



## **Initiative on Empowering Women in Water Diplomacy in the MENA region Special session**

*Title:* Role of Women in Water Diplomacy and Peacebuilding in fragile conflict situations

*When:* 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024, 11:00- 12:30 CET

*How:* virtual

Register at: [https://unige.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5EtdcCqgzvvhdaqXxtOzz\\_m8RoKvRuf2DZE](https://unige.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5EtdcCqgzvvhdaqXxtOzz_m8RoKvRuf2DZE)

Current efforts to empower women leadership in water diplomacy often target women in mid to senior management positions in water governance issues, with the long-term objective of achieving positive steps towards peace.

Global, regional and national challenges related to climate change have been increasingly addressed, and links between climate change and conflict are also gradually recognised.

Both above efforts and progresses are well applauded and assist in narrowing the gap towards meeting Agenda 2030 and beyond. However, in a world of disappointingly increasing armed conflicts, there is a need to understand what water diplomacy entails, specifically for women who need to lead on water supply, access and sharing in those contexts. Women already encounter obstacles in attaining leadership positions within and beyond the water sector. This is further exacerbated when the conditions within which they operate are those of conflict, whether inter- or intra-state.

In most of the countries that are currently experiencing / have experienced (armed) conflicts, water resources are mainly of transboundary nature and necessitate arrangements and agreements on shared water use. In addition, these countries are often most impacted by climate change. In the absence of political horizons, the constituencies, including those displaced, will need to negotiate and agree to the use of limited resources water to meet their daily basic needs, and create opportunities for dialogue and trust building. Women are at the heart of such efforts, especially in situations in which existing fragile water and sanitation infrastructure is targeted.

This is particularly pertinent to the MENA context. Hence, the Initiative for Empowering Women in Water Diplomacy in the MENA region is organising a special session to look into the role of women in water diplomacy and peacebuilding in fragile conflict conditions.

With panellists coming from different country contexts (e.g. Ukraine, Syria, Palestine, Armenia), river basin commissions ( Sava RBC), and an international humanitarian network (IFRC), this special session will share the experiences of women working on water issues under conditions of existing or post conflict situations globally, and to raise the attention to an underestimated opportunity for peacebuilding and water diplomacy. Besides discussing the challenges women face in these conditions, the session will aim

to identify ways to empower them so they can contribute to findings ways out of the conflict and towards peace.

<b>Role of women in water diplomacy and peacebuilding in fragile conflict conditions</b> <i>Thursday, 4 April 2024 11:00-12:30 CET online</i> <b>Final Agenda</b>	
11:00-11:15	<p><b>Welcoming: what is today about and a short recap of the MENA Women Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Dr. Anthi Brouma</i>, Deputy Regional Coordinator, Theme Leader on Diversity, Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med)</li> <li>○ <i>Eng. Natasha Carmi</i>, Water Peace Programme Manager, Geneva Water Hub</li> </ul>
11:15-12:00	<p><b>Panel exchanges on the role of women in water diplomacy and peacebuilding in fragile conflict conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Alvard Zakaryan</i>, Local Coordinator at Berghof Foundation, Armenia</li> <li>○ <i>Beesan Shonnar</i>, Water Expert, Palestine</li> <li>○ <i>Hanna Slobodyanyuk-Montavon</i>, CEO and Founder, Mykolaiv Water Hub, Ukraine</li> <li>○ <i>Reham Aga</i>, Community Mobilization Officer, UNHabitat, Damascus, Syria</li> <li>○ <i>Melita Žižanović Dakić</i>, Special Advisor for Legal and General Affairs, International Sava River Basin Commission</li> <li>○ <i>Mey AL Sayegh</i>, Regional Head of Communications, MENA &amp; Spokesperson, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</li> </ul>
12:00-12:25	<b>Interactive discussion</b>
12:25-12:30	<b>Take away messages &amp; Closing</b>