

Mark your Calendars:

- **September 8 @ 14:00** Stockholm time, Shared Waters Partnership Webinar ‘Digital Water Diplomacy’
- **September 21 @ 14:00** Stockholm time, SIWI’s annual High Level Panel on Water Diplomacy
- **September 29-30**, IHE Online Conference ‘(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance’.
- **October 5 @13:00** Stockholm time, Release of new SIWI-IHE study on Women’s Participation in transboundary water management.

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HEADING INTO A NEW PHASE TOGETHER

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile was established by SIWI’s Shared Waters Partnership programme in 2017. To date, the programme has hosted three annual workshops, including most recently in January 2020, and several online experience exchange opportunities.

Thus far, the Network has engaged 43 representatives of key line ministries responsible for transboundary water cooperation from Nile Basin countries.

As we head into our fourth year as a Network – what lies ahead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network?

This newsletter aims to provide Network members and other stakeholders with key information, announcements, opportunities for further engagements, and timely updates from Network members.

The Network is nothing without its members and as always your inputs are welcome! If you are interested in sharing updates, initiatives, events and more with your friends and colleagues in the Network please contact us with your suggestions!



Women in Water Diplomacy 2021 Annual Network Gathering

The people want to know!

Since its establishment, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network has met annually in one of the Nile basin countries for a one week training and experience sharing workshop. This year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant travel restrictions, a

decision on whether SIWI will convene the 4th annual Women in Water Diplomacy Network workshop in person or online will be taken in the Fall.

In the meantime, the Women in Water Diplomacy team at SIWI is hard at work planning innovative online activities.



How are we all doing? 2020 Network Assessment

In April 2020, SIWI undertook an assessment of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. The aim was to better understand the needs and priorities of Network members.

The results were exciting. Network participants see value in the Network, use and share information gained through the Network, and strongly believe the Network contributes to improved transboundary water cooperation at the country level, at the sub-Basin level, and at the Basin level. There is a clear desire to continue to utilize and expand the Network over the coming months and years!

The Network members are keen to take on new challenges and leverage opportunities to grow the Network—particularly looking to improve linkages to other water diplomacy initiatives in Africa, engage more young professionals in water diplomacy processes, continue joint learning through Network meetings, create opportunities for inter-basin experience exchange, and engage more of the Nile's growing number of women water diplomats in the Network.

Taking it to the Next Level:

Featured Women in Water Diplomacy Network Members



Dr Muna Musnad,
UNESCO Water
Chair, Sudan

"Due in part to my participation as a key member in the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, I was appointed to participate in activities related to gender & water diplomacy."



Firmina Acuba,
Senior professional,
Ministry of Water and
Environment, Uganda

"The workshop organised by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network held in Naivasha, Kenya in January 2020 opened my eyes to see a bigger picture. The session on human rights based approaches (HRBA) in particular helped me to understand that most of my work in water has been a HRBA. When I was invited by Uganda Human Rights Commission to make a presentation on HRBA in water, I found it easy because of the knowledge I got from the Workshop in Naivasha. I was able to present a paper that articulated how we use human rights approach in water programs by addressing issue of gender, People with Disability, People Living with HIV and AIDS, refugees, poverty issues through the pro poor strategy and more importantly recognition that access to water is a human right as enshrined in the Ugandan Constitution and the water statute."

Inaugural Workshop 2017



Workshop 2018



Workshop 2020



Workshop 2021!

Women in Water Diplomacy Network Issues Joint Statement:

In January 2020, during the 3rd annual Women in Water Diplomacy workshop in Naivasha, Kenya the assembled women water leaders of the Nile basin states released a unique 'Joint Statement' in support of enhanced inclusive transboundary water cooperation.

The Statement, complementing high level processes ongoing in the Basin, called attention to the importance of inclusive water governance across the Nile and stressed the 'urgency of action to address our shared water and climate challenges.'

The statement was endorsed by all of the workshop participants.

To read the full statement please go to page 5 or visit:

<https://www.siwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Joint-Statement-Draft-23012020-Final.pdf>

"We call upon our fellow decision makers to leverage all available skills, experience, and leadership to improve cooperation across the Basin and achieve our shared goals of sustainable water management and development."

Opportunity for Engagement: '(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance: Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation'

On 29 and 30 September 2020, IHE Delft will host an online cross-regional workshop on '(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance: Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation.'

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network will share their experience during the conference in a SIWI facilitated panel featuring three Network members including **Yodit Balcha**, Climate Change Adaptation Advisor,

Ministry of Water, Irrigation, and Energy, Ethiopia; **Nancy Ngumba**, MFA, Peace and Conflict, Kenya, and a third surprise speaker, to be confirmed.

The workshop aims to bring together researchers and practitioners to shed light on the often hidden gender dynamics of water conflict and cooperation at transboundary level and on the implicit assumptions that guide research as well as policies. The conference will discuss

strategies to support more inclusive water diplomacy.

Participation in the conference programme is free and open to the public. Information on the programme and registration can be found here:

<https://www.un-ihe.org/engendering-transboundary-water-governance-feminist-perspectives-water-conflict-and-cooperation>



IHE partnered with SIWI in the 2nd Women in Water Diplomacy Workshop, 2019.

Leading by Example: Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative sends message of support to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network:

"The quest for development has led to a consensus that participation by both men and women - as equal partners - is essential for sustained results. **Ensuring equality for women on decisions about water is critical for their social and economic empowerment and plays a vital role in strengthening community resilience**, as women are the most affected. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) sees gender mainstreaming as essential to its work and has formulated a Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy to guide gender mainstreaming and to ensure that women are not left out of the picture of development benefits arising from the emerging projects. Involving women also brings to the table their knowledge on water and natural resource management."

- Professor Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla, from Sudan, July 2020



Professor Seifeldin Hamad Abdalla, Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative

Memorandum of Understanding Signed to Support further Network Development

In August 2020, SIWI and the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support further development of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

ELI's Jessica Troell has been engaged in supporting the Network since its inception and this new MOU will enable broader ELI support to the Network in this new phase. We are excited to expand this critical

partnership and for ELI to bring its extensive expertise in national and transboundary water law and governance to enhance the activities and capacities of the Network.



Joint Research featuring Women in Water Diplomacy to be released soon:

SIWI's Shared Waters Partnership programme, SIWI's UNESCO Category II Centre - the International Center for Water Cooperation (ICWC), and IHE Delft Institute for Water Education have conducted a study on women's participation in high-level decision-making processes related to transboundary water management.

The aim of the study is to contribute to a better understanding of high-level decision-making processes on water from a gendered perspective, identify the barriers and opportunities women encounter and based on this develop recommendations to strengthen inclusive decision making.

The three geographic areas included in the

study are Chu Talas basin, the Rhine basin and the Nile basin.

The results will be presented in a webinar **5 October**, with the three researchers Alexandra Said (SIWI), Rozemarjin ter Horst (IHE Delft) and Jennifer Sehring (IHE Delft). Additionally the event will feature a panel discussion with three experts from the respective basins.



Experience Sharing: Dr. Tahani Sileet featured in Shared Waters Partnership Webinar Series

SIWI's Shared Waters Partnership (SWP) programme initiated its special webinar series for basin partners in April 2020 as a part of the SWP response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second SWP webinar focused on enhancing inter-ministerial coordination for improved transboundary cooperation and featured a key member of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, Dr. Tahani Sileet.

Dr. Sileet shared insights and experience from her many years of high level leadership in Nile Basin processes. Remarking on the issue of inter-ministerial coordination that *'the key factors for intergovernmental coordination in Egypt are, political will and respecting the principle of water law.'*

Adding, *'the overall necessity of intergovernmental*

coordination is needed on both in national and regional level.'

The SWP Webinar series continues on September 8 with 'Digital Water Diplomacy.'

For further details on SWP webinars please contact Elizabeth A. Yaari, Senior Programme Manager, SIWI.



Dr. Tahani Sileet, Head of External Cooperation in the Nile Water Sector, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt

January 23, 2020

Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin, 2020

On this day January 23, 2020, we, women water leaders from Nile Basin states conclude our participation in the Third Annual Women in Water Diplomacy Workshop hosted with appreciation by the Shared Waters Partnership programme at Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). Together, we recognize the unique and intrinsic social, cultural, ecological, and economic value of the Nile Basin and its essential role and relevance in all aspects of our lives and communities. It is due to this shared heritage that we join together to elevate our voices in sisterhood, as peacemakers, mediators, and water stewards. Evidence from water cooperation and peacebuilding efforts throughout the world has demonstrated that women play an essential role in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water as well as ensuring a more durable peace.

Cooperation over the shared water resources of the Nile Basin is essential to sustainable water management and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) throughout the Basin. To mitigate and manage potential and actual drivers of water-related challenges in the region, more inclusive decision making is critical. Specifically, this necessitates the importance of enhancing women's role as decision makers. We are blessed with a strong and knowledgeable generation of women water leaders across the Basin. We call upon our fellow decision makers to leverage all available skills, experience, and leadership to improve cooperation across the Basin and achieve our shared goals of sustainable water management and development.

We share a cooperative vision for the Nile Basin – a vital life-force across our communities and countries. As water leaders and professionals, we recognize the remaining challenges that weigh heavy on our peoples. The path towards sustainable water management has been long and difficult at times - but also one rich with opportunities. Despite the challenges, we are bound together and thus recognize the significant benefits to regional development and economic integration that can result from improved transboundary cooperation. In our Workshop, we discussed common challenges, enhanced our understanding of each other and our countries, and together sought to identify mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, increasing our resilience to climate change impacts through improved watershed management and water use efficiency, as well as efforts to reduce pollution of our shared water resources.

In this call, we stress the urgency of action to address our shared water and climate challenges. We agree, in our capacity as women water leaders, to continue to work together to further cooperation as well as contribute to the enhancement of inclusive decision making across the Nile. We call for sustained support and partnerships at home and across the international community in these critical endeavors.

In partnership and sisterhood,

Participants of the 2020 Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Workshop

Naivasha, Kenya



Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

Stockholm International Water Institute's Shared Water Partnership programme was founded in 2010 as a platform to improve cooperation over shared waters in regions where water is, or may become, a source of conflict or where water can serve as a catalyst for peace.

The overall objective of the Shared Waters Partnership is peaceful cooperation between basin states sharing transboundary water sources.

The Shared Waters Partnership is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United States, Norway, the Netherlands, and UNDP.

For more information on the Shared Waters Partnership programme please visit: <https://www.siw.org/what-we-do/shared-waters-partnership/>

Read more about the Women in Water Diplomacy Network here: <https://www.siw.org/publications/tapping-our-potential-womens-water-leadership-in-the-nile-basin/>

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