

North American

**Women in Water Diplomacy Network:
Reception and Launch Event @CRWUA**



**Wednesday, December 13, 2023 | Colorado River Water Users Association Annual
Conference, Las Vegas; Chablis Room, Paris Las Vegas Hotel | 4:30 PM -6:30 PM**



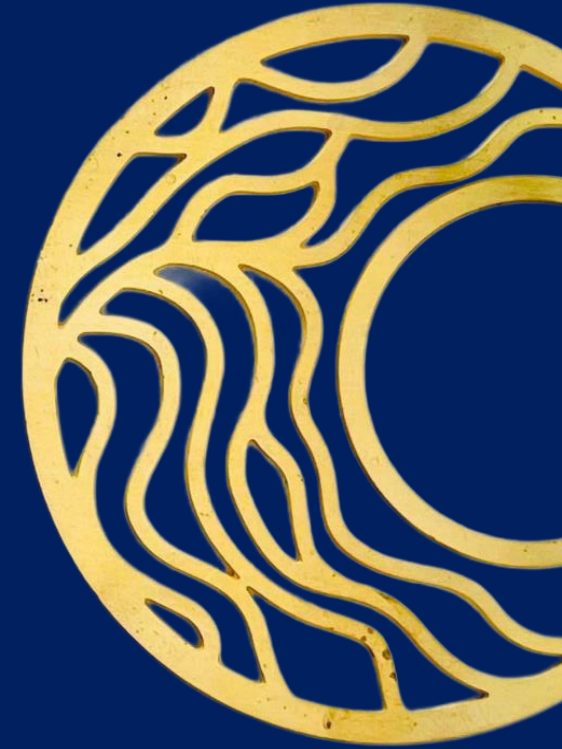
**WOMEN IN
WATER DIPLOMACY
NETWORK & PARTNERS**



Welcome!



Dr Sharon Megdal, Director of the Water Resources Research Center at the University of Arizona



**WOMEN IN
WATER DIPLOMACY
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES
RESEARCH CENTER**

Women in Water Diplomacy Network

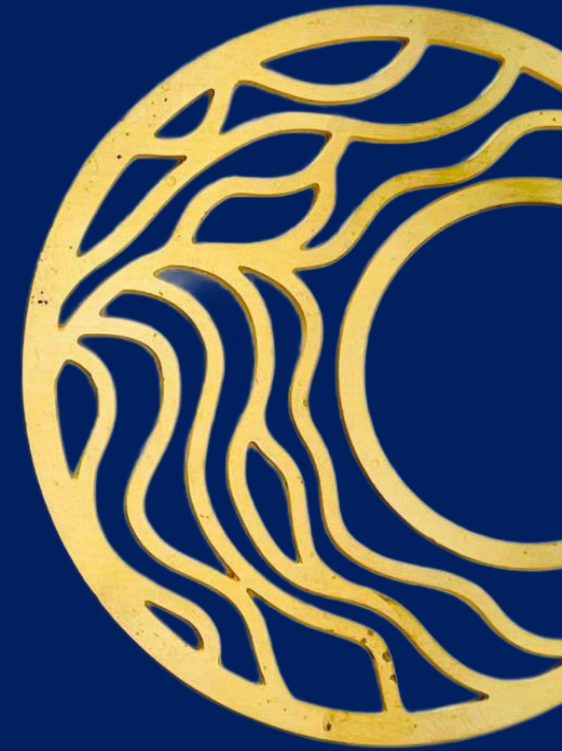
A Growing Partnership across North America!



'A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace and Security' - Introduction to the Women in Water Diplomacy Network



Elizabeth A. Koch, Senior Manager, Environmental Law Institute; Process Support Lead for the Women in Water Diplomacy Network



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ENVIRONMENTAL
LAW • INSTITUTE®



SIWI

What is Water Diplomacy & Who is a Water Diplomat?

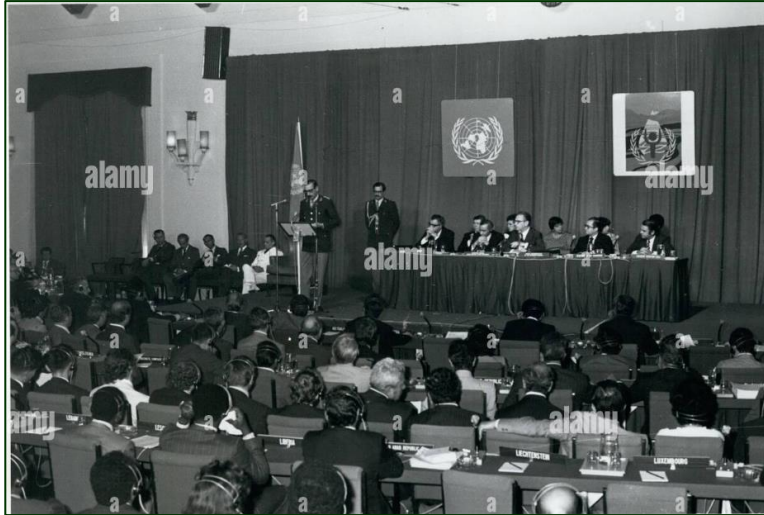
Water diplomacy recognizes that there are *many different actors* that can *create solution spaces* for conflicts over water and *windows of opportunity* for cooperation over water. Water diplomacy can help to assess and *generate opportunities for cooperation* in shared basins and improve water security.

Formal Diplomacy (Track 1) Official/Formal communication between state actors with the authority and mandate to speak and make decisions on behalf of their governments or institutions.

Informal Diplomacy (Track 2 and 1.5) Dialogue between non-officials to build relations, resolve conflict, manage a crisis or build trust, based on agreed mandate, roles and responsibilities. It can include officials in informal roles (Track 1.5), academics, NGOs, faith-based organizations, business partners, media, retired civil servants and other “insiders” (Track 2).



Why focus on inclusion in water diplomacy? Specifically, gender equality?



The status quo is
exclusive



Under-represented and
vulnerable communities
on all sides bear
**disproportionate and
cumulative harm from
water and climate
decisions.**

Some progress in North America but a long way to go....



Costs – Benefits – Opportunities



Failure to include women equitably



Has direct cost to political decision-making at transboundary level



Can contribute to **conflict relapse**



Undermines progress toward cooperative and sustainable management



Support to women water experts



Opportunity to elevate distinctive knowledge, perspectives and experiences



More comprehensive understanding of relevant water issues and challenges



Broader set of **equitable solutions**

Resources are scarce




Investing directly in women is an easy choice



Snapshot: Women in Water Diplomacy Network

- Initiated in the Nile Basin in 2017
- Central Asia-Afghanistan Network launched in 2021
- Global Strategy released in 2022
- New basin Networks under development – Southern Africa, Americas
- Networks host regular in-person and online experience exchange sessions; collectively engage in basin, regional, international events of critical importance to water cooperation; enables inter-generational and cross border mentoring and shared learning for women water diplomats and more.

Learn more with our #Herstory Resource Series



POLICY PAPER

Tapping our Potential: Women's Water Leadership in the Nile Basin

Women Have a Critical Role to Play in Inclusive and Effective Transboundary Water Governance

Cooperation over the shared water resources of the Nile Basin is essential to water security and development in the region. To mitigate and manage potential and actual drivers of water-related conflict in the region, improved and more inclusive resource decision-making is critical. Engaging a diverse cross-section of stakeholders in decisions around shared waters breaks the set of environmental and social impacts that are considered and the knowledge and skills employed to address them, thus increasing the likelihood of developing sustainable and equitable solutions. In the Nile Basin, SWI and partners initiated a growing network of women water professionals active in transboundary water management under the 'Women and Water Diplomacy in the Nile (WIN)' platform to enhance the collective capacity of women throughout the basin and to support the engagement of these women water leaders in decision-making and peace building processes in the Basin.

From Policy to Action: Balancing Gender for Stronger Water Diplomacy

The critical role of women in water resources management and protection has been recognized and emphasized at the highest policy levels for over 25 years. The Dublin Statement on 'Water and Sustainable Development' (see box) was only the first of countless national, basin-level and international policy statements and guidance documents that stress the need for more gender-inclusive water governance processes at all levels¹. Yet, despite repeated high-level commitments to engaging women in water governance, evidence reveals a persistent gender gap in the water sector. This gap is particularly evident at the transboundary level, where water governance processes continue to be dominated by men (Baithi and Earle, 2013; ILCN, 2017).

Similarly, the transformative role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has been repeatedly demonstrated.

Dublin Statement (1992) Principle 3:

Women play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water.

This pivotal role of women as providers and users of water and guardians of the living environment has seldom been reflected in institutional arrangements for the development and management of water resources. Acceptance and implementation of this principle requires positive policies to address women's specific needs and to equip and empower women to participate at all levels in water resources programmes, including decision-making and implementation, in ways defined by them.

including research showing that gender inclusive peace processes are 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years, that peace agreements signed by women are positively associated with more durable peace, and that higher levels of gender equity are associated with a lower incidence of conflict (Kosson et al., 2018; UNSC, 2000). Despite this evidence and the formal recognition of the UN Security Council of the critical role of women in peace and security efforts, between 1990 and 2017 women constituted only 2 percent of mediators, 8 percent of negotiators and 5 percent of witnesses in all major peace processes.

Women in transboundary water governance therefore face a hurdle on two fronts in overcoming the traditionally male-dominated world of water and peacebuilding (UN Women, 2018). Ensuring a better gender balance in water diplomacy efforts will require a sea change in perception of gender roles in both fields, accompanied by strong and implementable policies to overcome entrenched discrimination.

The persistent failure to include women equitably in political decision-making processes at the transboundary level impedes progress towards the cooperative and sustainable


¹ See, e.g., The Beijing Platform for Action (2004), Rio Principle 20 (1992), 'Africa Water Vision 2025: The AMUCOW Strategy and Policy for Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa' (2011) and the Mekong River Commission Gender Policy and Strategy (2013).

INCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Laying the Bedrock of Transformation

Women in Water Diplomacy Network 2013-2021



The story so far; how the Network came to be and how it has developed through the years.



GLOBAL STRATEGY | AUGUST 2022

A Path Forward for Women, Water, Peace, and Security

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network Nile and Beyond Global Strategy 2022-2027





Women in Water Diplomacy Network official Side-Event at the UN Water Conference

by Elizabeth Koch and Elise Patel

The Women in Water Diplomacy Network hosted its official side event on March 22 at the UN Headquarters, entitled 'Elevating Critical Voices in Water Diplomacy'.

[Read the full message >](#)



Inclusivity fostered by the Women in Water Diplomacy Network

by Sharon E. Megorah, Ph.D.

It is hard to believe that it was less than nine months ago that I became part of the strong and exciting Women in Water Diplomacy Network...


[Read the full message >](#)

Youth participation at the UN Water Conference

by Meerim Seidarkmatova

Youth engagement at the UN Water Conference took many forms, such as attending as delegates or observers, participating in side events and workshops, and contributing to the conference's outcomes through various channels.

[Read the full message >](#)



Women in Water Diplomacy Global Network Forum 2022



Collective Positive Visibility

- Launched alongside the Women in Water Diplomacy Network's Global Strategy at the 2022 World Water Week
- **Collaboratively designed** in partnership with Anna Forsberg and Stina Lanneskog
- Worn by Network members and supporters championing the Network's shared objectives at a range of high level global and basin dialogues **bringing attention to the boundary crossing movement for gender equality in transboundary water decision making.**



2022 Call to launch a Network in 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 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....' **Canadian Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare, International Joint Commission, World Water Week 2022**

North American Network Working Objective:

To establish a Women in Water Diplomacy Network across Mexico, Canada, United States anchored in Indigenous leadership; adapting and adopting the Global Strategy for North American contexts and communities.

Women in Water Diplomacy UN Water Conference 2023



Proposed North American Network Development Process



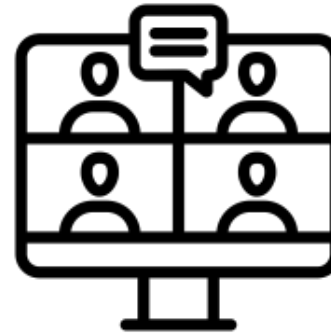
Launch Event



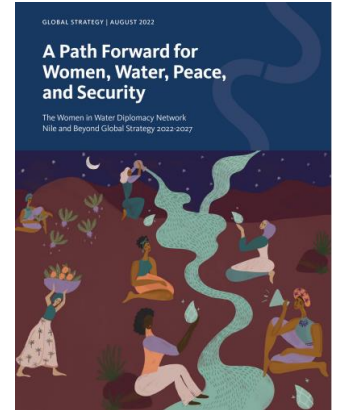
*Partnership
Consultations*



*Collective
Engagement in
Global Network
Events*



*In-person and
online workshops
and Webinars*



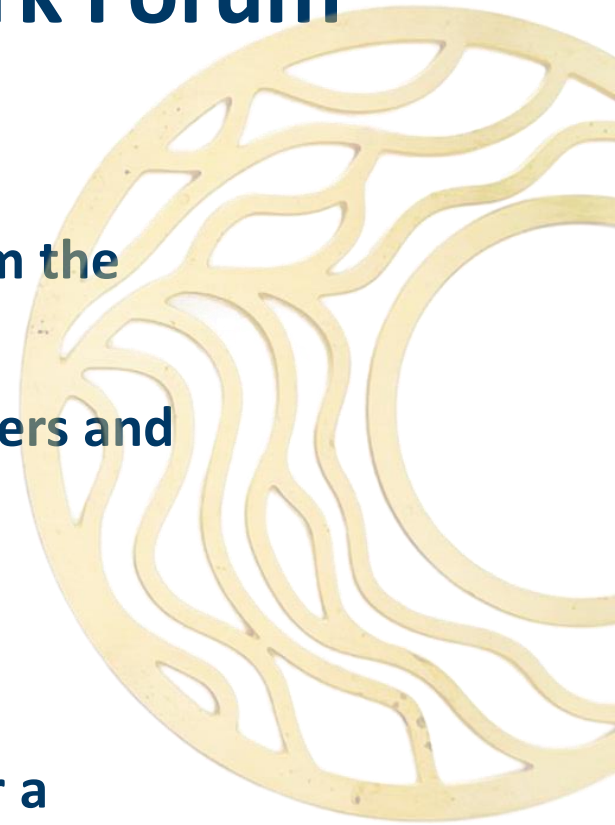
*Adaption and
Adoption of the
Global Strategy
for North America*

We need your support! Detailed proposal for North American Network Inception and Development available at:



Upcoming Opportunity: 2024 Global Network Forum

- March 4-8, 2024 in Vienna, Austria
- 2024 Global Network Forum is made possible by targeted support from the MFA of Finland and joint programming with OSCE and other partners
- 4 days of joint learning and experience exchange with Network members and supporters from around the world!
- Networking and informal engagement activities.
- Celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th together.
- Limited sponsored participation packages, self-sponsorship or sponsor a delegate opportunities!
- Read the [2022 After Action Report on the first Global Network Forum](#) to get a sense of the experience.



Interested to apply to join the 2024 Global Network Forum?



<https://forms.office.com/r/9aNFTMSqB2>

Submit your application by January 5, 2024!



Reflections from Network Champions

- **Commissioner Adriana Resendez**, International Boundary and Water Commission, Mexico and **Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner**, International Boundary and Water Commission, United States
- **Lorelei Cloud**, Vice Chair, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribe and Co-chair, Indigenous Women's Leadership Network
- **Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton**, United States Bureau of Reclamation
- **Commissioner Merrell-Ann Phare**, International Joint Commission, Canada (recorded video message)



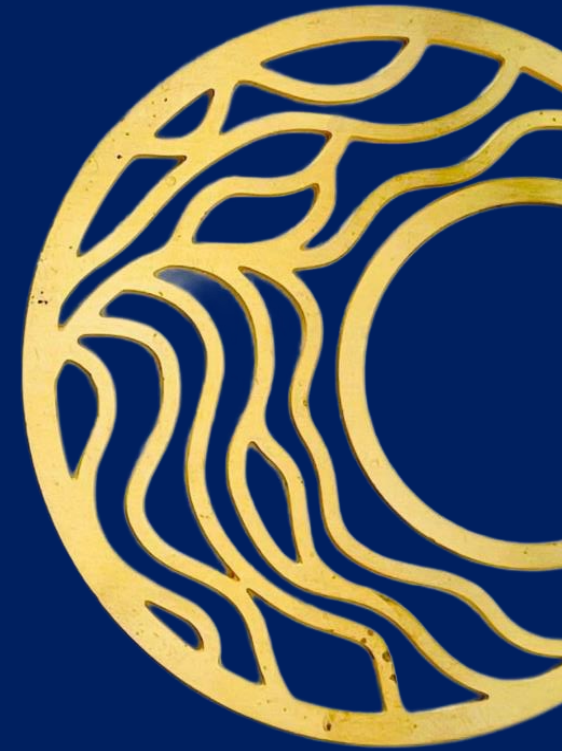
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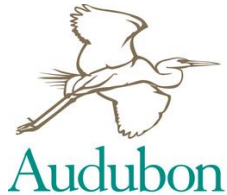
Open Mic – Your reflections welcome!



**Jennifer Pitt, Director, Colorado River
Program, National Audubon Society**



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Closing Remarks:



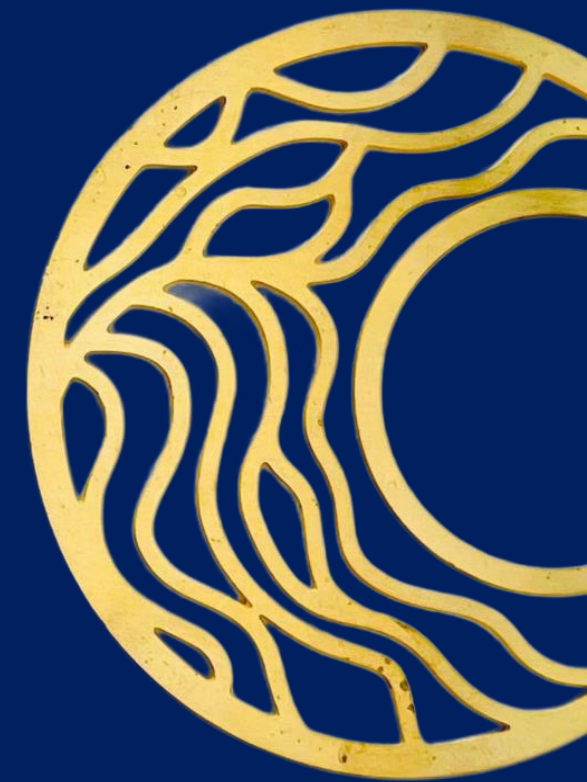
**Chairwoman Amelia Flores,
Colorado River Indian Tribes**



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Thank you!



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