



SUMMARY

On June 8, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa hosted a network meeting of professionals from some 25 organisations working in the water sector. The theme for this gathering was *“The Gender, Water, and Security Agenda: Stock-taking and Next Steps”*.

The meeting discussed the gender outcomes and in particular gender, water, and security linkages/developments coming out of the various activities and conferences that have taken place since the last meeting in late November 2021 (Mediterranean Water Forum, World Water Forum, MENA Climate Week, Stockholm+50 (in early June), and other events).

Participants also discussed opportunities to raise the gender, water, and security interlinkages ahead of and during the upcoming COP meetings in the region (COP27 in Egypt, COP28 in UAE). Recommendations included highlighting examples of women and youth acting as change agents, illuminating the gender and youth gaps in the COP process, and contributing to relevant policy developments.

REPORT

On June 8, the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa hosted a network meeting of professionals from some 25 organisations working in the water sector. The theme for this gathering was *“The Gender, Water, and Security Agenda: Stock-taking and Next Steps”*.

The purpose of the gender-water network is to create a platform for sharing information, experiences and ideas, to develop relevant policy recommendations, and to strengthen connectivity amongst professionals and organisations across the region with like-minded agendas, contributing to effective advocacy, and ultimately supporting efforts to solve the complex and often inter-connected challenges in the fields of gender, water, and security.

The meeting reflected on the gender outcomes coming out of the various activities and conferences that have taken place since the network’s last meeting in late November - the Mediterranean Water Forum, the World Water Forum, the MENA Climate Week, the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development and Stockholm+50 (in early June), and other events. Participants also discussed opportunities to raise the gender, water, and security interlinkages ahead of and during the upcoming COP meetings in the region (COP27 in Egypt, COP28 in UAE).

Ambassador Johanna Lissinger Peitz from the Swedish Ministry of Environment began by providing an update of the recently completed **Stockholm+50 conference**:

- **MOMENTUM AND AGENDA SETTING:** The meeting provided a much needed global push to urgently accelerate green and fair transitions globally, ahead of COP27, COP15, the Summit of the Future and other relevant international meetings. It clearly demonstrated the opportunities generated by a holistic approach, addressing the triple planetary crisis (of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution) together with development challenges – this is a key legacy of Stockholm+50.
- **FORWARD-LEANING SUBSTANCE:** The ten point Stockholm agenda provides a blueprint for the work ahead – a systemic transformation of societies and economies, including by adopting new measures of welfare, aligning all financial flows with existing environmental, climate and sustainable development commitments and focusing on circularity and sustainable value chains in key sectors. It stressed the need for national implementation, while underlining the value of rules-based multilateralism, providing a push for ongoing international processes on adopting a Global Biodiversity Framework, an international instrument to end plastic pollution and moving forward on the politically recognized right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. It also built momentum on the urgent need to scale up adaptation finance to benefit those most affected by climate change.
- **DIALOGUE AND INCLUSION:** The meeting was attended by around ten heads of state and government, over one hundred ministers, and around 4 000 representatives of governments, businesses, and civil society. Over 50 000 people were involved in global pre-meeting consultations and a Youth Task Force provided policy input.

For a full report, please see [Stockholm+50 Agenda for Action, Renewal and Trust - Outputs and outcomes | Stockholm+50](#).

Almotaz Abadi, Director of the UfM Water Division, spoke about the 12th meeting of the **UfM Water Expert Group**, which had taken place in Amman in late May. The overall aim was to continue supporting efforts by UfM member states to increase water security and promote water investments in the Mediterranean region through the implementation of the UfM Water Agenda.

Former Moroccan Minister of Water Charafat Afailal gave an overview of the **4th Mediterranean Water Forum**, which fed in a number of recommendations to the World Water Forum, including the need for more youth representation and to move beyond gender mainstreaming towards gender equality. The gender balance at the MWF is moving in the right direction and the engagement of youth, and youth start-ups is positive. (The final report can be found here [4rtMedWaterForum_FinalReport_04.pdf \(ufmsecretariat.org\)](#)).

Carol Chouchani Cherfani, Director of the Arab Centre For Climate Change Policies at UNESCWA, provided an update from the first-ever **MENA Climate Week** ([Middle East and North Africa Climate Week 2022 | UNFCCC](#)), which explored resilience against climate risks, the transition to a low-emission economy, and collaboration to solve pressing challenges. The event brought together over 4,000 participants with over 500 speakers from 147 countries. Chouchani Cherfani also mentioned the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the mid-term review of the Water Action Decade (WAD), held in Beirut in May, ahead of the review in 2023. This gathering assessed regional progress towards the WAD objectives and discussed challenges and opportunities in implementation.

Michela Miletto, Director of the UNESCO Programme Office on Global Water Assessment, gave a concise overview of the work of the **World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)**, and in particular its gender priorities (**please find the Powerpoint presentation attached**). A Water and Gender Toolkit has been developed, with 105 indicators in ten priority areas, which are interlinked with the SDGs. The WWAP points to an overall lack of progress on gender equality and women's empowerment, highlighting the following challenges: a policy-practice gap, low participation of women in leadership, social norms and stereotypes, and a lack of funding and of gender-disaggregated water data.

Alain Meyssonier, President of the Mediterranean Water Institute ([IME - Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau \(ime-eau.org\)](#)) was unable to join due to technical issues, but had prepared a **report from the World Water Forum in Dakkar in March 2022** ([9th World Water Forum - Dakar 2021](#)), which is attached.

Inspired by these presentations, the participants then **brainstormed opportunities to pursue advocacy on women's participation ahead of the upcoming COPs**. Wide-ranging discussions took place in three break-out groups. These discussions resulted in the following set of recommendations for raising the gender, water, and security profile before, during, and after the upcoming COP-meetings:

1. Change the narrative of women (and youth)

- a. Develop practical, real life stories/case studies portraying women (and youth) in the MENA region – in civil society, in the public sector, and in the private sector – as change agents and role models rather than only or primarily as “vulnerable” groups.
- b. Present these stories before and during COP, including by reaching out and sharing information with a variety of media channels.

2. Advocate for greater women and youth representation at COP

- a. Lobby governments for more women and youth in negotiating and decision-making capacities, and “on stage” for main events and side events.
- b. Seek alliances between women’s and youth organizations.
- c. Develop visual data showing the magnitude of under-representation of women and youth in the COP process, including
 - i. What proportion of chief negotiators are women?
 - ii. What proportion of heads of government and ministers participating in COP are women?
 - iii. What proportion of official delegations are made up of women and youth?
 - iv. What proportion of co-presidents are women?

3. Make use of existing platforms to elevate the agenda

- a. UfM will have a pavilion for side events. Organizations seeking to raise the profile of water and gender may be able to make use of this platform.
- b. Explore other platforms in our collective networks and other opportunities to elevate the agenda.

4. Support progressive policy development

- a. Develop joint policy papers to advance the gender, water, and security agenda
- b. Present these policy papers at seminars, webinars, and round table discussions before and during the COP process

5. Hold organizers/political leaders accountable

- a. Prepare a gender/youth scorecard for COP27, assessing the level of youth and women’s participation (at all levels) and what improvements have taken place since COP26.
- b. Use “shadow reporting” to provide alternative assessments of progress on key issues at COP¹
- c. Develop other tools to measure progress and fulfilment of pledges, including improved transparency.

The next meeting in the gender-water network is planned for December 2022, but the Dialogue institute plans to convene a meeting in September for those interested in pursuing efforts to raise the gender, climate, and security profile in connection to the COP.

For a list of links to further reading, see the attachment.

¹ [Shadow Report: An important tool for Advocacy \(civilsocietyacademy.org\)](https://civilsocietyacademy.org/shadow-report)