

## Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) Shared Waters Partnership Programme

Mark your Calendars:  
See Page 3 for Details

- **March 8, International Women's Day @ 15:00 -16:30 UTC+1** Network 'Town Hall Meeting'
- **April 6 @ 13:00-14:30 UTC +1, SIWI Webinar** 'Elevating Youth Perspectives in Water Diplomacy.'
- **June 15 @ 9:30-15:00 UTC+1 Women in Water Diplomacy Network Workshop** on Communication Resilience and Disinformation in water cooperation.
- **June 30 @ 12:30-15:30 UTC+1 Women in Water Diplomacy Network Workshop** on Third Party Involvement in Water Diplomacy.
- **August 23-27 World Water Week Online:** Building Resilience Faster

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## Adaptation and Connectivity in 2021

Happy 2021 and welcome to the second issue of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile Newsletter.

The last year has been full of personal and professional challenges for many of us. Staying connected to friends and

colleagues means even more these days.

While the ongoing travel restrictions due to the global Covid-19 pandemic means we won't be able to meet in person as a group just yet— let's stay safe and connected throughout 2021.

In this issue you will find Network and Member updates and activity summaries, as well as lots of upcoming events responding to your requests.

**Get ready to mark your calendars!**

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network webpage launched!



The Network has formed a strong foundation since its launch in 2017. Many engaged in promoting gender equality and water diplomacy processes are reaching out to learn more about the Network, the goals, and most importantly, the members.

The overarching goal of the Network is to elevate women's leadership in

high-level decision-making in transboundary waters of the Nile basin.

To support the Network, a webpage was launched at the end of 2020 to increase visibility for the members. The webpage has three tabs. The **What We Do** tab, briefly introduces the Network and its objectives. The **Who We Are** tab introduces

members, with a slideshow of previous workshops, and a link to the impressive biographies of the Network members. Finally, the **Learn More** tab, links to material created by the Network, and other relevant resources.

Visit the webpage at: <https://www.siwi.org/women-in-water-diplomacy/>

## Network Online Adaptations for 2021

In order to support enhanced engagement and identify barriers and pathways for improved online activities, SIWI undertook a Network consultation on October 2020—the findings of which helped feed into the 2021 Network activities.

Network members overwhelming expressed their desire to maintain their engagement in the Network and pivot to online activities in early 2021 with the hope that the annual in-person gatherings will resume as soon as safely possible. Additionally, Network online activities in some countries are requested to be hybrid—with small in-country in-person attendance in line with national public health recommendations. These online engagements also aim to leverage additional translation services to more easily engage Network members in the multiple language of the Nile communities. Finally, online engagements also provide an opportunity to engage additional women water diplomats from the Basin—and the Network is keen to invite additional participants!

## Taking it to the Next Level: Featured Women in Water Diplomacy Network Members

In advance of each Women in Water Diplomacy Network Newsletter members are invited to provide updates and reflections they wish to share with the Network. To read more about the Network members visit: <https://www.siwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Women-in-Water-Diplomacy-Nile-network-members.pdf>

In November 2020 **Gladys Wekesa (Kenya)**, Chair of the Nile-Technical Advisory Committee handed over the role to **Jaqueline Nyirakamana (Rwanda)** - both outstanding public servants are active members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. **Gladys** is an experienced water diplomat serving as the Director of Transboundary Water Resources in the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation as well as a member of a variety of Technical Advisory Committees of several river basins. Reflecting on her year as Chair Gladys stated 'I wish to thank the Nile-TAC for the support you have accorded me as your Chair. I wish to thank the management and staff of NBI for their dedication and commitment to the NBI, as well as the development partners for the continuous support extended to the Nile cooperation.' **Jaqueline**, also an experienced water diplomat, serving as a Transboundary Water Resources Cooperation Specialist in Ministry of Environment in Rwanda and a Nile Technical Advisory Committee (Nile-TAC) member with over 18 years of experience in transboundary water management, remarked on her new appointment 'I want to thank Ms Gladys Wekesa for her efforts in support of NBI activities during her Chairpersonship. I want to thank all Nile-TAC members for their efforts and request them to continue supporting NBI in all activities, so that we can achieve our shared vision objectives. Finally, I want to thank development partners for their support to NBI.' The Women in Water Diplomacy Network congratulates Jaqueline on her appointment and trusts she will do an outstanding job as the Chair of the Nile-TAC following the great leadership of Gladys.

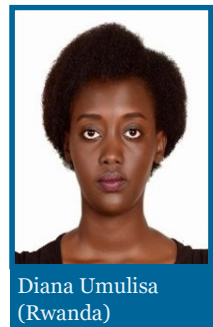
In November 2020, the cabinet of Rwanda appointed **Diana Umulisa (Rwanda)** Advisor to the Executive Secretary of the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST). Her role among others, will be to provide strategic and technical advice on matters relating to the activities and mandate of the Council, as well as coordinating and monitoring of such activities. NCST was established and placed under the Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, with a mandate to advise the government on policies, legislation and regulation in the fields of science, technology, research and innovation as well as leveraging resources and efforts to support scientific research productivity and capacity building through knowledge creation and innovation activities. Water has been identified as one of the national priority areas that the NCST has been promoting through research funding. Diana remarks, 'I am very passionate about science and technology fields which makes me honored to be appointed to such a high caliber position as a young woman in a very male dominated field. There is a lot of value added when more women are engaged and involved in such fields as practitioners, experts, advisors and decision makers.'



Gladys Wekesa  
(Kenya)



Jaqueline Nyirakamana  
(Rwanda)



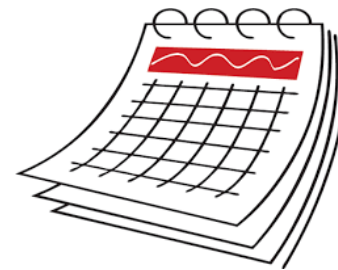
Diana Umulisa  
(Rwanda)

March 8, 2021 @15:00-16:30 UTC +1  
International Women's Day Network 'Town Hall' Meeting:

**Let's get together!** All members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network are invited to an informal **Network 'Town Hall' meeting on International Women's Day, March 8 @ 15:00 UTC+1.** The

meeting will be an opportunity to share updates, input into upcoming Network activities and meet the new members of the SIWI support team.

**Please RSVP to Elizabeth A. Yaari to attend!**



April 6, 2021 @ 13:00-14:30 UTC +1 | WEBINAR  
Elevating Youth Perspectives on Water Diplomacy

SIWI is pleased to invite members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile to participate in the upcoming UNESCO Category II International Centre for Water Diplomacy & Shared Waters Partnership Webinar entitled **'Elevating Youth Perspectives in Water Diplomacy.'**

Inclusive governance is a key

principle of effective transboundary water management. This SIWI webinar will explore the benefits and opportunities of inclusive transboundary governance with a focus on youth perspectives.

The event will feature young water diplomates from Central Asia and Afghanistan as well as the Middle East and a key note speech from **Yodit**

**Balcha**, Senior Climate Change Adaptation Advisor at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation, and Energy, Ethiopia and active member of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

**For details and registration visit:**

<https://siwi.zoom.us/webinar/register/>

June 15, 2021 @ 9:30-15:00 UTC+1 | Capacity Building Workshop  
Communication Resilience and Disinformation in Transboundary Waters

Targeted information influence or disinformation campaigns are posing dangerous and growing challenges for transboundary water cooperation processes.

Responding to requests for additional targeted training on the theme of communication resilience, disinformation and 'fake news,' **the Women in Water Diplomacy Network is pleased to offer this unique training opportunity for Network members.**

In this online capacity building workshop Network members will receive training on how information manipulation, disinformation, and 'fake news' campaigns are designed, exploring the impacts on national and transboundary water management and providing participants with strategies to enhance communication resilience.

This session, led by SIWI's Dr Martina Klimes will specifically aim to increase the ability of officials to identify, assess, and communicate the ben-

efits of transboundary water cooperation while building capacity to respond to information influence campaigns.

This workshop is specifically designed for Network Members responsible for decision-making and communication on water issues, including transboundary water cooperation issues but also issues related to national water management.

**Please RSVP to Elizabeth A. Yaari to attend!**

June 30, 2021 @ 12:30-15:30 UTC+1 | Capacity Building Workshop  
Third Party Involvement in Water Diplomacy Processes

SIWI's Dr Martina Klimes, Advisor, Water and Peace will lead this exciting half day capacity building session on **Third Party Involvement in Water Diplomacy Processes** designed for members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network.

The session will explore different

entry points, mandates, opportunities, and challenges in the engagement of third party actors in water diplomacy processes. Members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network will have an opportunity to hear from experts and share their experiences of engaging different types of third parties (arbiters, mediators, facilitators, good offices,

monitors/observers) in national and transboundary water diplomacy processes in the Nile basin.

Dr Klimes is the author of the 2016 book *Using Carrots to Bring Peace? Negotiation and Third Party Involvement (World Scientific)*.

**Please RSVP to Elizabeth A. Yaari to attend!**

## Reporting Back: Women in Water Diplomacy Network at the IHE Delft e-conference: ‘(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance: Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation’

In September 2020 the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile was pleased to participate in the IHE Delft hosted the e-conference ‘(En)Gendering Transboundary Water Governance: Feminist Perspectives on Water Conflict and Cooperation.’ SIWI hosted the session ‘Experiences of the Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile’ which included a brief introduction to the Network by Elizabeth A. Yaari followed by a panel discussion including Network members’ **Ambassador Nadia Gefoun (Sudan)** and **Yodit Balcha (Ethiopia)**, moderated by Alexandra Said. The session

was an opportunity to discuss the significance of all female Networks, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by women as decision-makers in the Nile.

Ambassador Nadia voiced “Power is taken, not given. You must not sit and wait for people to come and give you something, you have to fight for it!”, urging women to take up space in leadership positions.

Yodit Balcha (Ethiopia) expressed her views that although there still are many obstacles to women’s equal participation, “There are many promising developments that pave the way



for a more effective role of women in decision-making”, indicating a change in societal perceptions on who is fit for leadership and high-level decision-making.

**To read more about this session and view the recording please visit:**

<https://www.siwi.org/latest/lessons-from-the-women-in-water-diplomacy-network-in-the-nile>.

## Reporting Back: Women in Water Diplomacy Network Experience Exchange with regional women mediators networks

On December 7, 2020, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, in partnership with the **Folke Bernadotte Academy**, hosted a digital experience exchange on ‘participating in and facilitating dialogue and decision-making processes’ between the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile and the regional women mediators networks the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) and Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC).

The purpose of the exchange was to create an opportunity for these networks to meet and to learn from each other through shared experiences. The meeting was initiated as response to the Women in Water Diplomacy’s request for experience exchange with mediators from the Swedish Women’s Mediation Network. The meeting gathered 27 women with experience in dialogue and decision-making processes as mediators, negotiators or civil servants).

Elizabeth A. Yaari (SIWI) and Anna Möller-Loswick (FBA) opened the meeting by introducing the Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Network and the Swedish Women’s Mediation Network. This was followed by opening reflections from **Ambassador Nadia Gefoun**, Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an opening re-



sponse by **Ambassador Charlotta Sparre**, Director of at Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa. Thereafter, the participants were divided into three break-out chaired by **Gladys Wekesa**, Director of Transboundary Water Resources in the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Kenya; **Jacqueline Nyirakamana**, Transboundary Water Resources Initiative Specialist & Nile-TAC Chair, Ministry of Environment, Rwanda; and Swedish Ambassador **Helena Gröndahl Rietz** respectively.

A written summary of this event was subsequently circulated to all Women in Water Diplomacy Network members and is available upon request from Elizabeth A. Yaari, SIWI.



## 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, 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/what-we-do/women-in-water-diplomacy/>

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