Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: a Call For Action

An advocacy initiative from the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme and the convened Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition


Background

Achieving gender equality in the water domain is crucial in view of the global commitments enshrined in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and in numerous other international gender- and water-related commitments. However, an extensive analysis carried out by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and its dedicated ‘Water and Gender Working Group’, formed by over 50 experts from UN Agencies, governmental water offices from Member States, universities and NGOs, shows that progress towards the realization of these global promises is off track. Indeed, the analysis shows that gender inequalities in the water domain are severe and persist at all levels.

Given the urgent need and in alignment with the UNESCO Gender Equality Priority, UNESCO WWAP is leading a global Call For Action ‘Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: bridging the data gap and developing concrete actions’.
Call For Action’s objective

The scope of the Call is bringing attention to the need of accelerating gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain, as well as encouraging the development and implementation of gender-inclusive actions.

The Call For Action calls upon decision-makers, political leaders, governors, policy-makers, financiers, CEOs and other relevant actors to accelerate concrete actions towards the achievement of:

• Water access to all without discrimination;
• Promoting women’s leadership in water management and governance;
• Protecting women’s water rights and applying gender-equal financing;
• Narrowing the gender gap between policy and practice;
• Prioritizing the collection of sex-disaggregated water data and;
• Counter-fighting norms and stereotypes that disadvantage women and girls.

How the Call For Action works

The Call For Action builds on three main pillars:

1. A factual basis achieved through the global analysis ‘Taking Stock of the Progress towards Gender Equality in the Water Domain - Where do we stand 25±years after the Beijing Declaration’;

2. Transforming into action the recommendations contained in the joint Position Paper ‘Accelerating Gender Equality in the Water Domain – A Call For Action’ with key support of the Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, facilitated by UNESCO WWAP;

3. Advocacy and dissemination: to catalyse action and determine progress on the ground, a broad dissemination of the Call For Action’s key findings and recommendations to reach as many stakeholders as possible is essential. The support and advocacy by the Multi-Stakeholder Coalition is key to this behalf.
The global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition

The ‘Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition’ aims to support and amplify the resonance of the Call For Action. The Coalition consists of Member States’ institutions, international and regional organizations, funding agencies and ODAs, NGOs, private sector and civil society, foundations, academia and others. It is coordinated by UNESCO WWAP.

The members of the Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition are invited to:

- **Advocate for the Call For Action** to expand the Coalition;
- **Pledge voluntary support** to the key recommendations as expressed in the Position Paper;
- **Implement regional/national specific actions** associated to the Call;
- **Finance actions on the ground recommended by the Call, and support the sustainability of the Call and its coordination.**

Join the Multi-Stakeholder Coalition

To join the Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, it suffices to send an email to the dedicated email address: waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org, with the expression of interest.

We recommend to include the following items:

i) Name of the Institution represented;
ii) Name of the key contact person(s);
iii) Institutional Logo;
iv) Link to the Institution’s web page

All members of the Coalition will be publicly acknowledged and have visibility on the dedicated UNESCO WWAP web page, displaying: name of the institution, logo and website link. Moreover, they will be invited to participate in the international and regional events organized by WWAP.

WWAP stands ready to schedule individual calls with interested parties to discuss any level of involvement and collaboration schemes.

All members are invited to:

- Divulge the foundational basis of the Call For Action by sharing the Position Paper, Taking Stock analysis and subsequent key findings, as well as disseminate the dedicated communication materials through social media and mailing networks;
- Present the Call For Action and its publications at international, national and local events. WWAP provides upon request a standard Power Point presentation (so far available in English, French and Spanish) on the Call.

Members’ early and active involvement will maximize the impact of the Call
Funding opportunities

Financing options can address the implementation of actions on the ground, advocacy activities and the Call’s sustainability. Specific actions can be developed individually, in partnership with WWAP and other members of the Coalition. In its function of coordinator and facilitator of the Call For Action and the associated Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, the WWAP Secretariat continues to seek support to assure the Call’s sustainability until its end date.

Opportunities to funding are among others:

i) Specific projects focussed on gender equality and inclusion in water management and governance;

ii) Regional or national water and gender training activities (e.g. aligned with WWAP’s capacity development programme on sex-disaggregated water data, to apply gender analysis in water resources and dependent ecosystems under climate change);

iii) Participating into a multi-partner basket to fund the Call For Action’s short and medium-term operations, such as: the creation and maintenance of a dedicated digital “community of practice” platform, the production of communication materials, the development and implementation of specific outreach projects, the organization of advocacy and fundraising events.

Roadmap to accelerate gender equality in the water sector by 2030

The Call For Action was launched at international level in August 2021 at the SIWI World Water Week and will culminate into 2030, coinciding with the completion date of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. During this period, two important milestones for the Call are: i) the UN Conference celebrating the Mid-term review of the International Water Action Decade in 2023 at UN headquarters in New York, and ii) the completion of the International Water Decade in 2028.

The 2021-2023 Call For Action Roadmap includes the following events:

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 2021 | June: | LAC Regional pre-launch  
San José - Costa Rica |
|      | August: | SIWI World Water Week (WWW), Global Launch  
Stockholm - Sweden |
|      | October: | EU Water and Gender Conference,  
Brussel - Belgium |
|      | November: | Africa Water Week  
Windhoek - Namibia |
| 2022 | February: | International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS)  
New York - USA |
|      | March: | Asia International Water Week (AIWW)  
Labuan Bajo - Indonesia |
|      | | World Water Forum (WWF)  
Dakar - Senegal |
|      | June: | Dushanbe Biennial HL Water Conference  
Tajikistan |
|      | July: | UN HLPF  
New York - USA |
|      | August: | SIWI WWW  
Stockholm - Sweden |
|      | December: | UN Water Summit on Groundwater  
Paris - France |
| 2023 | March: | UN 2023 Water Conference  
(Mid-term review of the Water Action Decade)  
New York - USA |
Frequently asked questions - FAQ

1. **Who can join the Call For Action and for what purpose?**
   Everyone can join the Call For Action: governments at any level, private sector, civil society, international and regional organizations, non-governmental and non-profit organizations, development banks, financiers, foundations, academia and others. For example, the Call For Action can be used by governments to confirm political commitment on these topics and foster actions that integrate gender considerations into water policies, improve gender-equal financing, implement sex-disaggregated water data collection and analysis to inform policies and pursue a gender-equal access, use, and control of water resources and related decision-making.

2. **Is there a deadline for joining the Call For Action?**
   The Call For Action has been kicked off with its international launch at the World Water Week 2021 and will continue until 2030 with the following key milestones: the International Water Decade Mid-term Review (2023), its completion in 2028, and the end date of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Call can be joined at any time using the following email: waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org. An early and active involvement will maximize the impact of the Initiative.

3. **Is there any advocacy material available to promote the Call For Action?**
   A full package of information, advocacy and messaging materials is available on UNESCO WWAP website’s special Call For Action section, which can be easily downloaded and freely used.
   
   This Call is fact-based. The document “Taking Stock of Progress Towards Gender Equality in the Water Domain” (UNESCO WWAP, 2021) analyzes the existing information and assesses the emerging challenges to gender equality in the water domain. It provides information and data on different aspects, among others: access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, employment, climate change management, water governance including in transboundary context, education and training, data collection and funding.
Critically important to fully understand the Call For Action is the conceptual **Position Paper “Accelerating Gender Equality in the Water Domain: A Call For Action”**, which contains the Call’s recommendations to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain while achieving safe and secure water for all.

4. **What will the Call For Action bring about?**

The Call For Action advocates for bold actions to accelerate the equitable access to water resources and water services, in an inclusive and sustainable manner. Simultaneously, it aims to trigger the necessary socioeconomic changes for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain by 2030. It is expected that members of the Global Multi-Stakeholder Coalition facilitated by UNESCO WWAP, including governments, organizations, private sector, civil society, ODA and other entities supporting the Call, will either develop actions on gender-transformative advocacy, policy, programming and planning, or finance them. Relevant actions will be reported and disseminated in dedicated events and through dedicated communication platforms.

5. **How to support and where to follow the Call For Action?**

Everyone can use the Call For Action as means to advocate for the importance of accelerating gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain, and for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal (SGD) 6.

WWAP coordinates the Call For Action Initiative and facilitates the associated Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, and will continue to do so until 2030 with the support of its members.

Additional information about associated events and actions, as well as advocacy and communication materials can be found on UNESCO WWAP’s dedicated Call For Action page.

You may request to highlight your activities on this dedicated page or through UNESCO WWAP’s Twitter account.

**Contact us through:** waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org