REGIONAL NILE WOMEN’S NETWORK (RNWN)
“WATERING WOMEN WEBINAR SERIES”
EPISODE 1 - 6TH JULY 2023

EVENT SUMMARY:

Event Date: 6th July 2023
Duration: 2 hrs 16 mins
Moderator: Ms Ghada Ahmedein (Chairperson of the RNWN)

Topics/Speakers:

- “The Role of Women in Implementing SDG No. 6 Of the Un Agenda 2023: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All”; By Dr. Ghada Fouad
- “Recognizing The Role of Gender in Water Resource and Policy Management”; By Ms. Maureen Cheruto

No. of Participants: 39 (from Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Asia, Uganda, United Kingdom, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania)

Technical Support for the Webinar: NBD Secretariat
PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

TOPIC 1:
The role of women in implementing SDG No. 6 of the UN Agenda 2023: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" - (Dr. Ghada Fouad)

SDG 6 is: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all.

The rationale: Clean Water and sanitation are important services for poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The Problem: Overexploitation, pollution, and climate change have led to severe water stress across the world. To achieve SDG 6, current rates of progress will need to increase four-fold to save 829,000 lives annually.

Goal 6 targets and how women can play positive role in accelerating the achievement process.

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<th>Goal 6 Targets</th>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Action Points for Women</th>
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| **Target 1:** Universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 | - Limited funding; some countries have a 61% funding gap to meet targets.  
- Governments spend chunks on conflicts and wars, reducing allocations to significant priorities like WASH. | Raise awareness, spread the culture of coexistence and tolerance, and raise children well to reduce extremism and armed conflicts; to reduce states’ expenditure on wars and spend more on useful goals like WASH. |
| **Target 2:** By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls. | Limited data that is accurate enough to support operations towards achieving the target and with little specifics to needs of women and girls in the available data. | Women’s CSOs and academics should use Goal 6 indicators to provide continuous reports with accurate data on women's needs and conditions with regard to WASH, especially in rural areas. |
| **Target 3:** By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally. | Globally, Water pollution is increasing by the day and there is little to no knowledge about water recycling in most African communities. | Women in houses and farms can increase efforts to recycle and safely reuse water; NGOs have to promote the practice. There’s need to build capacity of women on this. |
| **Target 4:** By 2030, increase water use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and water stress. | Increasingly rising water stress. Water stress is freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources. A higher stress %tage means water scarcity. Water scarcity could displace 700 million people by 2030. | - Advocate for gender-sensitive policies and legal frameworks to not only advance women's rights to land, but also including water conservation |
**TOPIC 2:**
Recognizing the Role of Gender in Water Resource and Policy Management”; Ms Maureen Cheruto

Gender does not mean women only as considered by most people. It is the representation of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed

**Importance of gender in Water Resource Planning and Management (WRPM):**

Women and men have different roles, responsibilities, knowledge, interests and access to resources. Both genders are likely to respond differently to water scarcity and how they will cope with or recover from a water crisis. A combination of the two genders in decision making on water policy will produce all-inclusive and effective management of water.

There is consensus that both genders must be involved in water resource and policy management, if there is to be sustainable development. Men are considered to be good leaders while women are good resource managers; they can efficiently lead their communities in management of natural resources, food production and water governance.

Women consider water as personal to life as females. They appreciate the importance of water because as norm in society they are expected to fetch water, cook, bath the children, offer water to livestock and ensure sanitation is sustained among other chores. This makes women have a unique understanding of the water resource and other natural resources around them. Women would create better advocates and better policy formulators if given space in water policy-making and management.

**Hinderances and solutions:**

Unfortunately, women themselves are unaware that their potential and value is not included in water resource and policy management. Africa cannot continue to neglect the valuable role women could play in bringing efficiency and sustainability in water resource and policy management. There’s need for advocacy, raising awareness, training and sharing intra-boundary and trans-boundary knowledge among women and making sure that women contribute in the role of decision making.

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<th><strong>Target 6 - a:</strong> By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity Building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programs.</th>
<th>Target depends on clear and accurate data about needs, chances, and challenges. Therefore target 2 challenges have to be overcome to.</th>
<th>Actively participate in all water-related voluntary commitments to accelerate progress in the next five years of the Water Action Decade 2018 2028 and second half of the 2030 Agenda</th>
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<td><strong>Target 6 - b:</strong> Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.</td>
<td>Very low participation of local communities especially women in Water resources and sanitation management. Most decisions are a result of Top – Down approach.</td>
<td>Women need to increase their numbers in decision making institutions (both public and private) and also advocate for community-wide inclusion in all water and sanitation management decision-making process.</td>
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Let’s envisage that following the resolutions of the Paris protocol of 2015, climate change finance should be dedicated to women organizations who champion water conservation and management initiatives as one of the positive climate justice approaches.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER ABOUT:

1. Do we have traditional methods to clean water or to wash hands?
2. Do you have plants or herbs that can clean hands and eliminate fungus and microbes?
3. How do we engage decision makers and project planners to design projects that enhance women’s access to water and how to make women take responsibilities in water management?
4. How to change communities’ views on women taking leadership positions and owning property as a way to enhance access to water and contributing to gender – sensitive policies for WRM?

TAKEAWAY ACTION POINTS:

1. RNWN membership should mobilize to bring on board more participants to the next webinar from all categories; members and non-members of the NBD, academia, government, rural, urban, and youth.
2. There’s need to advocate for women participation on decision making bodies related to water and climate change. Women should seek mandate for leadership positions to enhance gender-sensitive representation and decision making. It is important to also continuously train, learn and prepare to convince other decision makers to buy-in to gender-centred ideas at the decision-making table.
3. After 3 or 4 webinars, the RNWN to shape a statement with recommendations and conclusions and status of women in Africa to share to among other platforms at the COP28 through negotiators for gender inclusion in water decision making.
4. The steering committee shall put together a concept note for every webinar episode that spells out the objectives. Episodes ought to be handling thematical topics for easy evaluation at the end of the series.