

## Women in Water Diplomacy Network 2023 Year-in-Review Online Event After-Action Report<sup>1</sup>

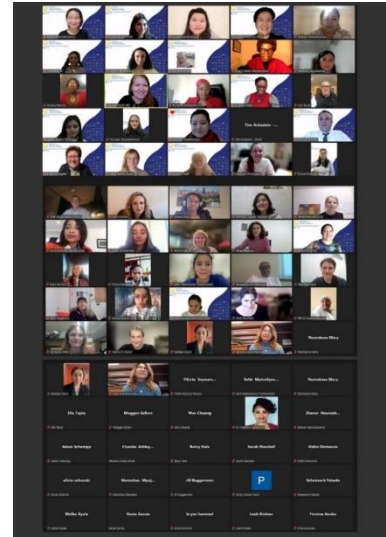
December 11, 2023 | Online



### Summary

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network is a community of practice comprised of both formal and informal women decision-makers working collectively to strengthen women's leadership in transboundary water decision-making with support from a global coalition of partners and members in basins across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

The third-annual Women in Water Diplomacy Network 2023 online Year-in-Review event was held on December 11, 2023, from 14:00 to 15:30 CET. The event was hosted by Women in Water Diplomacy Network Process Support Team representatives from SIWI and ELI and attended by over 120 participants from 38 countries across the globe. The main objective of the 2023 Year-in-Review online event was to collectively reflect on the 2023 achievements and milestones and to share information on Network engagements in 2024.



#### Key takeaways from the event included:

- The Network had a successful year in 2023, building on the 2022 launch of its Global Strategy 'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace, and Security.'
- The Network is well-positioned for continued global growth in 2024 with a variety of requests from basin communities to support regional Networks to be developed.
- The Network remains committed to strengthening women's leadership in transboundary water decision-making around the world.

#### The following upcoming engagement opportunities were elevated during the Year-in-Review session:

- The North American Network Launch event will be hosted on December 13th at the CRWUA Conference in Las Vegas, emphasizing the importance of indigenous partnerships and the broad support from various organizations.
- The second Global Network Forum will be held in Vienna from March 4-8, 2024, coinciding with International Women's Day.

### Year-in-Review Session Detail

The event began with welcoming remarks delivered by Kerry Schneider, Senior Manager of the Stockholm International Water Institute hosted Shared Waters Partnership program, who acknowledged the different supporting partners (financially, technically, and politically) which have provided support to the

<sup>1</sup> The 2023 Year-in-Review After Action Report was prepared by Jesse Ferraioli (ELI), Yodit Balcha (WWDN Leadership Council), and Elizabeth Koch (ELI).



Network to date. He also extended his warmest gratitude for the continued dedication and work of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network’s Leadership Council and Process Support Team including representatives from SIWI and the Environmental Law Institute (ELI).

As a testament to the success of the Network, the 2023 Year-in-Review online event was attended by many new members and supporters. Elizabeth Koch, the Network’s Process Support Team Lead and Senior Manager from ELI, provided brief background information on the Network’s inception, development and key milestones and resources. Elizabeth particularly highlighted the Network’s roots in the Nile Basin and expansion to a global Network with the launch of the Global Strategy. Elizabeth then provided key updates on the Network’s global engagements, including a new partnership with the Organization of American States, [strong engagement and presence at the UN Water Conference](#), continued engagement at the 2023 World Water Week, [co-hosting an event with the U.S. Institute of Peace](#) commemorating the International Women in Diplomacy Day, launching the [Network’s new LinkedIn page](#), and continued growth and development of the [Network’s Newsletter](#).

The event continued with 2023 engagement highlights from across the growing global network, where updates from the different basins were provided by Network members. Milestones and updates for the Nile Basin were shared by Julienne Ndjiki, who highlighted the different activities that took place in the Basin, including the different career upgrades that were witnessed by the Network members, participation of the Network members at the 2023 Nile Basin Development Forum in October, and hosting an online Experience Exchange Workshop on the theme of ‘WASH & Water Security.’

The Central Asia and Afghanistan Network also had a busy year. The Regional Centre for Environment in Central Asia’s Tais Reznikova shared reports on the key Network highlights including Network members’ engagement in the 13th Central Asia Leadership Program and the OSCE’s session at the World Water Week, as well as convening of online Experience Exchange Workshops for Central Asia and Afghanistan.

As a new network under development, Dr. Zodwa Dlamini provided an update on the inception and development of a Network in the Orange-Senqu Basin. Dr Dlamini shared information on the extensive consultation process undertaken in all riparian states of the Orange-Senqu highlighting how the consultation process has fed into the development of a draft framework document to be validated by ORASECOM and published in 2024.

Dr. Sharon Megdal shared the news of the [North America Network launch event](#) that will be held on the 13th of December 2023 at the Colorado River Water Users Association Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. She emphasized the importance of Indigenous partnerships and the broad support from various organizations.

During the plenary segment, which was facilitated by Sogol Jafarzedeh, participants shared how the Network has functioned internationally, regionally, and within the peer network in the past year. Members shared personal stories of how the Network has impacted their careers and provided opportunities for growth, visibility, and support during challenging times. Participants also expressed that the Network has





equipped them with networking and confidence to engage in public events, as well as access to new knowledge on digital diplomacy, resilience, and migration.

**What to expect in 2024**

Looking ahead to the future, Elizabeth announced that the second Global Network Forum will be held in Vienna from March 4-8, 2024, coinciding with International Women's Day. This second Global Network Forum will be organized as a standalone event for women water leaders (and male champions supporting gender equality) to support advancing regional dialogues, growing our collective knowledge through experience exchange, and elevating women water diplomats' voices and perspectives for its members and partners. Newtork members and supporters were encouraged to apply to join the event – with [applications](#) due January 5, 2024.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Muna Musnad, representing the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Leadership Council, thanked participants and organizers for a successful year and highlighted how the Network and the event provided a platform for members to share their work, reflect on the Network's achievements in 2023, and look ahead to the future. Dr. Muna further expressed her hope for continued achievements and support for young women in transboundary water issues in 2024.

The event's presentation [can be found here](#). The video recording [can be accessed here](#).

**With thanks to our growing partnership!**



The Women in Water Diplomacy Network's 2023 Year in Review online event has been organized in cooperation with a large number of partners including the Stockholm International Water Institute, the Environmental Law Institute, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre, the International Joint Commission, the International Boundary and Waters Commission, the Organization for American States, the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission, the Orange-Senqu Water Commission, the Zambezi Water Commission, the Indigenous Women's Leadership Network, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the University of Arizona's Water Resources Research Center and Udall Institute, and Audubon. Support for this activity has been provided through the SIWI hosted Shared Waters Partnership Programme with the support of the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency, the United States Department of State, the Government of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the United Nations Development Program.