



## ACCELERATING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WATER DOMAIN: A CALL FOR ACTION

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

<https://bit.ly/AcceleratingGenderEquality>

### 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, has shown 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.

**On this behalf, and in alignment with the UNESCO Gender Equality Priority, UNESCO WWAP is facilitating a global [Call for Action ‘Accelerating gender equality in the water domain: bridging the data gap and developing concrete actions’](#).**

### THE OBJECTIVE

The scope of this Initiative is to bring attention to the need of accelerating gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain, as well as to encourage the development and implementation of gender-inclusive strategies. This initiative therefore calls upon decision-makers, political leaders, governors and 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.*

## MODALITY

This Call for Action Initiative is based on three main pillars:

1. A **factual basis** formed by an in-depth analysis document '[Taking Stock of the Progress towards Gender Equality in the Water Domain - Where do we stand 25 years after the Beijing Declaration?](#)';
2. Concrete **recommendations for action** contained in a joint [Position Paper 'Accelerating Gender Equality in the Water Domain – A Call For Action'](#) by UNESCO WWAP and a Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, to the attention of leaders and other relevant stakeholders;
3. **Awareness and Dissemination:** Spreading the word on the Initiative, its key findings and recommendations is critical for reaching as many stakeholders as possible, ensuring widespread support and action at regional and local levels in order to catalyse progress in the field. To that end, the Call for Action Initiative seeks the support of a broad multi-stakeholder network, and a broad dissemination of the initiative across the public.

## THE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COALITION

To amplify the resonance of this critical Call, the Initiative is supported by a broad '**Multi-stakeholder Coalition**' consisting of –but not limited to- UN agencies, international and regional organizations, Member States' institutions, funding agencies, ODAs, NGOs, private sector and civil society.

Support from the members of the Multi-stakeholder Coalition may include:

- **Pledge voluntary support** to the key recommendations as expressed in the joint [Position Paper](#);
- **Advocate for the Call for Action Initiative**, *in primis* by Member States and other relevant stakeholders, in order to expand the Coalition;
- **Implement regional/national specific actions** associated to this Call;
- **Finance the Call for Action and its sustainability.** Options include supporting with dedicated funds for specific actions (e.g. regional or national training activities; water and gender country projects) or a share into a multi-partner basket to fund the Call's development and long-term operation (e.g. organization of advocacy and fundraising events; creation and maintenance of a dedicated digital platform and community; design and production of communication materials) and/or specific projects. Specific actions could be developed between individual partners and WWAP, as well as in partnership with several members of the Coalition.

In order to join the Multi-Stakeholder Coalition, it suffices to send an email to the dedicated email address: [waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org](mailto:waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org), with the expression of interest and including the following items:

- i) Name of Institution represented;
- ii) Name of the key contact person(s);
- iii) Official email and/or signed letter with expression of interest;
- iv) Institutional Logo;
- v) Link to the Institution's web page

All members will appear and be acknowledged on the UNESCO dedicated web page through their logo and the link to their websites.

A reply will follow acknowledging reception. The WWAP Water and Gender Team will be available to schedule individual calls/videoconferences with interested parties as appropriate to further discuss the level of involvement and collaboration schemes.

All members of the Coalition are invited to:

- Spread knowledge on the Initiative by sharing the [Taking Stock analysis](#), [Position Paper](#) and [dedicated communication materials](#) (downloadable from the UNESCO WWAP dedicated web page) through social, media and mailing networks;
- Present the Call for Action and its supporting publications at various international, national and local events, as discussed under the next section. A standard Power Point presentation (so far available in English, French and Spanish) will be shared upon request.

### ROADMAP TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WATER SECTOR BY 2030

The Call for Action Initiative has been launched at global 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. Two important milestones are: i) the Mid-term review of the International Water Action Decade in 2023 and the related UN Conference planned at the UN headquarters in New York, and ii) the completion of the International Water Decade 2018-2028.

A roadmap of key events for the period 2021-2023 has been identified (Fig. 1):



Figure 1. 2021-2023 key events for the Call for Action Initiative

Countries and regions are also invited to organize dedicated regional events for the presentation of this Call and of the concrete commitments and actions assumed by countries and institutions.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 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, and academia among 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 official launch at the World Water Week (on [23<sup>rd</sup>](#) and [25<sup>th</sup>](#) of August 2021) and will continue with upcoming milestones being the International Water Decade Mid-term Review (2023), its completion in 2028, and the deadline of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2030.

The Call can be joined at any time using the following email: [waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org](mailto:waterandgendercallforaction@unesco.org). **An early involvement will maximize the impact of this Call.**

### 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 analysis document "[Taking Stock of Progress Towards Gender Equality in the Water Domain](#)" (UNESCO WWAP, 2021) is an assessment of the existing and 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, education and training, and data collection and funding.

Critically important to fully understand and support 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, becoming inclusive and sustainable. These actions should trigger the necessary cultural changes for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain by 2030. It is expected that members of the Water and Gender Multi-stakeholder Coalition facilitated by UNESCO WWAP, and all governments, organizations, private sector, civil society, ODA and other entities supporting the Call will develop actions either on gender-transformative advocacy, policy, programming and planning, or financing as a result of the Initiative. Relevant actions will be reported and disseminated in dedicated events and platforms.

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

Everyone can use the Call for Action to promote the importance of accelerating gender equality and the empowerment of women in the water domain, in line with the acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goal 6.

You can follow the Call for Action activities, including events at international, regional and national scale through the [UNESCO WWAP website's special Call for Action section](#), where you can also download the [advocacy package and other relevant materials](#), and through [UNESCO WWAP 's Twitter account](#).