

# SHARED WATERS PARTNERSHIP

## AFTER ACTION REPORT<sup>1</sup>

### WOMEN IN WATER DIPLOMACY NETWORK Global Network Forum at the 2022 World Water Week

August 27-September 1, 2022 | Stockholm, Sweden



**Women in Water Diplomacy Network**  
**A Growing Global Partnership**

**Shared Waters Partnership**  
supporting Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin 2017 - 2023

**Women in Water Management Network**  
Central Asia and Afghanistan 2020-2022

**Women in Water Diplomacy Global Strategy**  
Supporting the Network in the Nile and Beyond 2022-2027

**SIWI**  
Stockholm International Water Institute

**UNEP**  
United Nations Environment Programme

**Government of the Netherlands**

**Sweden Sverige**

**UNDP**  
United Nations Development Programme

**OSCE**  
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Carec**

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

**CIWA**  
Central Asia and Afghanistan Water Institute

**IHE DELFT**  
International Institute of Water, Environment and Health

**Cap-Net**

**ENVIRONMENTAL LAW INSTITUTE**

**LM International**

**Join Us!**

<sup>1</sup> This Shared Waters Partnership Women in Water Diplomacy Network After Action Report was authored by Network members and process support team representatives, including Minura Begishbek Kyzy, Dr Zodwa Dlamini, Letizia Zuliani, Julienne Ndjiki and Elizabeth A. Koch; with special thanks to Rehab Abd Almohsen for the photography captured throughout the event.

On 27 and 28 August 2022, the first-ever Women in Water Diplomacy Global Network Forum was held in Stockholm, Sweden back-to-back with the World Water Week. The Forum was attended by over 80 water diplomats primarily engaged in the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile and the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, alongside new Network supporters and basin representatives as well as representatives of the development organizations and partners including the Government of Sweden, the United States Department of State, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Government of the Netherlands, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the World Bank's Cooperation in International Waters (World Bank CIWA), the Environmental Law Institute (ELI), the UNESCO IHE Delft, CAPNet and LM International (Läkarmissionen).

The Forum aimed to enable inter-basin networking and joint learning as well as fostering linkages between women water diplomats from across the growing Network and advance the Network's strategic collective engagement as part of key policy dialogues and events at the World Water Week. Specifically, the 2022 Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Forum served as an opportunity to:

- enable the Network Members to meet in-person after an extended period of limited travel,
- take stock of Network's developments and priorities,
- enable joint learning and discussions between Network members and supporters,
- enable inter-basin exchange and learning,
- together launch the 2022-2027 Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Strategy and the 2022 Global Network joint statement and call to action at the 'A Rising Tide' session during the World Water Week,
- enable capacity development and knowledge sharing through engagement in sessions at the World Water Week, and
- collectively influence international policy priorities at a key international engagement opportunity leading up to the 2023 UN Water Conference.



The Forum was opened by **Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager of International Programmes at the Environmental Law Institute (formerly Senior Manager at the Stockholm International Water Institute), who gave an overview of the engagements organized as part of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile and the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan since 2017 and highlighted the Women Water Diplomacy Network's Mission is: *"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"*. She further highlighted the importance of this initiative given that, unfortunately, climate change – largely expressed through impacts on water - and conflicts continue to disproportionately negatively impact on women and women's voices remain few at decision levels at all scales. It was for this reason that the coalition of networks worldwide is brought together at this Global Network Forum in order to provide the much-needed support and engagement of women water diplomats and collectively change the "status quo" of decision making in transboundary waters. Remarkably, the pre participation evaluation of the participating women diplomats at the Global Network Forum self-reported more than 500 years of collective experience engaged in water and transboundary processes.

The introductory section was followed by welcoming remarks from representatives of development partners and implementing partners, including:

**Katja Ahlfors**, Director of the Centre for Peace Mediation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland who contributed through a [pre-recorded video message](#). During her speech, Ms. Ahlfors highlighted how strengthening the role of women and water diplomacy are key priority areas in Finland’s support to peace mediation, which is at the heart of Finland’s Foreign and Security Policy.



**Dr. Saule Ospanova**, Senior Environmental Affairs Adviser at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) shared the OSCE experience in water management and gender mainstreaming in environmental activities, highlighting women’s role in decision-making as key priority for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. She indicated that women are often at the frontline of the water crisis and have critical roles to play in natural resources management and despite this, they are often under-represented in political decision-making at the national and

transboundary level, undermining progress towards co-operative and sustainable management of shared waters.

After the scene was set, it was essential for the women water diplomats to, as a collective community, reflect and explore the questions of shared identity and purpose in joining together at the first ever Global Women in Water Diplomacy Network Forum. Participants began by exploring **“who we are individually, and who are we together”**. This was done during the interactive session led by members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team including **Julienne Ndjiki** (SIWI), **Alyssa Offutt** (IHE Delft), **Xanani Baloyi** (SIWI), **Letizia Zuliani** (OSCE) and **Tais Reznikova** (CAREC).



During this engaging introduction session, Network members were able to share characteristics that define themselves and made aware of the linkages transcending their diverse geographical locations. The session served to strengthen inter-basin linkages among members to foster collaboration, as well as reaching a common understanding of the shared values of water and the Network’s growing community. The session concluded elevating key



points elevated by many throughout the interactive session including that the Network’s diversity is our strength, our shared values of water bring us together, strong motivation to build out and implement the Global Strategy.

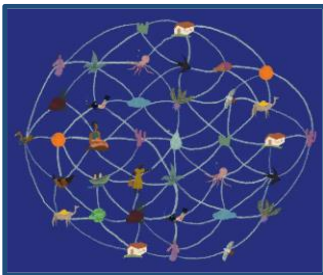
Following the lunch break, participants came together again to share perspectives from Network members regarding their engagement in Water Diplomacy processes. The high-level panel discussion was facilitated by **Ambassador Lena Sundh**, founding member of the Swedish Women’s Mediation Network and participant in the first Women in Water Diplomacy Network Forum in Uganda in 2017. The experience-sharing panel included perspectives from **Gladys Wekesa**, Nile Network Member & Director of Transboundary Water





Resources in the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation in Kenya; **Dr Zodwa Dlamini**, Network Leadership Council Member & South Africa's former Chief Delegate and Permanent Representative on the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission; and **Yodit Balcha**, Leadership Council Member & Climate Change Adaptation Research Officer II at the Alliance Bioversity CIAT, Africa Hub and Former Senior Climate Change Adaptation Adviser at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy. Ambassador Sundh started by calling attention to the role water plays, not

only as potential trigger for tensions and conflict, but also as a source of negotiation and mediation, enhancing security and prosperity. Ambassador Sundh shared Sweden's experience and contribution to the international work on women, water, peace and security, including UN-Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security). She also highlighted the importance of women's networks, such as the Nordic Women Mediators Network, where members share a commitment to sustaining peace through the inclusive and meaningful participation of women in all phases of peace processes, and the Swedish Women's Mediation Network which supports women from areas affected from armed conflicts and water. The Networks work to build capacities and enables knowledge sharing, while also helping women to become more visible in diplomatic processes.



The panellists provided their insights on the progress made and the challenges encountered to enhance gender equality in decision-making in the Nile Basin and beyond, the level of mediation of women in the water sector as well as the impact on women's involvement in conflict resolution and conflict prevention processes. Gladys Wekesa was proud to report the rise of the involvement of women diplomats in the water sector and related sectors in Kenya, owing it to the framework that has been put in place. She pointed to the case of the conflict between Tanzania and Kenya as an example of good practice in a women-led

mediation process. However, in her opinion, more work was still needed with gender-specific instruments. Dr Zodwa Dlamini highlighted the need to acknowledge and celebrate the victories acquired along the way in order to keep going. *"Remember that you are there not by mistake, but because you deserved it"*, she poised. However, she voiced the need to empower women at the local and village level to ensure the inclusion of all at all scales of decision-making processes. Yodit Balcha echoed the need for inclusivity in diplomacy processes and highlighted the need for mentorship and affirmation from senior professionals, including the male champions and women diplomats. This session provided an in-depth understanding of the importance of women's participation in water diplomacy from three different perspectives, international transboundary negotiations, local, as well as the challenges often experienced. The experience shared by Network members was invaluable as it provided concrete examples of good cooperation led by women to address conflict. Online and onsite participants shared how other women diplomats have been navigating the often-challenging environment in various ministries despite their low numbers. Considering the advancement of women in water diplomacy over the years, it is paramount to effectively conduct a monitoring and evaluation exercise on the existing legal framework at national level. The importance of identifying male champions who would bring a different perspective to their fellow male colleagues to the often misunderstood and mistrust of women participation in the often-male dominated field of water and transboundary field was emphasised.

Network members participating online also contributed to the discussions emphasizing the need to have an interface between different levels at national levels, starting from decision makers passing by scientists and ending with the end users of our projects, as well as people receiving the benefits from the implementation process. In addition, it was highlighted how the media still needs a lot of training to be able to communicate appropriately on technical issues in the right way and assist in fighting against disinformation. The fear of harassment was also cited as a limiting factor to women acceding to highest decision-making levels of water diplomacy.



To conclude the first full day of the Global Network Forum, **Bogadi Mathangwane**, National Director at the Department of Water and Sanitation in Botswana and Commissioner of the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) provided the wrap-up and reflections of the day, summarizing it with the following key messages. Bogadi remarked that the strategy is one of the important things that can contribute to the development of our Network; the participation of women in the water sector is an important factor for the development of water cooperation; women can and are contributing positively to the prevention of water conflicts; a balanced workforce is necessary so that men and women can make decisions together and finally that positive interactions with the media can enhance the role of women in water resources management.

**Day 2 of the first ever Global Network Forum** began with a welcome and recap session from day 1 by **Xanani Baloyi**, Programme Officer and Gender Equality Focal Point at SIWI. Xanani ushered the participants into the second day of the Forum by reflecting on the accomplishments of the first day of the Global Forum and reviewed the agenda for the day.



Following the morning welcome session, **Radhika Gupta**, SIWI's Communications Officer introduced the session [‘Visions of Water’](#). Radhika developed beautiful visual representations of how she perceived the journey of water and women in water diplomacy from now until 2050. This vision was also strengthened through the interview she conducted in 2022 for the [Women in Water Diplomacy Network Newsletter](#) with Theresa Khakasa Wasike, a member of the Network's Leadership Council and captured in the article [‘Water is a Woman's Affair’](#). The story behind Radhika's illustration, which graces the cover of the Network's new Global Strategy, was not just of the Nile countries but relevant to basins globally. The session was key to showcase the importance of communications and art in achieving our shared objectives, engage new stakeholders in and around water diplomacy processes.

The highly visual presentation was followed by a panel discussion from leading Network members and supporters. **Ambassador Nadia Gofoun**, Former Sudan Ambassador to Norway and Denmark and current Vice President of the Arab Human Rights Committee, thereafter, facilitated the panel discussion of *‘Pragmatic Dreamers’* with **Theresa Khakasa Wasike**, Member of the Network Leadership Council and Director of Administration in the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation in Kenya, **Meerim Seidakmatova**, Member of the Central Asia and Afghanistan Network, Central Asia Youth Network, **Dr Tahani Sileet**, Member of the Network Leadership Council and Head of External Cooperation in the Nile Water Sector, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation in Egypt, and joining online from South Africa, **Karabo Mokgonyana**, Lawyer and Development Practitioner, Former African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace in Southern Africa. The session provided an insight into the experiences of the women water diplomats with a focus on enabling as well as barriers to acceding to positions of power and decision making. Dr Tahani expressed the meaning of the support and motivation she has received from male colleagues throughout her career as well as the personal value the Nile River carries to her heart. In addition, Karabo highlighted the challenges often experienced by young professionals such as lack of opportunities, the use of inaccurate data, as well as the lack of funding for research and youth programmes. Meerim Seidakmatova added that, often in local government, the main barrier is that most of the officials are males who are not progressive and somehow reluctant to the idea that youth could perform optimally in positions of power. Theresa shared that,



as an Administrator, it has not always been easy to implement diplomacy at high level. However, she acknowledged the opportunity afforded to women specifically in the Ministry of Water in Kenya, to hold decision making positions and represent the country internationally. Theresa also emphasised the importance of hard work, transparency, professionalism and due diligence in order to prevent any mistrust. This session afforded the Global Network Forum participants an opportunity to reflect on the best way to provide support to youth and other women water diplomats. The key takeaways messages were that water conflicts should be examined with an intersectoral and multi-stakeholders' lens, and that the growth of young women diplomats depends on the opportunities they are afforded to apply their skills. During the interactive segment, the need to ensure the involvement of all categories of youth, such as mentorship, assistantships, and internships should be accompanied with an adequate income to motivate young professionals, develop their confidence and improve their skills was emphasized.

The session was followed by a special segment on **'Boundary-crossing Symbols – Collective Positive Visibility & Action at the World Water Week'** facilitated by **Elizabeth A. Koch**, with guest designers **Anna Forsberg** and **Stina Lanneskog**, who created a unifying symbol for the Global Network. Elizabeth began by sharing background on the objective of the collective design project and the power of symbols in fostering collective positive visibility. Anna and Stina then jointly presented the process of developing the symbol, initiated by the Process Support's request to develop a unifying way of supporting collective positive visibility for the Global Network and developed in close collaboration with the Network Leadership Council.



The beautiful "Rising Tide Symbol" was then revealed alongside the many ways of wearing it was also provided – for champions of water cooperation of all genders. There was a lot of excitement as Network members and supporters, participants of the Global Forum received their Rising Tide Clip and wore them as symbols of togetherness of the rising tide across the globe. Each participant also received a hard copy of the full strategy featuring the beautiful illustration from the *Visions of Water* series.

During the session that followed, **Julienne Ndjiki** (SIWI), **Nompumelelo Ntshalintshali-Motsa** (Network Leadership Council Member, eSwatini), **Dr Muna Musnad** (Network Leadership Council Member, Sudan) presented the strategy inception and development process leading up to the World Water Week during which the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Strategy will be launched. Copies of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Strategy were handed out to all the participants who expressed special thanks and appreciation to the Strategy Process Support team which strategic planning and consultation efforts were led and coordinated by Elizabeth A Koch, with support from the Leadership Council and Process Support team members including Julienne Ndjiki, Anton Earle, Xanani Baloyi, and Katie Goldie-Ryder from SIWI, and Jessica Troell, Environmental Law Institute, Ellen Hagerman, World Bank's Cooperation for International Waters in Africa (CIWA) and others.



**Tais Reznikova**, CAREC, then shared further details on the mission and perspectives of the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, which was built on the vision and achievements of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile and aims to adapt and adopt the Global Strategy in Central Asia and Afghanistan. The successful first ever Women in Water Diplomacy Global Forum concluded with Julienne Ndjiki sharing some practical information ahead of the World Water Week session and strategies for elevating the Women in Water Diplomacy Strategic Objectives during all sessions at the World Water Week.





The participants of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Network Forum were then able to join and contribute to sessions throughout the 2022 World Water Week. On 30 August 2022, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and its many partners convened the World Water Week session ***“A Rising Tide: Our Shared Vision - Women in Water Diplomacy Nile and Beyond”***.<sup>2</sup>

**Elizabeth A. Koch**, Senior Manager at Environmental Law Institute opened the session by acknowledging partners who turned the dream of the Network into a reality. Thereafter, she presented the evolution of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network from its founding stages in the Nile in 2017 to the global movement it had become to date. Representatives from participating development partner organizations, shared reflections and expressed admiration and ongoing support towards the Global Network and the many leading women water experts, but also to note the critical contributions of the Network members to water diplomacy at large.



**Tanya Trujillo**, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior in the United States of America, highlighted the strong interest of Vice President Kamala Harris as a water leader who understands the value and importance of water and in line with the White House’s action plan for global water security. Assistant Secretary Trujillo further emphasized the embedded strong alignment of all the pillars of the Women in Water Diplomacy strategy with the work in the White House Action Plan to advance the United States Global Water Strategy and to increase equity and economic growth and decreasing risk and vulnerability to conflict, increasing resilient communities and emphasising gender equality: *‘All of the pillars of the action plan (in the US Global Water Strategy) complement the work of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network...The Women in Water Diplomacy Network is something we are very proud and happy to support.... In the Western United States right now we have unprecedented drought conditions we are working hard in our major river basins to address the short-term emergency operational challenges but at the same time building the strategies and solutions to help us be resilient to climate change over the long-term. We are very inspired, I am personally inspired, by the wonderful conversations and stories of collaboration you have through this Network.’* Trujillo shared.

<sup>2</sup> The full video of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network Global Strategy launch event can be accessed [at this link](#) from our partners at the World Bank’s Cooperation International Water in Africa World Water Week summary (scroll down!).



**Dr Saule Ospanova**, Senior Environmental Advisor at OSCE, thanked all governments and partners that had contributed to the launch of the Global Strategy and the hosting of the first Global Network Forum. She further indicated that the women diplomats who joined the Global Forum would be considered as strategic resources by the OSCE and an essential element in the quest to ensure peace and security at national and regional levels. Dr Ospanova highlighted the implementation of a Global Facility financed project on transboundary water cooperation, a project focused on strengthening capacity and exchanging knowledge for women in water

conflict prevention and was achieved through the guidance on gender mainstreaming in water management in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Dr Ospanova indicated that OSCE would continue with its work to empower women professionals in the water sector ahead of the UN Water Conference in 2023 in New York.

**Antti Rautavaara**, Special Envoy for Water at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, expressed his excitement to be contributing to the elevation of the objectives of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and described the importance of the topic for Finland which has, since 1964, been involved in transboundary water cooperation in their own region and globally. He boldly drew a parallel between the involvement of women in negotiations and the state of success cooperation experienced in Finland. Antti further stated that he considers water diplomacy to be at the heart of the Finnish Foreign Security Policy, making mention of several Finnish women peace mediators' networks which the Women in Water Diplomacy Network has had the pleasure to exchange with. He concluded by encouraging the Network Members to pursue their vision because water management is considered as a development issue as the heart of security and foreign policy.



**Sogol Jafarzadeh**, Environmental Advisor at OSCE then facilitated a conversation with members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network around the "**Meaning of Us**", starting by expressing her sympathy to the Afghan people and Network Members specifically, who could not join the Global Forum due to political instability as well as her personal support and value of being engaged in the Network for some years. **Dr Tahani Sileet**, **Cholpon Aitakhunova** and **Theresa Khakasa Wasike** took turn to narrate the history of the creation of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, applaud the achievements so far, recognize the force water

generates to unite members beyond geographical boundaries as well as the sisterhood that fosters collaboration and empowers the next generation.

**Dr Anders Jägerskog**, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist at the World Bank's Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA), congratulated the Global Forum Network for the pioneering work they have achieved, and shared key data related to the critical linkages between women and water security yet highlighting how women remain largely excluded in water management. Echoing Antti's remarks, Dr Jägerskog demonstrate the correlation between the sustainability of the agreements and the involvement of women in transboundary water cooperation. Dr Jägerskog concluded by stating the intent of the World Bank CIWA to work with male champions that will drive this process of women inclusivity forward.







**Dr Zodwa Dlamini**, Network Leadership Council Member & South Africa's former Chief Delegate and Permanent Representative on the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, provided an emotional narration of the *#Herstory* of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile, from its birth in Entebbe, Uganda (2017) to its current constituents. She emphasized the dynamism and the resilience of the Network which had to adapt in order to survive and thrive through the COVID-19 pandemic among other barriers experienced by the Network throughout its development. She presented the

timeline of the Women in Water Diplomacy Strategy development process from its launch in December 2021 to the World Water Week launch in August 2022. Dr Dlamini specifically highlighted key milestones including: the 14 December 2021 Women in Water Diplomacy Network Leadership Council and Strategy launch event hosted online by the Swedish Ambassador in Pretoria, H. E. Håkan Juholt; the 25 January 2022 all Network Online Consultation; the 8 March 2022 Women in Water Diplomacy Network's second Strategy Development Consultation hosted online by H.E. Caroline Vicini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden, Embassy of Sweden to Kenya, UNEP and UN-Habitat; the 31 April 2022 Nile and Central Asia and Afghanistan Joint Network Consultation and the 27 – 28 August 2022 first ever Global Network Forum. Concluding with highlighting today's milestone as a seminal occasion with the Global Strategy launch at the World Water Week when the world was introduced to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Global Strategy in the presence of a full house of more than 100 women and male champions who witnessed this auspicious occasion in person and the many others who were able to join online. Dr Zodwa Dlamini continued, presenting the mission of the Network: *"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"* as well as the Network's Strategic Objectives including:

- **To improve gender equality in high level decision making in transboundary basins** with focus in enhanced women's leadership in decision making on the share waters in the Nile Basin and other transboundary basins in Africa and globally- with resultant positive implications for regional peace, human security and water governance.
- **To support technical and research cooperation, knowledge exchange, peer to peer experience exchange, and capacity building** opportunities to enhance coordination, shared understanding, and trust building among Network members.
- **To elevated dialogue, knowledge, and experience** around the intersecting themes of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network (gender equality, women's leadership, male championship, water cooperation, water security, climate security, human security, etc.) as part of the basins processes, Pan African processes and globally.
- **To contribute to empowering young water** diplomats by fostering experience exchange and empowering early career water diplomats.
- **To engage new sustainable core and thematic partners** to continue to support the Network in the Nile and develop adapted and contextualised Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile and develop adapted and contextualised Women in Water Diplomacy Networks in other strategic basins in Africa and beyond.

**Yodit Balcha**, Leadership Council Member & Climate Change Adaptation Research Officer II at the Alliance Bioversity CIAT, Africa Hub and Former Senior Climate Change Adaptation Adviser at the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, explained the significance and importance of the overarching goal for empowerment of women and how it would be achieved through objectives and activities defined within the five strategic pillars in the Nile and Beyond Strategy, including:

### **Pillar 1: Gender and Youth empowerment In Transboundary Water Decision Making**

Objective: Spearheading initiatives within the Network and elevated women's roles in decision making and addressing underlying drivers of gender inequalities in water governance from local to transboundary levels. Contribute to empowering young water professionals in support of the next generation of water diplomats.



### **Pillar 2: Peer-to-peer learning, capacity development and experience exchange**

Objective: Support peer-to-peer learning, capacity development and experience exchange across the Network, enhancing knowledge, coordination and trust-building among network members.

### **Pillar 3: Research cooperation supporting network members and institutions**

Objective: Support multi-disciplinary research cooperation among network members and other institutions and partners in cooperation with the SIWI hosted UNESCO International Centre for Water cooperation (ICWC) and other partners.

### **Pillar 4: Linkages to basin, regional and global processes**

Objective: 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 5: Analysis, Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications**

Objective: Provide professional process support to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network to effectively implement the Nile and Beyond Strategy. Support the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, and financial resources to enable the achievement of the Network's global mission and strategy.



**Tais Reznikova**, Water Management and Policy Specialist at CAREC, applauded the work undertaken by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile, which was a great source of inspiration for the establishment of the Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan, launched in June 2021. On behalf of the entire Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, Tais fully endorsed the Women in Water Diplomacy Global Strategy with specific interest in capacity building and youth empowerment, engagement in regional water dialogues, inter-generational knowledge transfer and experience sharing with current water governors, research cooperation, and the engagement of the male champions.

In a special announcement that followed, **Commissioner Bogadi Mathangwane**, of the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM, representing Botswana) was pleased to announce ORASECOM's plan to be part of the inspiring, passionate team of women that make up the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. She further endorsed the importance of this platform to the attention of the many who value water and its potential to provide important input opportunities to the 2023 to UN Water Conference. Through her voice, ORASECOM pledged to support the Global Strategy and its objectives that emphasise peace and security.



International Joint Commission **Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare** (IJC, representing Canada) followed, adding her endorsement of the Global Strategy and encouraging its adoption across North America. *'There has never*

been a more important time for a Network like this to exist. The challenges we are facing are so significant – while we all face them – the impacts are most severely on those that are marginalized and vulnerable. We all have the opportunity to benefit from this Network.... (The IJC water treaty) has stood the test of time for 114 years, that said, I am only the fourth female commissioner in the history of the IJC. We had the first female commissioner in 1979 and my group of commissioners has the honor of having the first indigenous commissioner appointed to the commission. And so, as you can see, we have a very long way to go and one of the things that I think is most valuable about this Network is its role in helping us challenge assumptions about the way things are, how we make decisions, and the way things should be.... The IJC is very committed to working to support this and finding funding partners... to see if there is way to be an ongoing member of this Network.’ Adding her voice to ORASECOM’s, Dr Phare voiced the IJC’s commitment to be a member of the Network and support the Network’s development across Canada’s shared waters.



Following these exciting announcements, representatives of Network – including new and longer serving representatives – took the stage to jointly read aloud the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s 2022 ‘**A Rising Tide Joint Statement**’ included in the [Women in Water Diplomacy Nile and Beyond Strategy 2022 – 2027](#).

**They read: ‘With gratitude and recognition to the many women, water experts, diplomats, and leaders that paved the way before us, the Women in Water Diplomacy Network shares this Global Network Statement on the occasion of the launch of the**

**Network’s Nile and Beyond Strategy at the 2022 World Water Week.**

**The Women in Water Diplomacy Network** is an informal community of practice comprised of both formal and informal women decision-makers and experts, representing over 500 years of collective experience and expertise in transboundary water management and decision making engaged in some of the most water insecure regions of the world. The Women in Water Diplomacy Network holds a cooperative vision recognizing the unique and intrinsic social, cultural, environmental, and economic values of the transboundary water resources that traverse the landscapes of our one shared planet. Despite challenges, we are bound together and jointly recognize the significant benefits that can result from improved transboundary water cooperation. Guided by our shared objectives, we discuss common challenges, share experience, enhance understanding of each other and our countries’ perspectives, build trust, and support one another to seek mutually beneficial opportunities for cooperation **to achieve sustainable water for all.**

**Shared surface and ground water resources** unite and link our communities and lives in times of abundance and in times of scarcity. For communities who know well the deep insecurities of political conflict and non-cooperation as well as the true values of peace, increasing water and climate insecurities add a challenging complexity to already deeply consequential transboundary water relations. Sadly, water-insecure ‘hotspots’ are found on every continent today affecting the lives of roughly a third of humanity. Shared water resources that support, sustain, and enrich communities and nature, and drive economies in all corners of the world, **are reaching critical conditions.**

**Women and children from vulnerable communities** are bearing a heavy and disproportionate burden for unsustainable water management. Yet, women experts and decision makers are far from equally represented



*in transboundary water management decision making processes. While it has long been recognized that women play an essential role in both, the provision, management, and safeguarding of water resources, and all scales of development and peacebuilding processes, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction and recovery, rigid barriers restricting women's equal participation and influence persist.*

***The essential value of water to peace and human security spurs us to elevate our voices and knowledge in a global rising tide of water experts, peacemakers, mediators, and stewards. As leaders we know this to be true - sustainable water for all is foundational to a peaceful, secure, resilient shared-future and to the full and effective enjoyment of human rights.***

***Many women water diplomats are currently at the innovative fore of efforts to advance cooperative and inclusive transboundary water governance solutions in some of the most vulnerable countries and communities around the world. As decision makers and experts, we, members and supporters of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, stress the urgency of action needed to address our shared water and climate challenges and, we commit, in our capacity as water leaders, to continue to work together to further this cooperation. Through our collective strength and support to each other we affirm that a rising tide does, indeed, raise all.***

***We ask you to meet our commitments with yours.***

***To the young water diplomats, we have not forsaken future generations. The burden of sustainable development is not yours alone. We recommit to our shared responsibility to future generations – ours, yours, and those that will follow – by ensuring young leaders are actively involved in water and climate decision making.***

***To our brothers, we are grateful to those among you who even from a place of power conscientiously examine assumptions and who share our convictions. We invite your partnership and championship in actively removing barriers to gender equality, enabling, and encouraging inclusive decision making.***

***To our colleagues and peers, local, national, regional, global decision makers and development partners, we call upon you to commit political, financial, and other resources to frontline women water diplomats and stakeholders around the world to ensure that all of society's available skills, experience, and resources are represented and empowered to meet our shared water and climate challenges.***

***We all must take urgent and coordinated action to remove gendered barriers to equal participation and influence in water, peace, and security dialogues.***

***In partnership, the members and supporters of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network'***

Thanking all Network members, supporters and session participants in the room and online, **Jessica Troell**, Director of International Waters at the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) concluded the proceedings of the launch of the Women in Water Diplomacy Global Strategy and encouraged all to reach out to discuss with Network members and partners how they and their institutions, organizations, countries can share in achieving the shared objectives of the Women in Water Diplomacy and change the status quo for women, water, peace and security.

## Global Network Forum Monitoring and Evaluation Survey Summary Results

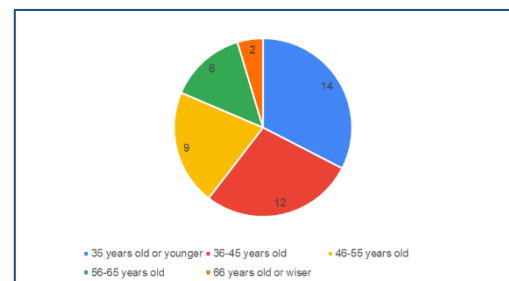
Design, Monitoring and Evaluation are critical aspects of all Women in Water Diplomacy Network engagements both to collect age and gender disaggregated data, reflections and thoughts on the workshop content and design, and a key aspect of how future engagements and priorities are co-created across the Network. Reflections from participants are valuable inputs that impact how mainstreamed and targeted network activities are developed and shaped to better deliver on Network objectives. Participants were encouraged to think deeply about the positive but also negative factors that could have impacted their learning ability during Network engagements. Responses to Network evaluations, including this survey, are recorded anonymously and are enabled with google translation to enable respondents to answer in their easiest language. Included aggregate response data, as well as individual statements included in this report are quoted anonymously with consent of all workshop participants who completed the assessment.

It is noteworthy to indicate that not all participants (members or supporters) who participated in parts of the Global Forum responded to the survey (which was unfortunately delayed in dissemination due to process support lead illness directly after the World Water Week). Slightly more than 50% of participants who joined part, or the entirety of the Global Network Forum responded to the post engagement survey. A near complete plurality of the participants and respondents were female, as to be expected in this event targeting women water diplomats and male champions of gender equality, and while 7% of participating respondents joined the engagements through the online platform arranged throughout the event – most respondents joined in person. The participants at the Women in Water Diplomacy Global Network Forum were largely members of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the Nile, the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, representatives of basins aspiring to join the Network such as the Southern African River Basin Organizations including ORASECOM, OKACOM and ZAMCOM or key North American transboundary basins. Partner organisations and supporters of the global network were also represented.

Despite clear limitations on any broad generalizations that can be demonstrated through this survey, important input from members and participants was collected of value to the further development of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network and water cooperation processes globally. Overall, the inputs received demonstrated the significance of the Global Network Forum by those able to join in-person. Many highlighted that the first ever Global Network Forum provided a uniquely transformative opportunity to exchange and gain experience and knowledge but also the soft skills such as joy, sense of community, and shared mission and motivation. The professionals were able to network freely in an atmosphere of cooperation. This word cloud captures some of the key words used to describe the Women in Water Diplomacy Global Network Forum by its participants.



The Global Network Forum’s goals for **diverse geographical and inter-generational participation**, dialogue and learning, including the engagement of a strong representative of young water professionals alongside mid and senior representatives were strongly met at the first ever Global Network Forum. A complete plurality of respondents indicated that they *‘Strongly Agreed’* or *‘Agreed’* that the Global Network Forum was **relevant and applicable to their professional work**. 95% of the respondents *‘Strongly Agreed’* or *‘Agreed’* that they would be able to **immediately leverage knowledge, skills, tools, or best practices gained from their participation at the Global Network Forum** and the World Water Week. And an overwhelming majority of responding participants indicated that they *‘Strongly Agree’* or *‘Agree’* that the

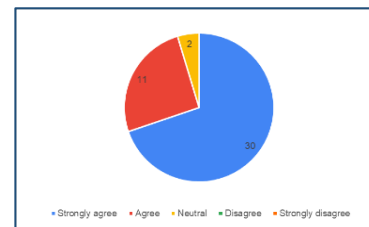
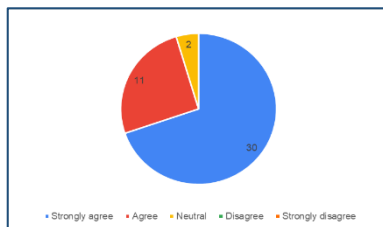
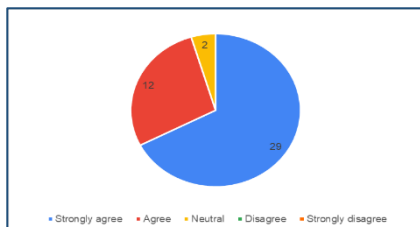


Women in Water Diplomacy Network **contributes to improved transboundary water cooperation at country (95%), basin (95%), and global (93%) levels.**

**95%** of respondents indicated that they **'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'** that **'the Women in Water Diplomacy Network contributes to improved transboundary water cooperation at the **country level**'.**

**95%** of respondents indicated that they **'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'** that **'the Women in Water Diplomacy Network contributes to improved transboundary water cooperation at the **basin level**'.**

**93%** of respondents indicated that they **'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree'** that **'the Women in Water Diplomacy Network contributes to improved transboundary water cooperation at the **global level**'.**



When asked to consider what part of the Global Network Forum should be **changed or improved**, most respondents indicated strong support for the engagement overall, requesting more social activities/events whilst other recommended that more time and effort be dedicated to achieving results through focus and targeted discussions over impactful activity as well as build and share real case studies demonstrating engagement of the Network in issues.

*“More engagement and membership should be given to all participants, this will make the expanding in the network, ownership sense will be raised to do more efforts on introducing the network and attracting for fund”.*

There was a suggestion that more women from other basins be invited to join the Forum and the Network but also influential men, often in leading policy development positions. Building stronger connections between the various Networks was identified in high frequency. And further efforts were needed to ensure stronger engagement for online participants.

Most respondents indicated that they will be reporting back on their engagement at the Global Network Forum to their institutes, organizations, universities or peer communities through report writing, publishing blogs, and articles as well as holding internal seminars or debrief sessions on the Network’s Global Strategy that was launched. A sample of open access reporting back include: **The World Bank’s Cooperation International Waters Africa** highlighted the Women in Water Diplomacy Strategy launch in a blog post here: <https://www.ciwaprogram.org/blog/siwi-world-water-week-2022-recap-and-highlights-from-ciwa-program-manager/>; **University of Arizona’s Dr Sharon Megdal** reflected on her participation in the events – the first Network event that a group of leading North American women water diplomats joined – in this blog piece: <https://wrrc.arizona.edu/reflections-connecting-globally-stockholm-world-water-week>; and many Network members and supporters shared their experience **on social media** platforms, including LinkedIn (such as [Sogol Jafarzadeh’s moving post here](#), [Meerim Seidakmatova’s inspiring live reflections here](#)) as well as Facebook posts (such as [this post from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation in Egypt](#)), and even Instagram and Tiktok.