

18th Meeting of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace

Women, Peace, Water: The role of women in water diplomacy

16 October 2023, 12.00 – 13.30, followed by a reception, Vieux-Bois, Geneva

Women play a major part in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water, as recognized in the 1992 Dublin Principles. While their role is widely acknowledged, they still remain largely excluded from the analytical, managerial and decision-making processes when it comes to environmental resources, including water resources. Their absence is even more detrimental when it comes to jointly managing water resources in times of tensions, fragility, violence, and armed conflicts. While mainstreaming gender in WASH and within the private sector has made progress, including women in water diplomacy and peace processes is still off track.

The landmark Security Council's resolution S/RES/1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Peacemaking strategies that systematically include women – and civil society, including formal networks of women leaders – are more likely to generate national ownership and support for a negotiated settlement and to lead to sustainable peace.

Within this context, systematically addressing persistent gender gap in the response to gender, water security and peace is one of the most effective mechanisms for building resilience. This necessity has been recognized by the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace in its report “A Matter of Survival.” Since then, several initiatives and models have emerged to reinforce the role that women can play in peace processes with regards to water such as the “Women in Water Diplomacy Network”, originated in the Nile basin and since then spreading to several regions, and other more regionally focused initiative such as “Empowering Women in Water Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa” or the “Mujeres Aguas Arriba” in the Latin American & Caribbean region. Nevertheless, more reflection is needed from the peace community on means to incorporate women in water diplomacy and peace processes. This meeting of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace will focus on the current work being done and the paths forward based on the sharing of experiences from different water, peace and human security sectors that are integrating women into peacemaking strategies.

The guiding questions will focus on developing ways to recognize women as agents of change; this will include approaches that can help surpass stereotypes of women's role in water and peace processes:

- How can we strengthen the role of women in water diplomacy in times of tensions, fragility, violences, and armed conflicts? What examples exists in broader environmental peacebuilding processes?
- What models exists and what are the best practices linked to the participation of women in water diplomacy processes that can already be shared?
- What measures are in place to leverage the participation of women in policy and decisions-making with regards to water resources, at the local, regional, and transboundary level? More specifically, how can we ensure changes in less prominent areas?
- What is the path forward with regards to the inclusion of women in water and peace?





REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED
NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA

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Agenda

Opening segment

Organisational notes, Geneva Water Hub, Secretariat of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace

Opening Statement, Ambassador Anita Pipan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and Chair of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace

Keynote Statement, Ambassador Lansana Gberie, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Keynote Statement, Ambassador Paul Bekkers, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Keynote Statement, Ambassador Seong deok Yun, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

Panel discussion

Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the Water Convention, UNECE

Mr. Callum Watson, Gender Coordinator, Small Arms Survey

Ms. Cristina Finch, Head Gender and Security Division, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)

Ms. Natasha Carmi, Lead Water Specialist, Geneva Water Hub

Closing

Closing Statement, Ambassador Anita Pipan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Slovenia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and Chair of the Group of Friends on Water and Peace

A cocktail reception will close the event at the Vieux-Bois