretary, Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM)</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A with all Symposium participants</b></p>
12:40 - 14:00	<b>Group picture and lunch for all participating delegates and a great opportunity for informal networking with basin representatives from around the world. Participants are welcome to use the Scandinavia House's garden as well as explore the gallery over lunch.</b>
14:00 - 15:10	<p><b>Session 3: The Power of Information Exchange</b>  <b>Facilitated by Dr Faith Sternlieb</b>, Associate Director for Stakeholder Engagement, the Internet of Water Initiative at the Lincoln Institute's Center for Geospatial Solutions</p> <p><b>Expert Panelists:</b>  <b>Sylvester Anthony Matemu</b>, Executive Director, Nile Basin Initiative Representative  <b>Dr Dinara Ziganshina</b>, Director at the Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, Uzbekistan  <b>Dr Melissa McCracken</b>, Assistant Professor of International Environmental Policy at the Fletcher School at Tufts University  <b>Dr Sharon B. Megdal</b>, Water &amp; Tribes Initiative   Colorado River Basin Leadership Team</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A with all Symposium participants</b></p>
15:10 - 15:25	<b>Break: Opportunity to stretch your legs and chat with the assembled water diplomats from around the world</b>
15:25 - 16:35	<p><b>Session 4: Managing for Uncertainty in an Era of Climate Change</b>  <b>Facilitated by: Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo</b>, Department of the Interior, United States</p> <p><b>Expert Panelists:</b>  <b>Ambassador Tanja Miškova</b>, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy, Slovenia  <b>Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner</b>, International Boundary and Water Commission, U.S. Section  <b>Commissioner Adriana Reséndez Maldonado</b>, International Boundary and Water Commission, Mexico Section  <b>Zafar Makhmudov</b>, Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), Tajikistan</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A with all Symposium participants</b></p>

16:35 - 16:45	<b>Updates on Women in Water Diplomacy Network Official Side Event inside the UN and other key events during the UN Water Conference</b> <b>Elizabeth A. Koch</b> , Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute and Process Support Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network
16:45 - 17:00	<b>Closing remarks and Exit Survey</b> <b>Jessica Troell</b> , Senior Attorney and Director of the International Water Program, Environmental Law Institute <i>All participants are kindly asked to complete the exit survey before departing.</i>

## Collected Expert Speakers and Discussant/Participants Biographies

*Efforts were made to include short biographies from all participants – our apologies if any participant bios are absent. Biographies appear in alphabetical order by first name.*



**Aaron T. Wolf** (United States) is a Professor of Geography in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University. His research and teaching focus is on the interaction between water science and water policy, particularly as related to conflict prevention and resolution. He has acted as a consultant to the World Bank and several international government agencies on various aspects of transboundary water resources and dispute resolution. Wolf is a trained mediator/facilitator and directs the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation, through which he has offered workshops, facilitations, and mediation in basins throughout the world. He coordinates the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database and is a co-director of the Universities Partnership on Transboundary Waters. He has been an author/editor for seven books, as well as almost 50 journal articles, book chapters, and professional reports on various aspects of transboundary waters.



**Adam Schempp** (United States) joined ELI as a Staff Attorney in 2007. He leads the Institute’s work on water allocation and use in the United States. Much of Mr. Schempp’s research focuses on water resource management, specifically identifying opportunities to meet conservation and sustainability objectives through existing laws and potential legal developments. Mr. Schempp also has worked extensively on other topics, including TMDLs and CWA 303(d) listing under the Clean Water Act, marine spatial planning and ecosystem-based management of marine resources, and routine program changes under the Coastal Zone Management Act. Prior to joining ELI,



Mr. Schempp clerked in the legal department of the Denver Water Board and for the Native American Rights Fund.



**Dr Adanech Yared Jillo** (Ethiopia) is a former member of the Ethiopian Negotiations Team to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and adviser on national and regional transboundary water issues in the Minister of Water and Energy in Ethiopia. Her main duties included advising ministers, facilitating hydro-diplomacy, negotiation meetings, and internal consultation meetings, and doing hydrological analysis. In her previous capacities, Dr Adanech Yared Jillo led Ethiopia's national NBI, Nile Equatorial Lake Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP), and ENTRO, supporting Nile-COM/EXCO members of the respective countries in prioritizing NBI, NELSAP-Cu, ENTRO, and AMCOW activities as member and chair of the NBI, NELSAP, ENSAP, and AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee. Dr Adanech Yared Jillo provides regular guidance and technical support on matters related to the Nile cooperation and the sustainable management of the Nile water resources including providing oversight for the NBI, its centers, and AMCOW programmatic activities.



**Commissioner Adriana Reséndez Maldonado** (Mexico) was appointed in September 2021. She is a civil engineer with a master's degree in hydraulic resources in arid zones, with a specialty in water use and water quality. She has 23 years of experience in the Mexican section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, in the department of engineering as deputy director of the Colorado River and in operations as principal engineer. In the IBWC, Reséndez has performed functions to ensure compliance with the current treaties between Mexico and the United States regarding the distribution of the waters of the international rivers, as well as the supervision of the operation and maintenance of the hydraulic projects built in the Rio Grande and Colorado River, the operation and maintenance of the hydrometric system of the Mexican section of the IBWC and the accounting of water allocations of the Rio Grande and Colorado River. During her career in this institution, she has participated in the negotiation of several minutes of the IBWC, as well as in the inter-institutional and binational coordination for the development of projects of great relevance in the border region.



**Alexandra Caplan** (United States) is a PhD candidate in Geography at Oregon State University. Her research brings a multi-scalar perspective to hydro-political analysis, with a focus on how power influences transboundary water interactions at different spatial scales. Her research aims to utilize this knowledge to understand how seemingly intractable water conflicts may be transformed into more equitable and sustainable situations. Alexandra is the manager of the Transboundary Freshwater Diplomacy

Database, a global repository of data relating to the governance of internationally shared freshwater resources. She is also a visiting researcher at the Environmental Law Institute, where she has coordinated a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Environmental Security and Sustaining Peace, which attracted a global cohort of over 10,000 learners across its three iterations. Alexandra also contributed to an evaluation of GEF support in fragile and conflict-affected situations, with a focus on the conflict sensitivity of GEF-funded projects in Lebanon. She is a founding member of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and a member of the North American Youth Parliament for Water.



**Alexandria Farrell** (Canada) is an Environmental Officer with the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission whose work focusses on transboundary waters along the Canadian and United States border. Alexandria supports the delivery of scientific priorities for the Commission's Sciences and Engineering team including planning and coordination of the Geo-Spatial Team, support for the International Watersheds Initiative, and serves as a support liaison to the International Rainy-Lake of the

Woods Watershed Board. Prior to joining the International Joint Commission, Alexandria's expertise included GIS and Remote sensing, and advocating on behalf of and representing students under Concordia University's Academic Code of Conduct, as well as the Code of Rights and Responsibilities. Alexandria's interests include building climate resiliency among Small Island Developing Nations and establishing diversity and inclusivity of water management along the transboundary. Alexandria received her BA (Specialization) in Human Environment from Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. She continues her studies at Concordia and is completing a graduate diploma in Environmental Impact Assessment, within the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment.



**Alyssa Offutt** (United States/ The Netherlands) is currently completing her PhD at the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education where she is focused on the multi-scalar hydrogeopolitics of transboundary water quality. She also supports the Water, Peace, and Security and Water Diplomacy initiatives hosted by IHE. Alyssa has a background and training in Water Cooperation and Diplomacy as well as Environmental and Water Resources Engineering. Alyssa has contributed to key scholarship related to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network as well as supporting experience exchange opportunities such as through the IHE Delft Seminar entitled “(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance” in 2020 and the IHE Water and Peace Seminar 2022 session featuring members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. Her chapter ‘A Gendered Perspective on the Multiple Scales of Water Conflict’ is set to be released in the soon to be released IHE Delft edited book *Gender dynamics in transboundary water governance: Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation*. IHE Delft is a long-time partner to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, and she will be joining the UN Water Conference in person on behalf of IHE Delft.



**Ambika Vishwanath** (India) is Founder and Director of the Kubernein Initiative and a Transboundary Water Security and Diplomacy Specialist. The Kubernein Initiative is an India-based geopolitical advisory group that aims to bridge the gap on issues that require greater intellectual questioning. Ambika works in the space of multilateralism and at the intersection between transboundary water security and foreign policy. She has led Track II diplomacy efforts and consulted with several governments and international organizations both in India and around the world.



**Chairwoman Amelia Flores** (United States) is Mohave and an enrolled member of the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT). She holds a B.S. Degree in Education Northern Arizona University and a Masters in Linguistics from University of Arizona. A former Tribal Librarian/Archivist, she has volunteered her time serving on local, tribal, state committees, boards, and commissions in regards to libraries, archives, early childhood education, foster care, language revitalization, and the humanities. Chairwoman Flores lives on the Colorado River Indian Reservation with her husband Mr. Neil Flores, Sr. and together they have three grown boys and ten grandchildren and one great-grandson with one on the way. She has received many awards for her Library/Archives and Language work, and recently was recognized as 2021 Leader

of the Year – Environment/Public Policy by the Arizona Capitol Times. Appointed to the Arizona First Things First, Early Childhood Development and Health Board from 2018 – 2020. Colorado River Indian Tribes Tribal Councilwoman from 2013 to 2020; served as Tribal Council Secretary, two-year terms in 2013 – 2015 & 2017 – 2020. She serves as a Board Member of the Parker Unified School District #27 from 2011 to present, and 2021 Governor’s Water Augmentation Board. In 2020, she was elected as the first Chairwoman for the Colorado River Indian Tribes.



**Dr Anders Jägerskog** (Sweden) is Program Manager of the Cooperation on International Waters in Africa (CIWA) Trust Fund ([ciwaprogram.org](http://ciwaprogram.org)). He is also the focal point at the World Bank for Transboundary Waters. His work focuses primarily on the African continent and on the Middle East and North Africa region but is also global. Previously he was Counsellor for regional water resources in the MENA region at the Swedish Embassy in Amman, Jordan; Director, Knowledge Services, at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) where he headed the Transboundary Water Management Unit and was work area leader for applied research. He managed the UNDP Shared Waters Partnership which facilitates and promotes dialogue and cooperation on transboundary water resources. He is Associate Professor (Docent) at Peace and Development Research, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg where his work focuses on global water issues. He worked for the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs; at the Embassy of Sweden, Nairobi and at Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). In 2003 he finished his PhD on the water negotiations in the Jordan River Basin at the Department of Water and Environmental Studies at the Linköping University, Sweden. He has published over 100 scientific articles, book chapters, debate articles and reports on global water issues.



**Dr Andrea Gerlak** (United States) is Director at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and Professor in the School of Geography, Development and Environment at the University of Arizona. Her research agenda focuses on cooperation and conflict in water governance, including questions of equity and access, institutional change, learning and adaptation. She is an author or co-author of more than 100 publications. She serves as a co-editor for the *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* and as a senior fellow with the Earth Systems Governance network. Andrea has more than two decades of experience leading interdisciplinary environmental studies programs and university-community environmental partnerships. She has consulted on water governance and climate resilience efforts for UNESCO and the WMO.



**Antti Rautavaara** (Finland) is Finland's Special Envoy for Water. In that role he is an advocate of Finnish Water Way strategy, which is a unique platform housed at Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs uniting Finnish water society to work together with national and international partners towards Water Secure World by 2030. The Special Envoy for Water coordinates and represents the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry of Economic

Affairs and Employment. Antti holds strong hands-on experience of international water affairs in political, peace mediation, development and humanitarian contexts. He has been seasoned through long-term posts in Sweden, China, Ethiopia and Nepal. During mega earthquakes in Nepal (2015) Antti was manager of UNICEF Nepal Water Section, which included leadership and coordination of water sector response and humanitarian cluster coordination for over 4 million people, and there he also served as acting Deputy Representative for over five months. He is well aware of insights of water affairs at the Horn of Africa through his tenure as First Secretary at the Embassy of Finland in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In China he was with UNDP based at Tumen River Commission serving five northeastern Asia countries. At the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, he has been Senior Adviser for Director General for Development and for several years Senior Water Adviser. He has also been assigned to work as Director of International Water Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Mr. Rautavaara holds a MSc from Aalto-university (Helsinki) and a Certificate from the Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm).



**Dr Avni Solanki** (United States) is an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the Department of State/International Joint Commission. Avni works for the International Joint Commission (IJC) as an Engineering Advisor. Her work focuses on transboundary water issues between the U.S. and Canada including portfolios focused on water quality, water apportionment, Indigenous collaboration, and sustainability. Prior to joining the IJC,

Avni was faculty at Washington University in St. Louis. Avni received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida and her work focused on alternative wastewater streams for nutrient recovery and pharmaceutical removal using low-cost products.





**Aziza Sharofova Khamza kizi** (Uzbekistan) is a Chief Expert of the Center for State Ecological Expertise of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environmental Protection. She was born in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), in a family of farmers. After graduating from a secondary school in 2008, she entered the Tashkent Financial and Economic College at the Faculty of Accounting and Audit, and successfully completed it in 2011 (secondary special education with a degree in accounting and economics). She also graduated from Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration at the Faculty of Hydromelioration in the direction of Ecology and Environmental Protection, in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering (in water management). Aziza a founding member of the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan and will be attending the UN Water Conference in person on behalf of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Ecology and Environmental Protection.

**Catherine Wong** (United States) is the Team Leader of Climate & Security Risk at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).



**Cécile Pillon Hue** (France) Cécile is an artist, feminist, and communications specialist. She has a strong commitment to social & environmental justice. Cécile joined SIWI in 2021. She serves as a Project Communication Manager and Gender Equality Champion. She is trained in digital communications strategy, she has over 10 years of experience managing multilingual platforms for non-profits and feminist organizations. Cécile brings her passions for visual arts, social & environmental justice into her work as a communicator. She loves connecting people across regions, cultures, and technologies as she believes this is the key to a more respectful and inclusive world. Originally from France, Cécile lived in Canada for 5 years before moving to Sweden in 2016. She speaks French, English and Spanish; and is currently learning Swedish and Portuguese.



**Cholpon Aitakhunova** (Kyrgyzstan) is a Research Fellow at Collective Leadership Institute under the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's International Climate Protection Fellowship. She is carrying out her research at the interface of water, climate, and security in Central Asia with a special focus on collective leadership approaches. She leads Central Asia Youth for Water (CAY4W) in her role of regional co-coordinator for Central Asia and Afghanistan. The network's mission is empowerment of a new generation of water

leaders to work on peaceful and sustainable development through transboundary water cooperation. Through a journey of around 5 years across different sectors (state, civil society, academia) and between various levels (national to international) Cholpon got well-acquainted with climate and water governance topics, and for more than a decade now she has been involved in youth empowerment in Kyrgyzstan and beyond. She strongly believes that in the face of the multi-layered crisis the world is confronting today it is only through quality dialogue and collaboration that we can bring transformative change. 'Everyone matters in water action; everyone can learn how to collaborate.' Cholpon is a founding member of the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan and will join the 2023 UN Water Conference in person on behalf of CAY4W.



**Dr Corinne Schuster-Wallace** (Canada) is the Associate Director of Global Water Futures and faculty member in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Saskatchewan. Previously she has worked within the UN and for the Public Health Agency of Canada. She is the founder of the Women Plus Water community. Her research utilises

a coupled systems approach to water-related human health in rural, remote, and marginalised communities. Her work integrates university and community, and research, practice, and teaching. Coupling environmental and social systems provides a comprehensive understanding of socio-environmental determinants and how inequities and intersectionality along with knowledge, attitudes, and practices affect health and wellbeing. This requires diverse, disaggregated data and research that span disciplines and are grounded in community, Traditional Knowledge, and modern science.



**Diana Moczula** (Canada) is a Policy and Communications Analyst with the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission with her work focusing on transboundary waters along the Canadian and United States border. Diana provides policy analysis and support for the delivery of strategic and operational policy priorities for the Commission's Policy and Communications team and provides support for initiatives relating to Indigenous

collaboration. Prior to joining the International Joint Commission, Diana has experience in environmental education and conservation work within freshwater and brackish water ecosystems in southeastern Ontario and along the eastern coast of the United States; in conjunction with this she has experience in compliance promotion and regulatory development. Diana received an MSc in Integrated Water Resource Management from McGill University and a BSc (Honours) in Environmental Science with a Biology Minor from Carleton University.



**Dr Dinara Ziganshina** (Uzbekistan) is the Director at the Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC) in Central Asia, a regional organisation that contributes to fostering transboundary water cooperation in the region through data, information and knowledge development and dissemination. Dr. Ziganshina is the Vice Chair of the Implementation Committee under the UNECE Convention on the

Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes; a Governor at the World Water Council and an Associate Professor at the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers. Dr Ziganshina has more than 20 years' experience working as a legal and policy expert in water resources management at national and transboundary levels and managing and coordinating regional projects in multi-stakeholder environments.



**Ekta Patel** (Kenya / United States) is finishing her PhD at Duke University where her dissertation focuses on global water governance and the politics of desalination. She has contributed to scholarship on water reuse technologies, stakeholder participation, water rights, and climate change, including a book chapter entitled "Rights, resilience, and water in turbulent times" (forthcoming, 2023). Some of the classes she has helped teach have centered on environmental

peacebuilding and the intersections between WASH and COVID-19 in the Middle East and North Africa. Ekta has also supported several USAID projects on topics such as water and food security, wildlife trafficking, and conflict sensitivity. Most recently, she led the rewrite of USAID's Water and Conflict Toolkit (forthcoming, 2023).



**Elia M. Tapia** (Mexico) is a faculty professor at Universidad de Sonora in Hermosillo, Mexico. She holds a Ph.D. in Arid Lands Resource Sciences and a Minor Degree in Hydrology from the University of Arizona. Elia has thirteen years of experience in applied hydrology, hydrogeology, climate change studies, and disaster risk assessment. She has been contributing to the United States-Mexico efforts on the Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program (TAAP) for

over 12 years, among many other projects for private and public institutions in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Elia has been recently involved in projects for the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and IDB Invest, including the Transboundary Regional Plan for Drinking Water, Basic Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization. Her areas of interest involve water governance, climate change, stakeholder engagement, and water resources management, particularly in transboundary settings.



**Elisabeth Ericson** (United States) (also known as Tess) has been with the State Department since 2012, where she began her career as a seasonal clerical intern in high school, before working her way up to a direct hire position on the Water Team in 2018, where she serves as a Foreign Affairs Officer. A lifelong member of the Girl Scouts of the USA, she has a passion for public service. Her portfolio covers interagency coordination and multilateral affairs, serving as

the coordinator for the Interagency Water Working Group and the national focal point for the UNECE Watercourses Convention, as well as the main U.S. point of contact for UN Water. Most recently, she served as the main coordinator for the U.S. delegation to the UN Water Conference. She is also extensively involvement in the Team's programs, including the Ambassador's Water Experts Program (AWEP).



**Elizabeth A. Koch** (United States) serves as the Senior Manager for International Programs at the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) and leads the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Process Support Team, supporting the Network's development since inception. Elizabeth has over 15 years of experience supporting water diplomacy engagements in conflict sensitive basins on behalf of ELI, SIWI's Shared Waters Partnership programme, the UNESCO Category II International Centre for Water

Cooperation, and EcoPeace Middle East. Elizabeth holds a MA in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy and BA in International Relations.



**Dr Erika Weinthal** (United States) is a Professor of Environmental Policy and Public Policy at Duke University. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from Columbia University. She specializes in global environmental politics and environmental security with an emphasis on water and energy. Erika is a founding Vice President of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and an associate

editor at the new journal, *Environment & Security*. In 2017 she was a recipient of the Women Peacebuilders for Water Award under the auspices of "Fondazione Milano per Expo 2015". Erika is author of *State Making and Environmental Cooperation: Linking Domestic Politics and International Politics in Central Asia* (MIT Press 2002), which received the 2003 Chadwick Alger Prize and the 2003 Lynton Keith Caldwell Prize. Her recent books include: *Water Quality Impacts of the Energy-Water Nexus* (Cambridge University Press 2022) and *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (Oxford University Press forthcoming, 2023).



**Dr Faith Sternlieb** (United States) is the Associate Director for Stakeholder Engagement for the Internet of Water Initiative at the Lincoln Institute’s Center for Geospatial Solutions, where she facilitates the IoW Coalition and fosters partnerships with local, state, and federal government agencies to support modernized water data systems. Faith received a bachelor’s degree in anthropology and Latin American languages from the University of Maryland, a master’s degree in agriculture through the Peace Corps Masters International Program, and a Ph.D. in earth sciences with a watershed specialty, both from Colorado State University. Her post-doctoral work through the U.S. Department of State, Office of the Geographer, was on the Secondary Cities project, where she facilitated teams from under-served, rapidly growing cities across the globe to collect and curate geospatial data for participatory mapping to help them better prepare for uncertain futures. She recently transitioned from Lincoln Institute’s Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, where she led Growing Water Smart, a program that works with the private and public sector to support Colorado River Basin communities integrate their land and water planning. She continues to work with diverse communities to address environmental justice, water sustainability, and climate resilience through appropriate technology, intelligent design, collaboration, sound science, and political resolve.



**Farwa Aamer** (Pakistan) is a Water and Climate Security Analyst. Her research focuses primarily on the diplomatic and political dimensions of transboundary river water governance in conflict-prone and water-stressed regions. Through her work, Farwa has led, organized, and convened high-level Track II dialogues and discussions designed to facilitate greater inter-and intra-regional cooperation on issues and opportunities concerning water, energy, and sustainable development in the Global South. Prior to joining the Stimson Center, Farwa served as the Director of the South Asia program at the EastWest Institute (EWI)—a global think tank headquartered in New York. At EWI, Farwa worked on promoting non-traditional channels of diplomacy and establishing multi-stakeholder platforms for shared economic, financial, and geopolitical interests by bringing together media influencers, thought leaders, policymakers, and business experts from within South Asia and across the globe.





**Dr Gaia Hatzfeldt** (Confirmed) is a gender and social inclusion specialist working in the Water Global Practice of the World Bank. She specializes in developing analytical work and providing guidance to task teams on gender, citizen engagement and broader social inclusion. Gaia is also team member of the Equal Aqua platform that promotes gender diversity and inclusion in water institutions and was one of the lead authors of the *Women in Water Utilities: Breaking Barriers* report that preceded the platform. Gaia is a social anthropologist by training.



**Commissioner Henry Lickers** (Canada) of the International Joint Commission, Canada Section is an internationally recognized Indigenous environmental leader who has pioneered and inspired the braiding of Indigenous and Western scientific knowledge toward sustainable solutions. A Haudenosaunee citizen of the Seneca Nation, Turtle Clan, Dr Lickers resides in Akwesasne where he served as director and environmental science officer for over 40 years. Dr Lickers has been contributing to the work of the International Joint Commission for decades, first as a board member and then in 2019 as the first Indigenous person to be appointed by Canada to the Commission. Dr Lickers earned a B.Sc. from Trent University, Peterborough and undertook graduate studies at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. He received an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from the State University of New York Syracuse, in recognition of his environmental leadership and development of cross-cultural partnerships. Dr Lickers has received several awards for his work in environmental protection and conservation, including the Royal Canadian Institute for Science's Sandford Fleming Medal.



**Ambassador Igli Hasani** (Albania) serves as the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities. Before joining the OSCE, Ambassador Hasani served as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania to the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna (2018-2021). In 2019, as part of OSCE Troika, he chaired the Mediterranean Contact Group. Subsequently, in 2020, Ambassador Hasani held the position of the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, and in 2021, he acted as Chairperson of the Asian Partners for Cooperation Group. Ambassador Hasani has extensive experience in international security, contributing to the development of the security and defence policy packages of the Republic of Albania. During his 17 years tenure at the Albanian Ministry of Defence, he held various management positions, including Secretary General (2017-2018), Director General for Defence Policy (2015-2017), Director of NATO and Foreign Relations (2013-2014),

Director of Euro-Atlantic Integrations (2013-2014) as well as director of the Press and Information, Policy and Media and Legal Affairs. Prior to his career at the Ministry of Defence, he worked as journalist and editor for several newspapers and TV stations in Albania. Ambassador Hasani holds Degrees in Law, Sociology and Philosophy from the University of Tirana, a Master's Degree in International Relations from King's College London and is also a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies.



**Dr Irena F. Creed** (Canada) is a Canada Research Chair laureate, a professor and vice-principal research & innovation at the University of Toronto. She has been producing field-leading water research for over two decades, and she is among the world's most-cited female water scientists. Her interdisciplinary research combining hydrology, biogeochemistry, and ecology has led to scientific advances that underpin much of the water field today. She currently focuses on the effects of global changes, including climate warming and atmospheric pollution, on ecosystem function and services. Irena has used her field-leading science to inform policy and management. For example, she held a high-profile role as co-chair of the International Union of Forest Research Organization's Global Forest Expert Panel on Forests and Water and contributed to the Global Diplomacy Lab on Water Diplomacy 4.0, an initiative that brought together scientists and diplomats to better understand the obstacles and opportunities for creating a more just and equitable society. Irena's original research discoveries, documented in her over 200 peer-reviewed publications, have also resulted in invitations to give over 100 distinguished, keynote, or invited presentations in the USA, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. Irena is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, the recipient of an honorary doctorate, two international professorships, and numerous awards and honors.



**Dr Jenny Grönwall** (Sweden) serves as a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program Specialist in the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support of the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida). With a background in law, Jenny has 25 years of experience from the water sector including interdisciplinary social science research in groundwater governance, sustainable textile manufacturing, and human rights. She has worked extensively in countries such as India, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates and is a member of the World Water Week's Scientific Programme Committee.



**Jessica Troell** (United States) is a Senior Attorney and has directed the Environmental Law Institute's International Water Program since its founding in 2006. Under her leadership, the Program has developed and implemented projects to define and track the legal recognition and protections for Indigenous and community-based water tenure; create realistic mechanisms for involving diverse stakeholders in water-related decision-making; identify and implement innovative water governance mechanisms to strengthen resilience of communities and countries in the face of climate change; build the legal and institutional capacity to manage transboundary water challenges; strengthen livelihoods and food security through more effective water management; and ensure that water management is effectively leveraged in fragile and post-conflict states to promote peacebuilding. Jessica works with NGOs, governments, the private sector, and universities to create, implement, and enforce sustainable water laws, policies, and management mechanisms.



**Joe Younkle** (United States) serves as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science in the United States Department of the Interior. Joe is a descendant of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and most recently served as Congressional Relations Associate at the National Indian Health Board where he led their Congressional advocacy on Medicare and Medicaid. Prior to joining the National Indian Health Board, Joe worked at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee where he served as Deputy Finance Director for the Midwest and South. Joe holds a B.S. in Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



**Johanna Sumuvuori** (Finland) was appointed State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Affairs by Pekka Haavisto on 4 July 2019. As State Secretary, she assists the Minister in matters relating to political steering and preparatory work. She also assists the Minister and represents him in the drafting of policy papers and in inter-ministerial coordination. Her responsibilities include participation in the harmonization of policy positions, the implementation of the Government Programme in the Minister's administrative branch, and the handling of EU and international affairs. Sumuvuori deals with matters relating to public relations and she deputises for the Minister. Previously Sumuvuori has been Press Counsellor at the Embassy of Finland in London. She has a wide experience of politics, communications, culture, and civil society organisations. Sumuvuori has previously been a Member of Parliament and

a city councillor, and she has held leading positions in civil society organisations as well as in different kinds of positions of trust. Sumuvuori holds the degrees of Master of Social Sciences and Master of Arts.

**Joshua (Josh) Moore** (United States) serves as the Farm Manager for the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Farms located on both the Arizona & California banks of the Colorado River. CRIT Farms consists of 33,000 acres of fertile farmland irrigated with water from the Colorado River. Josh holds two degrees from the University of Arizona, a B.S. in Agricultural Technology Management & Education, and an M.S. in Agricultural Education Research. As a former agricultural education teacher, and cooperative extension agent, Josh strives to incorporate technology, human resource development, and work force development to assist CRIT in tackling water resource challenges in the region. With a background in formal and non-formal education, Josh works to manage CRIT Farms on a daily operations basis, as well as holds responsibilities to work with tribal leadership to develop long term agricultural resource plans for the tribe while working to integrate water conservation practices on CRIT's farmland base. Josh is a member of the Colorado River Indian Tribes of Hopi, Mohave, and Chemehuevi descent and resides on the CRIT Reservation on farm with his wife, Lillian, and children Elena and Rhett Moore. Outside of work, Josh and Lillian have started up a family ran sheep farm with the goal of providing fresh lamb protein to local customers.



**Julien Katchinoff** (United States) currently serves as Water Team Lead in the Office of Conservation and Water at the U.S. Department of State. Previously, he served as the Department's Primary Action Officer in implementing the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the United States and Canada, including oversight of the U.S. section of the binational International Joint Commission (IJC) as Transboundary Water Specialist and Deputy Columbia River Treaty Negotiator in the Office of Canadian Affairs. Over a decade at the Department, Mr. Katchinoff also developed and implemented U.S. foreign policies on drinking water and sanitation, water resources management, and transboundary water issues, with a specific focus on Southeast Asia. Prior to Federal service, Mr. Katchinoff worked as an Environmental Scientist with Montgomery Watson Harza in Denver, Colorado, and a Research Intern with the Environmental Change and Security Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC. Mr. Katchinoff earned his B.A. in geography and international affairs from the University of Colorado and M.A. in global environmental policy from American University's School of International Service. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Georgia and speaks French and an ever-diminishing amount of Georgian.



**Dr Kathryn B. Friedman** (United States) joined the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies in July 2022. She also serves as a Global Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Canada Institute). Kathryn is a recognized foreign policy expert on North America, specifically the US-Canada relationship, with experience in transboundary water governance and

diplomacy. Her strategic advice to senior-level government officials includes advising the US Embassy Ottawa; US Consulate General Toronto; Embassy of Canada to the United States; Canadian Consulate Generals New York, Chicago and Seattle; the Government of Northern Ireland; the Cabinet Office of the United Kingdom; the German Foreign Ministry; and the Slovenian Foreign Ministry. She also has worked with The Nature Conservancy and the Alliance for the Great Lakes on strategies for strengthening water diplomacy and governance. Kathryn is an experienced mediator and conflict resolution specialist, who has designed processes and led Track 1.5-4.0 diplomatic efforts. She currently is leading a Water Diplomacy 4.0 initiative in collaboration with the German Foreign Ministry, the Slovenian Foreign Ministry and the German-American Fulbright Foundation. Kathryn has served as a Fulbright Fellow (Germany) and an Abshire Inamori Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. Kathryn is approached frequently to provide guest commentary in the media, including PBS, NPR, The Hill, CBC and Bloomberg News. Kathryn clerked for two appellate judges and is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Kathryn has a Ph.D. with a concentration in international relations and J.D., magna cum laude, with a concentration in international law.



**Katie Goldie-Ryder** (Canada/Sweden) is a Programme Officer at the Stockholm International Water Institute where she supports the Shared Waters Partnership (SWP) programme and serves as a Youth Empowerment Champion. Working closely with senior programme staff, Katie provides efficient coordination, programme management and logistical support for several projects, ensuring effectiveness and sustainability across the work.

Katie has several years of practical experience building networks, supporting cooperative processes and multi-stakeholder dialogues in regional contexts. She holds a Master Degree in Peace and Conflict from Uppsala University and wrote her MA thesis for the 'Equal Peace?' project at the PRIO Centre on Gender, Peace and Security. Katie also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Global Developments from Huron University College in Canada.





**Kayly Ober** (United States) serves as the Senior Program Officer for the Climate, Environment, and Conflict Program at the United States Institute of Peace. She primarily leads the program's portfolios on migration and displacement as well as transboundary water issues. Previously, she was the senior advocate and program manager of the Climate Displacement Program at Refugees International. She also served as a member of the Task Force on Displacement established under the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change's Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. She has worked on climate change and migration issues for more than a decade, including for the Asian Development Bank; the World Bank, where she authored the flagship report *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*; Overseas Development Institute; and Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, among others. Kayly holds a Master of Science in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from American University. She is currently completing her PhD in Geography at the University of Bonn, where her dissertation analyzes policymaking and governance structures around the climate change-adaptation-migration nexus.



**Kerry Schneider** (United States/Sweden) serves as SIWI's Senior Programme Manager for the Shared Waters Partnership programme, a multi-stakeholder platform aimed at advancing cooperation over shared water resources in regions where political tensions could be a source of conflict. He contributes to the development of research and project management in a number of fields including transboundary water management, climate change, and capacity building. Kerry holds a Master's degree in International Humanitarian

Action from Uppsala University, Sweden. Prior joining SIWI in 2013, Kerry worked for Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Kerry has supported the inception and development of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network since 2017 as a flagship engagement of SIWI's Shared Waters Partnership programme.



**Commissioner Lance Yohe** (United States) of the International Joint Commission has been previously involved in Canada-U.S. transboundary organizations centered in the Red River basin for over 25 years, serving as the executive director of the Red River Basin Commission in Fargo, North Dakota from its formation in 2002 until 2014. He was involved with its two predecessors, the Red

River Basin Board and International Coalition for Land and Water Stewardship. He also served as a manager with the Southeast Cass Water Resources Board and as a member of the Red River Joint Water Resources Board's Executive Board of Managers. In 2014, Mr. Yohe formed Trans Boundary Solutions, a consulting firm working with regional clients on both sides of the boundary, including the Prairie Improvement Network and the Assiniboine River Basin Initiative.



**Liliana Pimentel** (Brazil) is an Architect and Urban Planner and Specialist in Water Resources Management in Watersheds holding a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning focusing on bioregional planning and landscape ecology, Liliana is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Geography Department at Universidade de Brasilia. She is a Former Fulbright Hubert Humphrey Fellow attending

SPURS/MIT and currently works as a civil servant at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in Brazil. Liliana is a trained mediator interested in transboundary cooperation and conflict prevention over Natural Resources. Her passion for mediation and peacebuilding drove her to join the Environmental Peacebuilding Association since its very beginning and Mediators Beyond Borders International. By volunteering for several non-profit organizations, she keeps enhancing her negotiation and conflict prevention skills to benefit governance, decision-making, and public policy processes in Latin America and the Caribbean Region. Liliana has more than 30 years of professional experience working in climate change, environmental conservation, biodiversity, governance, water resources, STEM, and WASH for the public, private, and third sectors. Liliana holds extensive teaching experience and, in the last two decades, has been a lecturer in Architecture and Urban Planning Courses. A former coordinator of the Climate Justice Cluster at OLAC and former co-chair of the EnPAx Interest Group on Water, she is starting to set up a Water Group under the MBBI's UNMWG umbrella. She will be attending the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the UN Water Conference, and the New York Water Week as a representative of Mediators Beyond Borders International.



**Lou-Ellen Martin** (Australia) is an Australian Government official responsible for international engagement on water, and urban water policy issues, within Australia's Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. Prior to this role, Lou-Ellen served as an Australian diplomat with assignments in New York, Beirut and Buenos Aires, and expertise in multilateral issues and the Middle East. She has a Master of International

Development and undergraduate studies in politics and business. Lou-Ellen is from Australia's Kooma and Kamilaroi First Nations.



**Lyazzat Syrlybayeva** (Kazakhstan) has over 4 years of experience in the water sector, within the scope of her duties, she has worked in the fields of integrated water resources management, transboundary water cooperation, climate change, as well as Sustainable Development Goals. Besides this, she was a consultant in various assignments with the World Bank Group, the OSCE office in Vienna, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and the Kazakh-German University (DKU) in Kazakhstan. Lyazzat has contributed to the preparation of the Country Climate Development Report (CCDR) for Kazakhstan, focusing on climate change adaptation and mitigation measures for water, rangelands, and croplands. Currently, she is employed with the International Secretariat for Water (ISW) as a consultant, co-leading a regional project on youth empowerment for water in Central Asia and Afghanistan.



**Maarten Gischler** (The Netherlands) is a water adviser in the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2011. He works on water and resilience at scales from the global water cycle to urban problemsheds. His focus is on Africa and the Middle East. In the transboundary domain he has engaged in the Senegal River (OMVS), Niger River (ABN), Lake Chad (LCBC), and Nile (NBI). Before joining the Foreign Ministry in 2001, Maarten worked as a consultant on challenges in transboundary waters of the Caspian Sea, Aral Sea Basin and in the Middle East Peace Process.



**Dr Mara Tignino** (Switzerland) is Reader at the Faculty of Law and the Institute for Environmental Sciences at the University of Geneva and Lead Legal Specialist of the Platform for International Water Law at the Geneva Water Hub. Dr Tignino has been Visiting Professor at Renmin University of China, the University of Barcelona, the *Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali* (LUISS) and the Catholic University of Lille. She was also a Visiting Scholar at the George Washington University Law School in Washington D.C. Dr Tignino acts as an expert and legal adviser for States and international organisations. She has given training workshops in Africa, Asia, Middle East and South America. She is a member of the Coordinating Committee of the Interest Group of “International Business and Human Rights” of the European Society of International Law (ESIL) and former co-chair of the Interest Group on Water of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association. She holds a Ph.D. in international law from the

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and an *Habilitation à diriger des recherches (HDR)* from the Faculty of Law of the University Jean Moulin Lyon 3.



**Maria (Byström) Vink** (Sweden) is a Senior Program Specialist for Water Security at the Department for International Organisations and Policy Support at Sida. Maria has worked with different aspects of water management and development cooperation for almost three decades. She has substantive experience of support to multilateral cooperation initiatives, policy development and facilitation of stakeholder dialogues. She has previously served at Swedish Embassies in Mozambique and Kenya and at the European Commission. She has also worked at SIWI as Director of the Division for Transboundary Water Cooperation.



**Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner** (United States) was appointed by US President Joe Biden in August 2021 to serve as the United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico. Dr Giner, the second woman and first Latina to hold the post, previously served as General Manager of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC), an institution that developed environmental infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border in association with the North American Development Bank. During her tenure at the BECC, she focused on policies that addressed U.S.-Mexico cooperation on water, energy, and climate change. Dr Giner is well regarded among state agencies and local communities in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and the six Mexican border states. With the support of the BECC staff, she led the development and financing of \$9 billion in environmental infrastructure, benefitting about 100 communities and over 10 million residents. In addition, she has published extensively on water policy and transboundary bilateral cooperation. Dr Giner's education includes a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Loyola Marymount University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas at El Paso, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Texas at Austin. She is also a registered professional engineer, first-generation college graduate, and daughter of an immigrant. Dr Giner is from the border region and attended Loretto Academy High School in El Paso, Texas. She is bicultural and bilingual.



**Dr Mark Colosimo** (United States) is the Director, Science and Technology of the US Section of the International Joint Commission. Dr Colosimo works on water quality and quantity issues along the Canadian and United States Boundary. Mark serves as the U.S. Section Liaison to 14 different IJC Boards, Committees or Task Forces, and supervises, oversees and provides guidance to IJC US Section

staff. Prior to joining the International Joint Commission in June 2004, Mark worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) where he worked on water non-point source pollution reduction programs and initiatives, including market-based environmental stewardship and the initial development of the USDA Policy on Market-Based Environmental Stewardship. Mark has also worked for the US Army Corps of Engineers, first with Baltimore District in a variety of positions within the Regulatory, Civil Works and Military programs, and later in the Civil Works Planning and Policy Division of the Headquarters office. Mark served as one of ten federal agency representatives on the Council on Environmental Quality National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Task Force (2002-2003) that evaluated mechanisms to make the NEPA process more effective and efficient, as well as methods to modernize the NEPA process. Mark served as the Chair of the technical committee for the 2006 American Water Resources Association (AWRA) Specialty Conference on Adaptive Management of Water Resources held in Missoula, Montana and the 2009 AWRA Specialty Conference on Adaptive Management of Water Resources held in Snowbird, Utah. Mark also served on the 2007, 2011, and 2015 Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum Steering Committees. Mark received a BS in Biology from the Pennsylvania State University, an MA in Environmental Planning from Towson University, an MS in Environmental Science and Policy from Johns Hopkins University (JHU), and a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering, also from JHU. Mark is a registered professional wetland scientist and has authored a number of peer reviewed journal articles.



**Dr Martina Klimes** (Sweden) is Advisor for Water and Peace at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and a member of the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) of the World Water Week. She has over 15 years of experience working with dialogue facilitation, conflict resolution, political and security analysis, including practical work in the field and informal diplomacy processes. Her main focus is on

water diplomacy and water cooperation, climate and security, dialogue facilitation, incentives, and third party involvement in negotiation processes. Martina's book *Using Carrots to Bring Peace? Negotiation and Third Party Involvement* (World Scientific, 2016) focuses primarily on the effectiveness of aid conditionality and other external tools that third parties – from states and regional organizations to



NGOs – bring to the table in peace negotiations. She holds a PhD degree in International Relations and is also an Associated Research Fellow at the Institute for Security and Development Policy in Stockholm. Martina is a co-editor of forthcoming *Routledge Water Diplomacy Handbook* (2023) and she represents SIWI in the Stockholm Hub on Environment, Climate, and Security.



**Dr Melissa McCracken** (United States) is an assistant professor of international environmental policy. She directs the Shared Waters Lab and is an affiliate with the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy and the Center for International Law and Governance at Fletcher. Her research focus is on international water policy and management, cooperation and conflict over shared surface and groundwaters, and conflict transformation surrounding environmental resources. Broadly, she supports interdisciplinary research and teaching for water policy and management. Water is both a human and physical resource and therefore requires collaborative technical and policy solutions. Her current work addresses how transboundary water cooperation is defined and measured, with the goal of operationalizing a method for evaluating effective transboundary water cooperation. She is a collaborator with the Transboundary Freshwater Diplomacy Database at Oregon State University on additional projects to monitor hydropolitical tension and identify factors that contribute to potential conflict or cooperation, including research on international freshwater agreements, river basin organizations, and events over freshwater.



**Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare** (Canada) is a lawyer, writer, strategist, negotiator, and relationship-builder who worked extensively in and with Indigenous organizations on environmental, land, water, rights, and governance issues. She, along with 10 First Nation Chiefs, was the founding Executive Director of the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, a national First Nation charitable environmental organization. As Chief Negotiator for the Government of the Northwest Territories, Ms. Phare led the negotiation of transboundary water agreements in the Mackenzie River Basin and the creation of Thaidene Nene, a national and territorial park in the east arm of Great Slave Lake. She is the author of the book “Denying the Source: The Crisis of First Nations Water Rights” and co-author of “Ethical Water”. She is a member of the Forum for Leadership on Water, Smart Prosperity's Leadership Council, and is a recipient of Canada's Clean 50 Award. She served as legal counsel and advisor to a number of First Nation and Métis governments and organizations. Ms. Phare was appointed by Canada to the International Joint Commission in 2019.



**Meerim Seidakmatova** (Kyrgyzstan) graduated with honors from the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University in 2021, specializing in ecology and environmental management. She is currently studying for her master's degree in Integrated Water Resources Management at the Kazakh-German University. She founded the student eco-club "Young Environmentalists" at the higher student council of the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University in 2019 to increase social environmental education among students. At the same time, Meerim interned at the "Urban Initiatives" and "Rural Development Fund" public foundations, the Agency for Hydrometeorology under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic, in the Department of Environmental Monitoring (surface water and atmospheric air). She worked on research and projects on "Revival of Indigenous livestock breeding. Kyrgyz horse", "Land of snow leopards", in the laboratory assisted in physical and chemical analysis of surface water samples, atmospheric air monitoring, including PM 2.5, freons. Since the beginning of 2021, she has served as the project coordinator for the Kyrgyzstan Youth Network CAY4W.



**Olivia Urbanski** (United States) is a Water Security and Foreign Affairs Officer in the Office of Conservation and Water at the U.S. Department of State. She recently joined the Water Team after over three years in the Office of Global Change and working directly with the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, specializing in international climate policy and climate negotiations at the UNFCCC. She coordinated the team's bilateral and regional engagement for Central and Eastern Africa including SPEC John Kerry's two trips to Africa. She also focused on climate security issues, youth engagement, and the nexus of climate and gender. Olivia was the U.S. negotiator at the UNFCCC for both Action for Climate Empowerment and gender during the past two COPs. Previously, Olivia was a fellow at the U.S. Forest Service managing the national Youth Conservation Corps program and working in conservation education. She also has experience with the National Park Service in Alaska and teaching at an environmental learning center in Minnesota.



**Paul Allen** (Canada) is the Manager of Policy and Communications with the International Joint Commission's Canadian Section. Paul has over 30 years' experience with the Government of Canada working with various science-based natural resource management departments on domestic and Canada-US water policy issues. Since joining the International Joint Commission in 2011, Paul has

contributed to numerous national and binational Canada-US water policy and governance initiatives and led numerous multidisciplinary teams providing strategic communications advice and policy analysis and advice. Before joining the Commission, Paul was a Manager of Horizontal Policy Initiatives at Natural Resources Canada where he led the development of a Freshwater Strategy for the department. This effort was awarded a departmental merit award by the Deputy Minister and was an important contribution to advancing understanding sustainable water use and management in the energy, mining, and forestry sectors. Paul has a Master of Arts Degree in Geography from the University of Waterloo, Faculty of Environmental Studies, and a BA from the University of Ottawa.



**Paula Randolph** (United States; Confirmed) is a media creator for the Babbitt Center, responsible for producing content that raises awareness of the critical importance of water sustainability and resilience in the Western United States. This content includes videos, photographs, infographics, and other visual materials that communicate the complex issues surrounding land and water management in the Colorado River Basin. Paula Randolph is driven by a deep passion for the American West and a belief that all

communities in the region should have access to the tools and knowledge necessary to manage their land and water resources in a sustainable way. She understands that water is a precious and limited resource, and that it is essential to work collaboratively to develop innovative solutions that ensure its availability for future generations. Through her work with the Babbitt Center, Paula Randolph is helping to advance the integration of land and water management, not only in the Colorado River Basin but throughout the Western United States and beyond. Her efforts are critical to creating a more sustainable and resilient future for all communities that rely on this precious resource.



**Phera Ramoeli** (Botswana) is currently the Executive Secretary of the Okavango River Basin Commission since October 2018, after serving as Senior Program Officer in Directorate of Infrastructure and Services – Water Division, SADC Secretariat for over 15 years. He was responsible for the coordination and facilitation of the implementation of the SADC Program of Action in Water. He has been

working in the water sector for at least 20 years, with over 14 years focused in Transboundary Water Resources management at the SADC Level. He joined SADC Water Sector Coordinating Unit as Senior Environment Officer in 1997 and was in charge of, among other things, coordinating the implementation of the ZAMBEZI Action Plan Program including the Chairing the negotiation Process for ZAMCOM. He became the Sector Coordinator in 1999 until the restructuring of

SADC in 2003 and has been with the SADC Secretariat as head of the Water Program since and was active in the process of negotiating the amendments and subsequent revision of the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses. Mr. Ramoeli has a Master's Degree in Aquatic Resources Management from the Kings College, University of London, A Post Graduate Diploma in Operational Hydrology from Institute of Meteorological Training and research in Nairobi, and BSc in Biology and Chemistry from the National University of Lesotho.



**Philip Bettlestone** (United States/United Kingdom) currently serves as the Director of the Water Resources Department at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). Philip enjoys the challenges of water resources management and its interrelated nature affecting all aspects of society, the economy, and the environment. His primary focus is on the governance of water in all its aspects. As a trained Civil Engineer (MSc.) specialized in groundwater, he has over 20 years of water and environment sector experience in corporate consulting, development cooperation and humanitarian response. His work has encompassed projects on governance, transboundary water management, catchment management, groundwater, service delivery, stewardship, water security, and DRR/flood risk management among other areas. Over his career Philip has worked and lived in Germany, the USA, South and Central Asia, South-East Asia, and Eastern and Southern Africa.



**Dr Rebecca Peters** (United States) serves as an international water policy advisor in the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International and Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Previously she served as an Aspen Institute Climate Fellow and Academy Associate at the London-based think tank Chatham House. Her other experience includes serving as a Luce Scholar at the Asian International Rivers Center in Yunnan, China and co-authoring The Nature Conservancy's Power of Rivers report. As a doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford, she partnered with the REACH Water Security program to engage civil society, private sector partners, and the government of Bangladesh to confront industrial water pollution. During her tenure, she led the bi-lingual Bengali-English translation of the 283-page 'legal personhood' High Court verdict for Bangladesh's rivers. Dr Peters received an M.Sc. in Poverty and Development Economics and an M.Sc. in Water Science and Policy as a Marshall Scholar in the United Kingdom. As an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, she served as President of the Berkeley Water Group and as a Berkeley Law Human Rights Fellow. She has written for publications including *Scientific American*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *The World Today*.



**Commissioner Robert Sisson** (United States) the Acting United States Co-Chair of the International Joint Commission has been involved with the environmental organization ConservAmerica since 2006, where he has served as president since 2011, and more recently was appointed by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to the state's Environmental Justice Working Group in 2017. Mr. Sisson has also been involved in the government of the Michigan

city of Sturgis, where he has served as mayor from 2005-2007 and as a city commissioner from 2003-2008 and again from 2011-2016. Concurrently, he was a member of the boards of directors for both the Sturgis Economic Development Corporation and the St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation.



**Sarah Keener** (United States) is a Senior Social Development Specialist, serving as the global thematic lead on social inclusion in the World Bank Water Global Practice and in this role leads a team to embed gender, citizen engagement and broader inclusion into World Bank supported operations. She has worked for over 25 years with the World Bank Group in the Middle East and North African Region, the Latin American and Caribbean Region,

and the Africa Region, leading efforts to increase citizen engagement and social inclusion within World Bank lending and non-lending operations. Sarah has pioneered approaches to inclusion in water via leading a stakeholder engagement project among the riparians of the Nile Basin, contributing to the Africa Region Infrastructure Flagship on water provision to the urban poor, managed technical assistance focused on infrastructure regulation and citizen engagement, and developed innovative approaches to peri-urban water provision in Peru, Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Zambia and elsewhere. She has focused extensively on issues of inclusion and voice in the context of infrastructure operations in municipal, water, energy and transport. Sarah holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.



**Dr Saule Ospanova** (Kazakhstan) is a Senior Environmental Affairs Advisor heading the environmental cooperation portfolio at OSCE with activities in sustainable water management, water diplomacy, disaster risk reduction, good environmental governance, and hazardous waste management. She has over 20 years of experience

contributing to international multi stakeholder initiatives, managing, and implementing sustainability projects in different parts of the world (including Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Africa and China). Prior to joining OSCE, she worked with the International Institute for Environment and Development, the



World Bank, UN and other institutions on policy development in water, climate change, energy and green economy, as well as accountability in the extractive sector. Her doctorate studies at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor focused on resource governance and environmental justice. Dr Ospanova and the OSCE are founding supporters of the Central Asia-Afghanistan Network and she will be participating in person at the UN Water Conference on behalf of OSCE.



**Dr Sharon B. Megdal** (United States) is Director of The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor, and Distinguished Outreach Professor. Dr Megdal aims to bridge the academic, practitioner, and civil society communities through water policy and management research, education, and engagement programs. The

geographic scope of Dr Megdal's work ranges from local to international. Applied research projects include analysis of water management, policy, and governance in water-scarce regions, groundwater recharge, and transboundary aquifer assessment. Key engagement initiatives are Indigenous Water Dialogues and Diversifying Voices in Water Resources. Dr Megdal teaches the multi-disciplinary graduate course "Water Policy in Arizona and Semi-arid Regions". In 2020, she was awarded the Warren A. Hall Medal for lifetime achievement in water resources research and education by the Universities Council on Water Resources. Dr Megdal serves as on the Board of Governors for the Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Water, and Energy Security, is an ex officio member of the Leadership Team for the Colorado River Basin Water & Tribes Initiative, and is a member of the University of Arizona Presidential Advisory Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Food Production in a Drying Climate. Dr Megdal holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University.



**Shohida Tulieva** (Tajikistan) has a Master Degree in Social Sciences: Regional Studies - Integrated Water Resources Management, Kazakh- German university, Almaty, Kazakhstan. Shohida is the Senior Project Officer "Basin Management" and the National Coordinator for "Gender and Social Equality" in the National project "Water Resources Management in Tajikistan", which aims to support the "Tajikistan Water Sector Reform Program for 2016-2025", HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in

Tajikistan. Moreover, Shohida is the President of the Association "Woman and Water" of Central Asia and Afghanistan with the aim of developing networking and increasing the potential of women specialists in the water sector. Shohida has contributed to the development of social, gender issues in water resources

management, taking into account the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), development of the Basin, Sub-basin and Watershed management with focusing on the development of the “Bottom-Up” approach with 14 experience in Central Asia.



**Governor Stephen Roe Lewis** (United States) is in his third term serving as Governor of the Gila River Indian Community, having previously served as Lt. Governor. Stephen Roe Lewis graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor’s of Science and pursued graduate studies at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Governor Lewis currently oversees the implementation of the Community’s Water Settlement of 2004 (at that time the largest water settlement of its kind in United States history). Governor Lewis advocates for

renewable and green technologies guided by O’odham agricultural history and cultural teachings. Governor Lewis’s vision is to support a new generation of Community member agriculturalists with the goal of promoting and protecting the Community’s shudag (water) and agricultural development. During his tenure as Governor of the Gila River Indian Community, Governor Lewis has brought innovative solutions to long-standing issues that will create long-term gains for the Gila River Indian Community. One of these projects, Managed Aquifer Recharge sites, brings together the need for access to water while restoring the return of the Community’s riparian area which is vital for farming and the return of wildlife to the Community. Bringing back the Gila River, which is critical to the culture and identity of the Gila River Indian Community, has been a key milestone during Governor Lewis’ Administration and one that will lay the foundation for future projects across the Community. In addition, Governor Lewis’ innovation can be seen in his approach to providing educational opportunities for the youth of the Gila River Indian Community. Governor Lewis proudly serves as the Secretary of the National Congress of American Indians, President of the Arizona State University’s American Indian Policy Institute Board of Directors, on the Executive Board for the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), and on the Board of Trustees for the Heard Museum of Phoenix.



**Susan Daniel** (United States) is the Secretary for the United States Section of the International Joint Commission (IJC). The IJC is a bilateral treaty organization created by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty which assists in preventing and resolving disputes between the United States of America and Canada over the use of waters shared by the two countries. She also served as legal advisor for the U.S.

Section of the IJC. Prior to moving to Washington, D.C. she worked as an

attorney-advisor for the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission on the southern boundary of the United States, between the U.S. and Mexico, in El Paso, Texas. She has also served as legal counsel to the Oklahoma Municipal League, an association of cities and towns, and was in private legal practice in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Susan received both an undergraduate degree in economics and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Oklahoma.



**Dr Suvi Sojamo** (Finland) works as a Senior Research Scientist at the Finnish Environment Institute. She has over ten years of experience on developing principles and practices of sustainable and equitable water use and governance, collaborating with academia, governments, private sector, and civil society alike. Dr Sojamo was a member of the drafting team of the UNECE Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context and coordinated an Expert Opinion on the role of water during and after conflicts and in conflict prevention to the UN 2023 Water Conference Interactive Dialogues. She currently leads a Horizon Europe project Governance innovations for a transition to sustainable and equitable water use in Europe (GOVAQUA) and acts as an expert in the Water Cooperation and Peace - Finnish Water Way project developing Finland's water diplomacy activities.



**Sylvester Anthony Matemu** (Tanzania) is the Executive Director Nile Basin Initiative Secretariat. Eng. Matemu brings 40 years of experience service in the public sector in different capacities including chairpersonship of various Technical Advisory Committees at national, regional, and international levels; board member of various water-related institutions; and advisory roles to ministers responsible for water, higher education, communication, science, and technology. He has vast experience in international and national transboundary water management including water law.



**Tais Reznikova** (Kazakhstan) is a water resources management specialist with an academic background in IWRM, environmental management, and policy. Currently, she is coordinating the Mentoring and Career Development Programme for Women in Water and the Blue Peace Central Asia Secretariat at the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) in Almaty, Kazakhstan and the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Tais has more than 7 years of experience in the implementation of projects in Central Asia in the field of basin

management and planning, water diplomacy. She holds a master's in Environmental Science, Policy and Management from Central European and Lund Universities, and in IWRM from Kazakh-German University.



**Ambassador Tanja Miškova** (Slovenia) serves as Ambassador-at-Large for Water Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia. During her diplomatic career she served as Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Development Cooperation, as head of Department for Emerging Challenges, as Ambassador to Egypt (non-resident to Jordan, KSA, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman), as Diplomatic Adviser to the President of Slovenia, and as Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Slovenia to Israel. In her current position, she is focusing on the four priority areas of the Slovenian water diplomacy: water & peace nexus, the transboundary water cooperation, water & climate change nexus, and the SDG6 and other water-related goals & targets of the Agenda 2030. Ambassador Miškova is a supporter of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and will join the 2023 UN Water Conference in person on behalf of Slovenia.



**Tanya Trujillo** (United States) currently serves as the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for the United States. She is a water lawyer with more than 20 years of experience working on complex natural resources management issues and interstate and transboundary water agreements. She most recently worked as a project director with the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign. Before then, she served as the Executive Director of the Colorado River Board of California. She has served as Senior Counsel to the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at Interior. A native New Mexican, Tanya attended Stanford University and the University of Iowa College of Law.



**Dr Tuğba Evrim Maden** (Turkey) is the Policy Development Coordinator at the Turkish Water Institute (SUEN). She completed her undergraduate study at Hacettepe University Department of Hydrogeologica Engineering and her master's degree at Hacettepe University Hydropolitics and Strategic Research Center. In 2010, she received her Ph.D. from Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, which was entitled 'EU Water Framework Directive, Transboundary Rivers – Case Study: Maritsa (Meriç) River.' She worked at the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) - Water Research

Programme as a Hydropolitics Researcher between December 2010 - April 2015. She worked as a hydropolitics expert at Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) from June 2017 – January 2021. She has been worked as a Policy Development Coordinator at Turkish Water Institute (SUEN) since January 2021. She is an experienced Turkish water analyst whose work focuses on water politics, water diplomacy, transboundary waters, aquifers, environmental politics, the EU Water Framework Directive, and the Middle East (in particular water issues in Iraq, Syria, and Iran). She has been co-chair of Union for the Mediterranean Water-Employment-Migration Task Force since 2018. She was the head of the Blue Peace in the Middle East Initiative Coordination Office between 2019-2022, which is based in Istanbul.



**Wilzave Quiles Guzmán** (United States) is currently completing her MS Degree in Water, Society and Policy at the University of Arizona with strong focus on local and international water resource management. Wilzave also serves as a Graduate Research Assistant and project manager for the interdisciplinary research project “Assessing Navajo COVID-19 Risk and Increasing Indigenous Resilience.” A native of Puerto Rico, Wilzave has strong interests in service, community engagement, the intersection of science and society and is deeply passionate about water resources.



**Xanani Baloyi** (South Africa) serves as a Programme Officer in SIWI’s African Regional Centre and is the Gender Equality Focal Point for SIWI. Her prime work area at SIWI is supporting the implementation of development projects that seek to make more public and private capital accessible for water-related projects in Africa: advancing the financial viability of these projects, attracting investment finance into the regional water sector, and strengthening national IWRM governance frameworks. Xanani also contributes to the development of activities related to transboundary water governance and cooperation. Some of the projects worked on include: The Africa-EU Water Partnership Project (AEWPP), Transforming Investments in African Rainfed Agriculture (TIARA) initiative and ‘Enhancing rainfed agricultural system in the Zambezi watercourse’. She holds a master’s degree in International Development Studies from Palacký University, Czech Republic obtained via the EU Erasmus Mundus mobility program, an Honours degree in International Relations and a Bachelor of Political Sciences in International Studies from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She has worked for GIZ, Genesis Analytics, Higher Education and Training, South Africa.





**Yodit Balcha** (Ethiopia) is a member of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Leadership Council since 2021 and a founding member of the Network since 2017. Yodit currently serves at the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT-Africa Hub in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as a Climate Adaptation research officer. Her work focuses on the nexus approach of Climate, Land (Agriculture), Energy, and Water Systems. Until early 2022, Yodit served as the

Senior Climate Change Adaptation Advisor at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation, and Energy in Ethiopia, where she is responsible for mainstreaming climate change adaptation and resilience plans into the ministries sectoral strategic and development projects, she was also one of the few women water diplomats during the GERD negotiations in 2019. Yodit holds a Master's degree in Sustainable Development from Uppsala University, a Master's course in Agricultural Economics from Haramaya University, and Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resource Economics and Management from Mekelle University. Yodit will be attending the 2023 UN Water Conference in-person on behalf of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.



**Zafar Makhmudov** (Tajikistan) is the Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). His main areas of professional expertise and activities are related to the mainstreaming climate change adaptation and mitigation into national development plans and strategies. Prior to joining CAREC, Mr. Makhmudov served as the Head of the Project Implementation Unit at the Committee for Environment Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, where he coordinated projects on natural resource management at all levels of their implementation, including project

development, structuring, negotiation, execution and monitoring, carried out in close cooperation with a number of international development partners, donor community and multilateral development banks by providing access to climate and environmental funds supported by the National Coordinator.



**Zoe Rosenblum** (United States) is a PhD candidate in Geography at Oregon State University. Her work brings wetlands into transboundary water cooperation research, exploring the governance of transboundary wetlands and how institutions play a role in sustainable wetland management. She also supports and contributes to the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, a global

register of international freshwaters and treaties. Zoe was introduced to

transboundary water research by the Water Cooperation and Diplomacy joint master's program at OSU, IHE-Delft and the United Nations-Mandated University for Peace. She has experience in wetlands policy from working in the US Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds; wetlands education and restoration from working at a small non-profit, Environmental Concern; and in wetland science from field and lab research with the University of Maryland and the US Department of Agriculture.



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