



ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

“Accelerating the COVID-19 recovery and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda with and for youth”

THEMATIC SESSION ON SDG 6
25 April 2023, 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm (NY Time)
Hybrid Event

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	SDG 6
Session title	Water for Health and Cooperation: Youth Priorities, Challenges, and Success Stories
Session co-lead UN	UN-Water
Session co-lead Youth	Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), represented by Water Youth Network International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations (ICMYO), represented by International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA)
Session co-organizers (both UN and Youth)	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) UNESCO Groundwater Youth Network International Organization for Migration (IOM) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) World Water Quality Alliances Youth Workstream
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>The world’s precious water resources are “in deep trouble” as “we’ve broken the water cycle, destroyed ecosystems and contaminated groundwater” (UNSG, 2023). At the UN 2023 Water Conference, Secretary General António Guterres urged Member States and the international community to “recognize and act</p>	

upon the vital importance of water to our world's sustainability and as a tool to foster peace and international cooperation." The Conference emphasised that water is at the core of sustainable development and is critical for socio-economic development, healthy ecosystems, the realisation of human rights, and for human survival itself.

Nearly three out of four climate related disasters are linked to water, and a quarter of the planet lives without safely managed water services or clean drinking water. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) access is recognized as a basic human right by the UN. It is essential for maintaining human dignity, health and well-being.

Yet millions still lack access to these basic services, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Children and youth are overrepresented in areas of high, or extremely high, water vulnerability ([UNICEF, 2021](#)). 1 in 5 children worldwide do not have sufficient water to meet their daily needs. The lack of access to WASH facilities significantly impacts on human rights, especially those of young people, related to health, education, economic development, and social well-being.

Young women and girls are heavily impacted, with an estimated 500 million women and girls lacking adequate facilities for menstrual hygiene management ([UNICEF, 2021](#)). Addressing access to WASH is crucial for youth and especially young women. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing gender inequalities - an estimated 47 million women and girls have been pushed into extreme poverty since the declaration of the pandemic ([OXFAM, 2020](#)).

Additionally, lack of water security has been identified as one of the key drivers of migration as it undermines people's lives and livelihoods ([Mach, 2017](#)). Over 700 million people could be displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030 ([UNICEF](#)). Well-managed human mobility can play an important role in addressing water-related issues. WASH policies and action must ensure equitable access to services, including health services, and responding to the needs of mobile populations – especially irregular migrants who are harder to reach or remain invisible in WASH responses.

Further, growing pressure on freshwater resources often threatens peace by exacerbating tensions between the competing needs of communities, industries and agriculture – and even between countries that share freshwaters or groundwater. Youth engagement is a powerful catalyst to make peace-building and co-operation processes inclusive and sustainable, thus ensuring that agreements reached are considered by all relevant stakeholders ([SIWI, 2021](#)). Yet, recent data suggests that very few countries are committed to including youth in their decision-making processes ([SIWI, 2021](#)). Hence, it is imperative to better engage youth in their policy processes.

As leading innovators and knowledge creators, young people have proven time and again how crucial they are to social change - notably through youth-led research and action. Outside of decision-making processes, existing national, regional and global youth networks should be leveraged to disseminate knowledge, build transboundary cooperation, and promote multi-dimensional conservation efforts and integrated watershed management. These include surface water, groundwater and freshwater ecosystems (See Annex 1 Comment 1, 2, and 4).

COVID-19 has set back progress on a number of SDGs and targets, so a rapid recovery is needed to achieve Agenda 2030. The need for a holistic response has never been more urgent, and water has been

identified as particularly synergistic across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This ECOSOC Youth Forum thematic session on SDG 6 will further explore two themes of the UN 2023 Water Conference, Water for Health and Water for Cooperation, providing youth perspectives and solutions, and building upon the accelerators of the [SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#): Financing, Capacity Building, Data and Information, Innovation and Governance.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

Building on two of themes of the UN 2023 Water Conference, namely Water for Health and Water for Cooperation, the objectives of the thematic session on SDG 6 are to:

- 1) Discuss youth and children's **challenges and perspectives** on the right to water and sanitation, especially in humanitarian, climate and migration contexts, and on international and intergenerational cooperation for water.
- 2) Identify **priority policies and actions** for girls and young women to access safe drinking water, basic sanitation and menstrual health and hygiene in line with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework.
- 3) Showcase **youth solutions**, best practices, success stories and peer to peer exchanges regarding Water Cooperation, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in humanitarian, climate and migration contexts, while promoting institutions and development partners' role.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Youth recommendations to ensure WASH access for all and particularly for young women and young migrants and refugees.
- Solutions by and for youth aligning with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework: Financing, Capacity Building, Data and Information, Innovation and Governance.
- Concrete next steps to support and implement the youth demands and solutions to meaningfully engage them in water diplomacy processes and cooperation mechanisms, the nearest milestone being the SDG 6 Special Event at HLPF, but also looking towards the SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This session builds on priority areas identified by representatives of the Major Group on Children and Youth, youth representatives from UN entities and youth networks. The input draws from the youth inputs to the [Global Online Stakeholder Consultation](#) on the UN 2023 Water Conference. The input from youth representatives at the [Stakeholder Consultation hosted by the President of the General Assembly](#)

on 24 October 2022 has also been considered. Input from youth representatives at sessions of the UN 2023 Water Conference will be taken into account as well as the campaign of the Global Youth Movement for Water '[Fill up the Glass](#)'.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

The session will be held in the format of a hybrid interactive discussion, with a moderator and panellists who will engage in a live dialogue with the attendees. Please note that the programme is subject to change.

Duration: 90 minutes

- Opening Remarks: Li Cheng, UN-Water.
- Keynote address: H.E. Mr. Jonibek Hikmat, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations
- Moderated discussion

Question 1

How can we use entrepreneurship and technology to ensure better water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) access to support the realization of fundamental human rights - particularly the rights to health, education, and gender equality?

Question 2

What are some effective solutions for addressing the WASH needs of displaced people forced to migrate due to water scarcity? And how can these efforts be scaled up to promote greater access to basic WASH services for communities in vulnerable situations?

Question 3

3.1 Considering transboundary water management, how can we integrate surface water, freshwater, groundwater, and ecosystem conservation efforts in order to ensure water security?

3.2 What role can young people play in promoting long-lasting cooperation mechanisms for transboundary water management? What are the key enabling conditions for youth to be active change makers in this field?

Question 4

How can policymakers best engage young innovators and networks as key partners in negotiating holistic and impactful water agreements?

- Q/A (20 min)
- Closing Remarks: Sarah Breslin, UN-Water
Sharing of the key messages and call to action

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The five accelerators of the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework are Financing, Capacity Building, Data and Information, Innovation and Governance. These serve as organising principles for our discussion.

- 1 How can we ensure better WASH access and adequate menstrual hygiene management (MHM) to support the realisation of fundamental human rights, particularly the rights to health, education, and gender equality?
2. What are some effective strategies and interventions for addressing the WASH needs of displaced people who have been forced to migrate due to water scarcity, and how can these efforts be scaled up to promote greater access to basic WASH services for communities in vulnerable situations?
3. How can youth networks engage actively with governments and other key stakeholders (private companies, scientific institutions, local communities, etc.) to ensure their implementation? What role can young people play in promoting long-lasting cooperation mechanisms for transboundary water management? What are the key enabling conditions to allow youth to be active change makers in this field?
4. How can policymakers best engage youth networks as key partners in the negotiation of holistic and impactful water agreements?
5. How can we integrate surface water, fresh water, groundwater, and ecosystem conservation efforts into a comprehensive and holistic approach to transboundary water management, and what strategies can be employed to prioritize these efforts for the greatest impact?

NAMES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderators:

- **Ms. Sofia Corradi Oliveira**, Water Youth Network

- **Ms. Neha Sinha**, International Organization for Migration

Keynote Speaker:

- **H.E. Mr. Jonibek Hikmat**, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations

Panellists:

- **Mr. Ismail Farija**, African Youth Climate Hub
- **Mr. LIN Tengyu**, HurRain (Beijing) Technology Co., Ltd.
- **Ms. Faatiha Ayat**, Founder and CEO, CHIL&D
- **Mr. Francis Koroma**, Francis Koroma Foundation
- **Mr. Gregory Odey**, Founder of the Gregory Odey Water Foundation
- **Ms. Tracy Zaarour**, Member, Groundwater Youth Network

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

The following documents were reviewed:

- [UN 2023 Water Conference- Global Stakeholders Consultation: THEMES INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation hosted by PGA – [Roundtable 1 on Governance Summary](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation hosted by PGA – [Roundtable 2 on Capacity Development Summary](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation hosted by PGA – [Roundtable 3 on Data and Information Summary](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation hosted by PGA – [Roundtable 4 on Innovation Summary](#)
- Stakeholder Consultation hosted by PGA – [Roundtable 5 on Financing Summary](#)

SUGGESTED READING, IF ANY

- Annex 1 of this document
- [The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#) (UN-Water, 2020)
- [Reimagining WASH, Water Security for All](#) (UNICEF, 2021)
- [WATER AND MIGRATION: HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO FOR WATER?](#) (Mach, 2017)
- [Making Waves: Youth engagement in water diplomacy](#) (SIWI, 2021)
- [Beyond barriers: the fluid roles young people adopt in water conflict and cooperation](#) (Vojno et al. 2022)

Annex 1. UN 2023 Water Conference- Global Stakeholders Consultation

[UN 2023 Water Conference- Global Stakeholders Consultation: THEMES INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES \(Responses\) - Google Sheets](#)

Youth groups

Comment Number + Name of Organization	Country	Region	Sector	Proposed Theme for Interactive Dialogue 1	Please, indicate the rationale for proposing the Theme for Interactive Theme 1	Proposed Theme for Interactive Dialogue 4	Please, indicate the rationale for proposing the Theme for Interactive Theme 4
1. Parlamento Mexicano Juvenil por el Agua	Mexico	Latin America and the Caribbean	Children & Youth	Measures to fight corruption in the water and sanitation sector	Corruption in the water and sanitation sector affects the fulfillment of human rights and generates serious environmental impacts such as contamination and overexploitation of water sources.	Nature-based solutions for water management .	Focusing on solutions based on conservation, restoration, and integrated watershed management will have a sustainable impact on water availability and quality, helping countries become more resilient.
2. World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)	United Kingdom	Europe	Children & Youth	"1. Water and Forced Migrations "	Recent realities in the form of wars, conflicts, disasters and terrorism have led to the emergence of millions of environmental refugees around the world. If this condition is not immediately addressed, water stress or scarcity are almost imminent in the desired destinations of these individuals. The world must come to an agreement about how the water need of these migrants/refugees would be taken care of.	Maximizing the Potentials of Youths Networks in Water Response Globally	There are currently scores of national, regional and global organization of youths, that have extensive networks that could be harnessed to effectively disseminate the knowledge and resources that are needed for participation and inclusion across all levels. They could promote the intergenerational dialogues and stakeholders engagements that are crucial for proper response.
3. World Youth Parliament for Water	Nigeria	Africa	Other stakeholders active in areas related to	Water: The source of well-being for the human being.	Water is the main reason why there's still human survival		

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			sustainable development				
4. UNISC International	Japan	Asia	Children & Youth	Discussion on sustainable water infrastructure development in light of the 9th WWF and the 4th APWS	In each of these regions, it has been determined that the declarations to be presented will include a discussion of water infrastructure development. I believe that a multi-stakeholder discussion on the use and management of water resources should be conducted at this conference in response to these international meetings. It is clear that rural development in the African region and the Asia-Pacific region is a very important topic in both discussions.	Discussion on biodiversity-based designation of rivers and lakes as nature reserves	Many countries and regions include rivers, lakes, and coastlines in their nature reserves, but I am convinced that it is necessary to promote the protection of three-dimensional space, not just the surface. I also believe that the establishment of nature reserves along international rivers that emphasize the social benefits of transboundary nature reserves and the connections between nations will lead to comprehensive protection of water resources and biodiversity.
5. HaritaDhara Research Development and Education Foundation	India	Asia	Non-Governmental Organization	Youth and Water Resources Management	Awareness and capacity building of the Youth related to water resources management to equip them about water allocation and associated issues. River basin management, different usages of water will help them to learn about WRM. Can use games, hands-on activities for learning.		
6. The Young Explorers' Institute for Social Service	India	Asia	Non-Governmental	The surface water source such as lake,	The interested person can share on this water bodies		

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			Organization	river, we can share our experience of communication through digital means.			

Educational and capacity building organisations/entities

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7. Water Environment Federation	United States	Worldwide	Non-Governmental Organization	Water Resource Recovery to fuel and grow a circular economy	Water and wastewater treatment plants are not waste disposal facilities but are Water Resource Recovery Facilities that produce clean water, recover nutrients (such as phosphorus and nitrogen), and have the potential to reduce the world's dependence on fossil fuels through the production and use of renewable energy. Discussion with businesses like Aquaminerals.com in Europe, examples of water reuse in North America and Asia, fertilizer recovery from FSM or centralized treatment of biosolids. Also impacts climate change by carbon sequestration.	Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship to solve water crisis	The thinking that created the current situation cannot be the thinking that solves it. Programs such as Imagine H2O business accelerator, BraveBlue.World Foundation and UNLEASH.org - the global SDG innovation lab bring youth and innovation to water challenges, and outside the water sector - integrating with other industrial sectors. Discussion would feature young professionals (18-40 yo) entrepreneurs from 5 continents focusing on

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							integrated solutions with water, climate change, and industrial and infrastructure innovation.
8. University of Limoges, with EUROPA association	France	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Promoting the role of humanities and social sciences, for inclusive, effective and sustainable water management	To be inclusive, effective and sustainable, the planning, programming, implementation, regulation and management - quantitative and qualitative - of resources and uses of water, groundwater and surface, the preservation of aquatic biodiversity, and the prevention of conflicts between territories and maritime spaces, must appeal to the human, social and legal sciences, as well as to scientific knowledge, technical and technological. A multidisciplinary approach should be adopted, taking into account the cultural and spiritual dimension of water.	Effective control of salt water pollution by inland fresh water	Rivers are the natural paths of all forms of pollution, chronic or accidental, poured into the oceans that they contaminate severely: chemical pollution, micro and nanoparticles, of domestic or industrial origin, in particular plastic residues, are accumulating in the seas, affecting the survival of aquatic species and flora. It is important to prevent these pollutants at their origin, on land, by developing more adequate collection and treatment facilities for wastewater and solid waste, as close as possible to the populations involved.
9. Global Water Security Center	USA	North America	Education & Academic Entities	What water-related information is most needed for the types of decisions your organization is making?	Information gaps are often cited as a rationale for putting off action on water resources management. The science of water measurement and prediction is progressing rapidly, but that information is frequently not translated to decision-makers in ways that make it useful and used. Identifying information needs for water-related decisions would both help those making these decisions and		

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					clarify for scientists what research is most needed.		
10. University of Technology Sydney	Australia	Oceania	Education & Academic Entities	Decolonization of water sector knowledge	A critical theme to address power imbalances and progress action towards social and environmental justice, both of which are core to achieving Conference objectives.		
11. Chris Hani Municipality	South Africa	Africa	Education & Academic Entities	Trans-boundary water resources policies	Get to know policies on water transfer schemes		
12. UFMG	Brazil	Latin America and the Caribbean	Education & Academic Entities	Water and Gender	Since the 1990s, the topic has been increasingly discussed in international meetings and conferences on water with current discussions such as the professional, political and social impacts caused by insufficient access or lack of water and basic sanitation in women's lives. This field has expanded its borders, especially after the 1992 conference in Dublin, which marked the beginning of the international water debate, highlighting the important role of women in water participation and management (Principle N° 3)		
13. Imperial College London	United Kingdom	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Ensuring a "Clean Water for All Policy"	Awareness and education of water as a limited resources which need to be protected under the common international policy and regulations	Technological Adoption	The immediate need of using both newly advanced technological tools and satellite data to ensure quality of water and protection of water resources. Utilizing

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							processed data to assess, predict and drive well informed decision for engagement for sustainability in water resources.
14. UDLAP	Mexico	Latin America and the Caribbean	Education & Academic Entities	Global governance of water grabbing	Countries and corporations have started to acquire agricultural land and water in countries where the process is not transparent nor does it comply with human rights and can even compromise water security for communities. International cooperation to transform this practice into a technology transfer and collaborative program between countries should be boosted.		
15. UNIVERSITY OF ZARAGOZA	SPAIN	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	The governance of water	We need to focus on the management of water. That's why, I propose this theme to implement or show the benefits of some models which are really useful in Europe and other parts of the world are imitating, the hydrographic confederation. It is an instrument which works water management in all the watershed, not only in some parts. It is really useful for transnational watercourses. And it is really useful to agree the operational agreements that IHP from UNESCO try to implement all over the world.	Ecosystems and water	The synergies between all water instruments and the Convention on Biological Diversity 1992 must be empowered.
16. UNU-FLORES	Germany	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Resource Nexus in the	The WEF Resource Nexus Approach is a complex interaction to make the best application of resources in the water and energy-intensive manufacturing		

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				manufacturing industry	industry to gain the resilient environmental consequences through sustaining the wastewater management systems. It could be a precise indicator of decision-making and planning for the management team.		
17. IHE Delft Institute for Water Education	Netherlands	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Capacity Development	Proper management of water resources and universal service delivery lags behind because the focus is usually placed only on building infrastructure, with too little resources and effort invested in developing the capacity needed to run and govern infrastructure. Effective water management requires capacity at individual and organizational levels.		
18. Emory University	USA	North America	Education & Academic Entities	System strengthening to achieve universal access to sustainable WASH in healthcare facilities	Inadequate access to WASH services in healthcare facilities puts millions of people at risk of contracting infections during their stay, a risk amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the Call to Action from the UN Secretary-General in 2018 spurred action, greater dialogue is needed on how to provide safe, sustainable WASH services in healthcare facilities, in coordination with the health sector, as well as in consideration to the wider efforts underway to improve access to WASH services in communities.		

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19. ISSAPP	Bulgaria	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Water, irrigation, erosion	It will be based on optimization of water flows in pipes and channels within the irrigation processes in view of erosion of soil due to water steams.		
20. Polytechnic College Suriname	Suriname	Latin America and the Caribbean	Education & Academic Entities	Create and/or increase awareness about the excessive use of drinking water.	Water is essential for proper hydration, enabling the body to function normally. Water scarcity can result in food shortage and endangered human health. Surinamese people use 28 m3 water more per year than the Europeans. Besides, drinking water in Suriname is used for drinking, cooking, washing cars, pavements and buildings. Due to the lack of (correct) legislation and the slackness of the government's approach to this issue, it can be concluded that also the government is unaware of the water scarcity that is/will occur(ing).		
21. IHE, Delft	Netherlands	Europe	Education & Academic Entities	Pluralizing knowledges to bring inclusive and sustainable policy changes in the water sector	Traditionally, knowledge-production in the water sector has been deeply fragmented, constructed largely within engineering frameworks of high-income countries, dispensed using top-down policy approaches. These frameworks and discourses are often highly normative and filled with gaps that have led to unsustainable water management practices, ecological degradation and further endangering of vulnerable groups.		
22. Royal College of Art	United Kingdom	Europe	Education &	How can designers &	This design-science dialogue aims to explore the interdisciplinary	How design for	The relationship between behaviour change and design

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			Academic Entities	scientists improve interdisciplinary cooperation to identify key water challenges for innovation?	knowledge gaps between design and scientific communities in order to identify the key water challenges for collaboration. We would like to host a broad discussion with designers, scientists and water stakeholders to identify where and how designers can partner to generate new solutions. We hope to encourage knowledge exchange that could be used by supported by governments and regulators for co-developing innovative solutions to marine and water issues.	behaviour change could make collaborations with scientists and communities trigger of equitable change?	is the focus for this dialogue inviting scientists, designers, interested parties and stakeholders to explore the key behaviour change issues preventing us from adapting to climate issues related to the water ecosystem. We would like encourage discussion around identifying patterns of behaviours that designers should tackle to guide vulnerable communities in improving climate related resilience to climate events.

