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Quarterly Newsletter

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Highlight

GWP NETWORK MEETING 2020

Bringing the change

21-22
OCTOBER
2020 ONLINE



The 2020 GWP Network Meeting concluded on 22 October, with over 900 GWP Partners signed up for the virtual event and others watching the Facebook Live feed. The overall

theme was 'Bringing the Change' in the context of the GWP 2020-2025 Strategy and as the world faces a pandemic. Based on the experiences of GWP's 'Follow the Sun' Network Meetings in 2018 and 2019, we have learned that holding this meeting online ensures large and inclusive participation. We are creating a format that allows for broad participation, keeping in mind the current COVID-19 situation (PG. 2 and 5)

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GWP NETWORK STORIES

12 Water ChangeMaker Journeys Make It to the Finals. Read and Learn From the Water ChangeMaker Stories Now to make the change!

From the previous edition of the Newsletter, we have learned about the [Water Changemakers' semi-finalists](#). With that respect, the seventy-eight water Changemaker stories that successfully passed the first round jury have been identified by our qualified and diverse technical jury to pursue the next stage in the Awards selection process. The semi-finalist stories not only highlighted important common ingredients, such as the need for infectious enthusiasm and the motivation to work for a cause bigger than oneself. But, they also underline the importance of political buy-in, adequate financial and human resources, good communication, and the establishment of strong and transparent coalitions and partnerships to translate inertia into collective action. Finally, many of the stories demonstrate strong potential for growth: a viral propensity to be replicated and scaled up in other contexts. These elements can all be considered as keys to their success.



The [semi-finalist stories](#) highlight important common ingredients, such as the need for infectious enthusiasm and the motivation to work for a cause bigger than oneself. But, they also underline the importance of political buy-in, adequate financial and human resources, good communication, and the establishment of strong and transparent coalitions and partnerships to translate inertia into collective action. Finally, many of the stories demonstrate strong potential for growth: a viral propensity to be replicated and scaled up in other contexts. These elements can all be considered as keys to their success.

As time keeps progressing, the result of the second stage jury of thought leaders was announced on the 21st October 2020. The 12 finalists were announced in front of nearly 300 GWP Partners who participated in the Opening Plenary of the GWP Network Meeting by the chair of the juries, Oyun Sanjaasuren, the Director of

External Affairs for the Green Climate Fund and former GWP Chair. "Deciding on the 12 brilliant finalists was difficult," said Oyun Sanjaasuren as she congratulated all participants.

We invite you to discover these stories and enter into contact with their authors on the Water ChangeMaker website. (modified article, original articles by *EB*)

Finds out more about the original article on the 12 water change-maker journeys [here](#) and [here](#).

GWP Partners Ready to 'Bring the Change'

The 2020 GWP Network Meeting concluded on 22 October, with over 900 GWP Partners signed up for the virtual event and others watching the Facebook Live feed. The overall theme was 'Bringing the Change' in the context of the GWP 2020-2025 Strategy and as the world faces a pandemic.

Despite the difficult new reality that GWP Partners face due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the discussion in the Network Meeting was generally positive when looking to the future. Many Partners shared experiences on how new opportunities have emerged as a result of the pandemic. One example was the virtual meetings (such as the Network Meeting itself) which enable greater inclusion in discussions and deeper interregional collaboration. Also, the speed at which everyone has managed to adapt to a virtual world has been encouraging:

"This shows that people have the capability of adapting very quickly to changes – something that is very much needed in our battle against climate change," said GWP Caribbean Chair **Trevor Thompson** who is also the GWP Chair of Regional Chairs.

[In an introductory interview](#), GWP Chair **Howard Bamsey** said that the GWP network has managed to adapt effectively to the new circumstances thanks to modern technology and that in some respects *"we can actually be more productive than we were before."*

But he also stressed the importance of maintaining relationships developed in previous years through in-person meetings: *"We have to put a lot of emphasis on keeping the momentum that those relationships have created."* This is especially important when it comes to third party meetings and big international meetings that go beyond the water sector, he said, because these relationships are more challenging to maintain.

"There is no other organization in the world that has this reach in the water sector – and probably very few in other sectors. We can offer something that the water sector generally lacks, and that is a coherent view and vision of where we want to go. GWP can be a

node for coherence, for building coherence in the water sector. I'm hopeful that in the next 12 months, before our next Network Meeting, Partners will see the appearance of greater coherence within the water sector," said Bamsey.

The annual GWP Network Meeting is an important step in making this happen because the discussions that take place are part of what guides GWP's work in the coming year, said GWP Interim Executive Secretary **Peter Repinski**, who also acknowledged the difficult situation that all Partners live in at the moment. Repinski expressed GWP's sympathy and solidarity with all who are struggling:

"This is why we wanted to make this a big virtual event so that as many of you as possible could be part of it. We are adjusting our business, we are taking things virtual, and we are finding innovative pathways to delivery. And we are at the point in the year now where we think through what we have learned from this year, and how we can build that into the work program for next year."



Photo 1 Visualisation of the opening plenary session of the 2020 GWP Network Meeting

Event Highlights

This year, the Network Meeting was designed in a continental format, which started with an [Opening Plenary](#), followed by three continental sessions – [Latin America & Caribbean \(LAC\)](#), [Eurasia](#) (THESE SESSIONS WERE NOT BROADCAST LIVE), and [Africa & Mediterranean](#) – ending with a [Closing Session](#).

Each continental session consisted of a customized inter-regional segment. The LAC region discussed the three anchor areas of GWP's new Strategy – climate resilience through water, water solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and trans-boundary water cooperation. The Eurasia region focused on building optimal mechanisms to engage partners through the partnership platform, and effective inter-regional partners collaboration, and finally, the Africa & Mediterranean session focused on how to

transform and improve the investment outlook for water security and sustainable sanitation.

For the global segment, the same question was discussed in each session: *The Covid-19 crisis impacts water resources management today and will likely have long-lasting impacts due to the socio-economic crisis and shifting political priorities. As water actors, how do you adapt your work to continue bringing change to achieve water security? Can we identify 'success factors' to make change happen in this new environment?*

Visual summaries of each session were created in real-time to capture the essence of the interactions – these were available immediately following each session: [Opening Plenary](#), [Latin America & Caribbean](#), [Eurasia](#), [Africa & Mediterranean](#), [Closing Session](#).

Among the many highlights of the meeting was the [announcement of 12 Water ChangeMaker finalists](#), which was carried out by former GWP Chair **Oyun Sanjaasuren**. She is now Director of External Affairs for the Green Climate Fund and also the Chair of the Stage Two Water ChangeMaker Thought Leaders' Jury. She acknowledged that the jury process had been a challenge, due to the high quality of the many submissions: "The change journeys were all very motivational, and also transmitted hope."



Photo 2 Announcing the Water ChangeMaker Finalists

The winner of the [Water ChangeMaker Awards](#) will be announced in January 2021.

In the [Africa & Mediterranean](#) session, His Excellency President **Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete**, former President of the Republic of Tanzania and current [GWP Southern Africa](#) and Africa Coordination Unit Board Chairman, delivered a [keynote address](#) on how to transform and improve the investment outlook for water security and sustainable sanitation in Africa.

He said that despite the many challenges that Covid-19 has brought about, “the resourceful will always find opportunities in challenges, and Africa is home to the resourceful. Covid-19 has put a spotlight on water and sanitation, and this is an opportunity for GWP and Partners to mobilize action on water investments.”

EB

Read and find out more information from [the original article here](#).

Embracing Gender Equality and Inclusion – It Starts From the Top

Social inclusion and gender equality are long-established, core values of the GWP Network and manifested in the GWP Gender Strategy and the GWP Gender Action Piece. In a series of inter-regional discussions, GWP Senior Gender & Social Inclusion Specialist Liza Debevec sets out to identify what GWP as an institution can do to apply the concepts in these documents. Her first discussion is with Amy Sullivan and Andrew Takawira, who are both involved in a large Pan-African project on gender-transformative water and climate investment. The discussion topic is institutional leadership and commitment, which is the first of 4 action areas in the Gender Action Piece. Their message is clear: leadership makes all the difference.

The **GWP Gender Strategy** and the **GWP Gender Action Piece** both set out to pave the way for gender equality and social inclusion in water resources management. But how do we actually go about doing this, putting words into action? In a recent interview on the topic, Debevec highlighted the 4 action areas that the Gender Action Piece identifies as a recipe for success, and she decided to do a deep dive into each action area to identify and untangle some obstacles and challenges that they each contain. “This takes many uncomfortable conversations; it is not something that can be achieved through training or courses, it takes time and it is ongoing work,” says Debevec. **EB**

Read the [full article from this link](#).

GWP Appoints New Executive Secretary

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) Steering Committee announced the appointment of Mr. Dario Soto-Abril (**photo 3**) as GWP Executive Secretary, effective March 1, 2021. Soto-Abril joins GWP after serving as Global CEO at Fairtrade International since February 2017.

Soto-Abril spent the first part of his career as a corporate lawyer before moving to The Trust for the Americas, the non-profit affiliate of the Organization of American States (OAS) where he spent 14 years as the Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer.

“Dario brings to GWP extensive experience of a network whose dynamics are similar in many ways to ours,” said Mr. Howard Bamsey, GWP Chair, in announcing the unanimous decision to appoint Soto-Abril. “He has a proven track record of successful resource mobilization, motivating staff across five continents, and leading change.”



Photo 3 Mr. Dario Soto-Abril as GWP Executive Secretary, effective March 1, 2021

In addition to increasing the flow of fundraised resources at Fairtrade and strengthening Fairtrade partnerships with businesses, governments, and international organizations, Soto-Abril led a process of transformation that resulted in a greater focus on impact priorities, delivering positive change for more than 5 million people in agricultural communities around the globe.

During his time at The Trust/OAS, he led the expansion from three to 22 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, building coalitions and public-private partnerships around free trade, workers’ rights, and human rights.

“Water is the most important resource humanity has and is key to our survival,” said Soto-Abril in accepting the position. “GWP’s mission and its new strategy call us to double our efforts in securing access to water for all, while recognising water as a fundamental human right. By anchoring our work in the Sustainable Development Goals, and connecting it with a strong response to the COVID crisis, GWP is uniquely positioned to lead, inspire, and mobilise new partners to join us in this endeavour.”

Bamsey noted that Soto-Abril would be taking over as the GWP network is in the early years of its 2020-2025 strategy, Mobilising for a Water Secure World. “Dario showed that he has been working with civil society, governments, and the private sector to achieve inclusive economic growth and wellbeing – an excellent alignment with the way GWP works to achieve its strategy,” said Bamsey.

GWP, a global action network focused on the sustainable management of water resources, is served by a secretariat in Stockholm, Sweden – the Global Water Partnership Organisation (GWPO) –

hosted by the Swedish government. The GWP Executive Secretary serves as CEO of GWPO.

Soto-Abril, a Colombian, has a Law degree from Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), a Masters of Law from Tulane University (New Orleans), and a Masters in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Soto-Abril enjoys sailing and has a deep love of animals, having done philanthropic work in animal shelters in Colombia. **EB**

The original article can be accessed through this [web address](#).

Six New Members Join GWP Steering Committee

In December 2020, GWP welcomed six new members on its Steering Committee, adding to seven members who have served longer. The Committee acts as a Board of Directors for the GWP Network and the GWP Organisation (GWPO). The members rotate every three or six years. Now, for the first time, a Permanent Youth Seat has been added. Jamilla Sealy from Barbados is the new representative on this seat. “Being the first youth, and also being a female of African descent and from the Caribbean, which are often under-represented in the global sphere, makes it a humbling experience”, she says about her appointment. **(EB)**

The six steering committee are: **(Please see photo 4 for reference)**

- 1) Jamilla Sealy is an environmental professional, currently working as an Assistant Project Coordinator in the [Biodiversity and Conservation Section of the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification in Barbados](#).
- 2) Pablo Bereciartua is from Argentina, where he in 2017-2019 was Secretary of Infrastructure and Water of Argentina, and responsible for one of the main federal investment areas and the definition and implementation of the National Water Policies
- 3) Atem S. Ramsundersingh is a Dutch national in Singapore, where he is the Founder, Chief Executive Officer, and Board Director of [WEnergy Global Pte Ltd](#) - a one-stop provider of renewable energy solutions.
- 4) Naima Siddiqi in the United Kingdom is Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for [Europe at the International Rescue Committee](#) – a global humanitarian and development organization.
- 5) Tom Soo is based in France and he is Executive Director of the [International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research \(IAHR\)](#).

- 6) Stacy Swann in USA is the CEO and Founding Partner of [Climate Finance Advisors](#).



Photo 4 The Six new members of the GWP Steering Committee

Read the original article and finds out more relevant information about the new member of the GWP steering committee [here](#).

REGIONAL STORIES

EURASIA Continental Session of the 2020 GWP Network Meeting

The 2020 GWP Network Meeting concluded on 22 October, with over 900 GWP Partners signed up for the virtual event and others watching the Facebook Live feed ([not covered the EURASIA session](#)). The overall theme was ‘**Bringing the Change**’ in the context of the GWP 2020-2025 Strategy and as the world faces a pandemic. The session covers the global plenary session (Opening and closing) and 3 continental sessions; Latin America and Caribbean, EURASIA, as well as Africa and the Mediterranean.

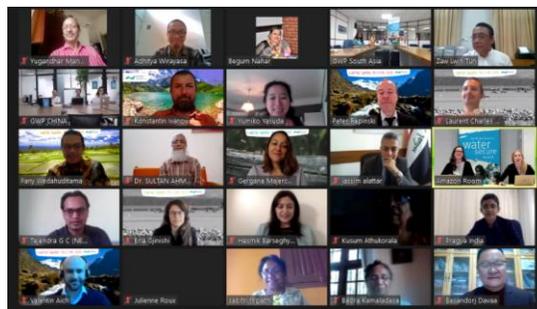


Photo 5 Participants of the EURASIA continental session of the 2020 GWP Network Meeting

The decision to move to a virtual environment was mainly to ensure large and inclusive participation and as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic that will limit the physical gatherings. The two previous network meetings adopted the 29-hour long online meeting 'Follow the Sun' traveled along the 13 GWP's regions. **Each continental session covered a global segment and a continental segment.**

For the EURASIA continental segment, The point of the discussion focused on 3 items:

- **GWP Partners Networking Platform**

Online collaboration is key in this COVID-19 era, which is why a potential GWP Partners Networking Platform was discussed by delegates. It was proposed to develop a web-based platform that enables learning exchanges and features partner profiles. The platform would allow Partners to engage with each other more regularly throughout the year.



Photo 6 Mr. Fany Wedahuditama, Regional Coordinator of the GWP Southeast Asia presented the GWP Partners Networking Platform

- **IWRM knowledge competition and exchange programs**

Another way to engage youth is through global integrated water resources management (IWRM) knowledge competitions and Olympiads where young people can work on finding innovative solutions to water sector problems. One idea was to hold a tech competition to tackle desalination issues. Exchange programs were also suggested as a way of connecting with youth in various locations.



Photo 7 Ms. Guljamal Nurmuhamedova, Regional Coordinator of Central Asia and Caucasus (CACENA) shared information on the IWRM knowledge competition and exchange programs

"It is time to give youth the tools to be successful in preserving the future. There is a need for clever and intelligent use of water sources. It is important to collaborate with people who focus on climate change. We can lay the ground for this strategy right now." – Guljamal Nurmuhamedova, Regional Coordinator of Central Asia and Caucasus (CACENA)

- **Interregional learning and youth exchange**

Following the success of Summer School 2019 in Central & Eastern Europe, it was proposed to expand the program to other regions in 2021. The aim would be to bring together bright young minds to solve water issues. The school could take a hybrid approach, with both online and in-person classes.



Photo 8 Mr. Konstantin Ivanov, the Regional Coordinator of the GWP Central and Eastern Europe Explained the 2019 Summer School Programme

For the global segment, the same question was discussed in each session: The Covid-19 crisis impacts water resources management today and will likely have long-lasting impacts due to the socio-economic crisis and shifting political priorities. As water actors, how do you adapt your work to continue bringing change to achieve water security? Can we identify 'success factors' to make change happen in this new environment? The EURASIA partners

responded with develop a capacity for technology use through training, create multilingual resources projects, and revise strategies to include remote regions.

The GWP 2020 Network Meeting report covered the whole session is now available and can be accessed through [this URL](#). Read the [global article here](#) (include visualization for all sessions). **AW**



Photo 9 Visualisation of the EURASIA continental session of the 2020 GWP Network Meeting

The PAN-ASIA SDG Learning Exchange on Monitoring and Reporting of SDG Indicator 6.5.1 Degree of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Implementation

In 2020, Global Water Partnership (GWP) in collaboration with The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the custodian agency, which coordinates reporting on SDG 6.5.1 indicator, together with UNEP-DHI Centre and Cap-Net, operates the SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme, to support 60 countries in implementing the survey. For the PAN Asia region, the reports have been successfully submitted and it is now time to find out the lesson learned behind the process.

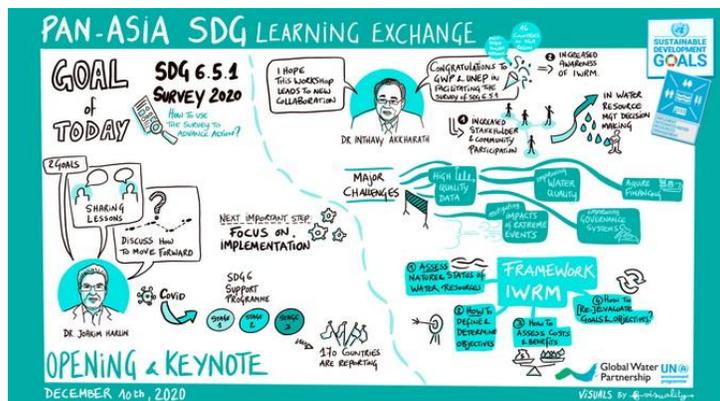


Photo 10 Workshop visualization of the Opening and Keynote Speech Session

The event successfully obtained several objectives, in particular:

1. Highlighted good practices and challenges in completing the 6.5.1 questionnaire in the round 2020 survey.
2. Identified any possible adjustments that need to be incorporated in the next round of the survey.
3. Identified common challenges and opportunities to advance on IWRM that had been identified through the survey; and establish collaboration at the PAN-Asia level to move forward together.

The online workshop on 10 December 2020 started with opening remarks from **Dr. Joakim Harlin, Head of Freshwater Unit of UN Environment and the UNEP-DHI Centre on Water & Environment**. He highlighted to date 170 countries that have reported on the status of their IWRM implementation 2020 and currently financially and technically assisted 61 countries in reporting the SDG 6.5.1 as well as providing technical support to at least 9 other countries. According to the 2017 baseline report, 80% of countries in the Asia Pacific have laid the foundations for IWRM, which at least have reached the medium-low level of implementation. He also stressed the opportunities for peer learning to support the weaker countries as shown by the 2017 baseline report.

The opening continued with a keynote speech from the GWP-SEA Chairman who also the chair of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management, Dr. Inthavy Akkharath. He presented, *“To some extent, many countries are in the fortunate position that water resources availability is not a major limiting factor in terms of economic growth. However, other countries do face a number of significant challenges and issues in the years ahead. In South-east Asia, it would appear that major challenges include collection of high quality data, mitigating the impacts of extreme events on water resources, sustaining and improving water quality, improving governance systems and acquiring financing for the development of new water infrastructure.”*

After a short break through an ice-breaking session, the workshop continued with the plenary session. The key aspects of the survey/consultation process, challenges met, best practices, and lessons learned in reporting on SDG 6.5.1 were presented by 4 country representatives from Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, and China. Their experiences were then furthermore discussed in the panel discussions a break-out group session.



Photo 11 Ms. Gvantsa Sivsivadze, participant from Georgia presented the result from her group discussion

The break-out group consists of two sessions, focused on the challenges & opportunities, collaboration, and support needed in relation to the next round survey, the advancement of the IWRM, and the possible collaboration at the Asia Pacific. In between the group discussion, two-panel discussions were carried out.

The first panel discussed the reflection on the implementation of the SDG 6.5.1 survey process in 2020, led by Mr. Colin Herron, the Global Coordinator Water Solutions for the SDG at GWP Organization, and Mr. Thomas Panella, Chief of Water Sector Group at the Asian Development Bank.

The second-panel discussion led by Prof. Victor Dukhovny, the Director of Scientific Information Center Water Commission (ICWC), and Mr. Ravi Narayanan, Chair of Governing Council, the Asia Pacific Water Forum (APWF). This session focuses on advancing the IWRM towards the achievement of the SDG.

In the group discussion, the challenges were pinpointed as follows:

1. Related to the use of words and technical terminologies that participants were not familiar with or did not understand. This was viewed as leading to confusion or need for further explanation and clarification of survey questions and threshold descriptions.
2. Related to the use of words with multidimensional aspects or dimensions like capacity, management instruments, and participation.
3. Participants' difficulty in "understanding issues presented in the survey instrument". Respondents from two countries in Central Asia perceived that the questionnaire was not context-sensitive and was not aligned with the on-ground realities of all participating countries.
4. Related to the framing of some of the survey questions. Respondents reported that some questions are unclear,

confusing, open to varied interpretations, or were considered as overlapping with another related or closely linked question.

5. Related to the suitability of threshold descriptions for all countries/settings. The standard/fixed descriptions of thresholds were viewed as not context-sensitive or appropriate to the actual realities and conditions of all countries.
6. On the justification narrative, (i.e., evidence and supporting data). The absence of clear-cut guidelines on the number of words required or desired length of the discussion made it difficult to ascertain the necessary and sufficient level of detail for this part of each question/section.
7. Related to value and use of the footnotes provided.



Photo 12 Participants of the PAN-ASIA SDG Online Learning Exchange

In view of all these aforementioned instrument-related challenges, some participants recommended that the questionnaire be reviewed and improved; a few others suggested that it be modified and simplified. Another noteworthy recommendation is to provide countries with the necessary background on how the survey instrument was developed, its rationale and reasoning behind metrics used. **AW, CVA.**

Find out more about the [events material through this URL](#).



Image: Quang Nguyen vinh from Pixabay

Quote of the day

*“Thousands have lived
without love, not one
without water”*

- W.H.Auden-

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