



# Resilient by Nature: Designing and Inclusive Sustainable and Thriving Water Sector

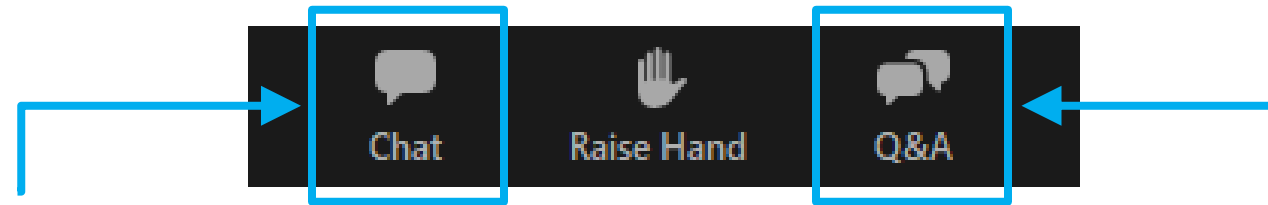
6 MARCH 2026

## WEBINAR INFORMATION – HOUSEKEEPING RULES



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# WEBINAR INFORMATION – HOUSEKEEPING RULES



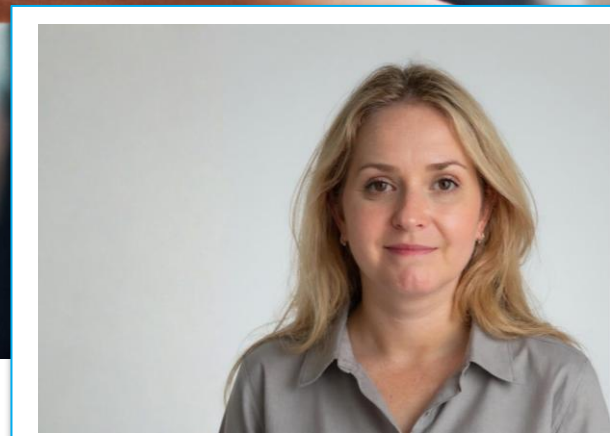
- **‘Chat’ box:** please use this for general requests and for interactive activities.
- **‘Q&A’ box:** please use this to send questions to the panelists. (We will answer these during the discussions)

*Please Note: Attendees’ microphones are muted. We cannot respond to ‘Raise Hand’.*

# Resilient by nature: Designing an inclusive sustainable and thriving water sector

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

**inspiring change**



# RESILIENT BY NATURE: DESIGNING AND INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING WATER SECTOR



## AGENDA

2.00 – 2.05	Introduction to IWA Congress	Sarah McMath
	Welcome and session objectives	Gill Edwards
2.05 – 2.15	<b>Session One: ACTION - Moving from commitment to system design</b> Designing a water sector that works for everyone	Sarah McMath
2.15 – 2.25	<b>Session two RESILIENCE - Leadership, culture and allyship</b> Building Organisational Resilience Through Inclusive Leadership	Sarah McMath Emily Timmins
2.25 – 2.35	The role of male allyship in driving systemic change Two leaders in conversation	Tim McMahon & Ian Cain
2.35 – 2.50	Panel Q&A	
2.50 – 3.00	<b>Session three: PROSPERITY - Inclusion as a driver for global Impact</b> Linking diversity to productivity and sector growth	Melina Persson
3.00 – 3.10	Gender equality, sanitation and shared prosperity	Jabulile Mashwama
3.10 – 3.25	Panel Q&A	
3.25 – 3.30	Closing Remarks	

# RESILIENT BY NATURE: DESIGNING AN INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING WATER SECTOR



**IWA Congress, Glasgow 2026**

## **A flagship global gathering**

- Bringing together global leaders, innovators and regulators to tackle critical water challenges
- Showcasing cutting-edge solutions, policy and practice from every region
- Catalysing partnerships that shape the future of water security worldwide

## **Women in Water (WIW) Programme**

- Inclusive, high-impact sessions embedded across the full Congress programme
- Our ambition is to make Glasgow 2026 the most welcoming Congress yet for women in water worldwide

**IWA Early bird ticket release - <https://worldwatercongress.org/>**

# RESILIENT BY NATURE: DESIGNING AN INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING WATER SECTOR



## WiW Committee Aims

- Champion gender parity through balanced panels and representative speakers
- Drive informed debate on gender related issues using strong speakers and data-led insight
- Build a global community of women, fostering connection before, during and after Congress.

## Leadership Group

- Annalisa Contos
- Cheryl Davis
- Rose Kaggwa
- Marie Whaley

## Planning Committee

- Leticia Ackun
- Gill Edwards
- Chelsea Hayward
- Arlinda Ibrahimllari
- Sarah McMath
- Geraldine T. Mpouma Logmo
- Liudmyla Odud

# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026:  
RIGHTS. JUSTICE. ACTION.**

**#FORALLWOMENANDGIRLS.**



# Moving from commitment to system design

SARAH MCMATH, CEO MOSL

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# MOVING FROM COMMITMENT TO DESIGN

- Shifting from individual resilience to organisational responsibility
- Embedding gender equality into policy, culture, and infrastructure
- Setting the tone/scene for leadership accountability and male allyship.



# Leadership, Culture and Allyship

SESSION 2

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# LEADERSHIP, CULTURE & ALLYSHIP



- **Building Organisational Resilience Through Inclusive Leadership**

Emily Timmins, Director of Water Recycling, Anglian Water

How inclusive leadership practices strengthen workforce resilience and retention in the water sector.

- **The Role of Male Allyship in Driving Systemic Change**

Ian Cain, CEO, Pennon Group – Retail and Customer Markets

Lawrence Gosden, CEO, Southern Water

A conversation about how engaged male allies can accelerate progress towards gender equality

# Prosperity: Inclusion as a driver for global impact

SESSION 3

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# PROSPERITY: INCLUSION AS A DRIVER FOR GLOBAL IMPACT



- **Linking Diversity to Productivity and Sector Growth**

Melina Persson, Client Director – UK Water Sector, Microsoft

Presenting the evidence connecting diverse leadership teams with stronger profitability, innovation, and productivity.

- **Gender Equality, Sanitation and Shared Prosperity**

Jabulile Mashwama, Managing Director, Eswatini Water Services Corp

Taking a global lens, this session will explore how gender-inclusive system design improves access to safe sanitation and water services for women and girls.

# Resilient by Nature: Designing an Inclusive, Sustainable and Thriving Water Sector

“FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: DESIGNING GENDER-INCLUSIVE WATER SYSTEMS THAT DELIVER SHARED PROSPERITY”

JABULILE MASHWAMA – MANAGING DIRECTOR (EWSC)



# OUTLINE



- 1 The Cost of Gender Exclusion in WASH | Eswatini & Africa
- 2 Africa's WASH Commitments
- 3 Gender Inclusivity | EWSC
- 4 Women as Catalysts for Sustainable Water Governance
- 5 Designing for Dignity
- 6 Conclusion | Policy to Action

# 1. ESWATINI | THE COST OF GENDER EXCLUSION IN WASH

## MORNING WATER COLLECTION

- 54% households have water on premises
- 57% of women collect water from other sources
- 84.8% spend up to 30 minutes daily collecting water



## DAYTIME WORK & CARE

- Most women carry major household and care responsibilities.
- Water collection reduces time for education and income generation



## EVENING SAFETY RISKS

- 28.4% of women experienced physical or sexual violence
- 3.2% report gender discrimination (vs 0.4% men)

## HEALTH & DIGNITY

- 85% households have improved sanitation
- 5.4% missed work or school because of menstruation
- 4.85% of the population practices open defaecation

Water and sanitation access in Eswatini directly shapes women's time, safety, health, and economic opportunity.

## THE GENDERED COST OF INADEQUATE WASH ACCESS

- **Disproportionate Impact on Women and Girls**
  - Affects health, safety, dignity and economic opportunity.
- **The Time and Care Burden**
  - Women collect water in ~7 out of 10 households without on-premises access.
  - Increased unpaid care work limits education and income participation.
- **Safety and Dignity Risks in Sanitation**
  - Shared or unsafe sanitation, increasing exposure to harassment and gender-based violence, particularly in slums and displacement settings.

## WHEN WOMEN ARE ABSENT, SYSTEMS FALL SHORT

🗳️ **Decision-Making Power**

**17% National Water Ministries**

**9% Transboundary Water Bodies**

🚰 **Daily Water & Care Burden**

**~70% of households rely on women for water collection**

**Collectors • Farmers • Caregivers**

*“Women carry the water — but remain underrepresented where decisions are made”  
(UNICEF)*

## 2. AFRICA'S WASH COMMITMENTS: TURNING POLICY INTO ACTION

### *AU Heads of State (2026)*

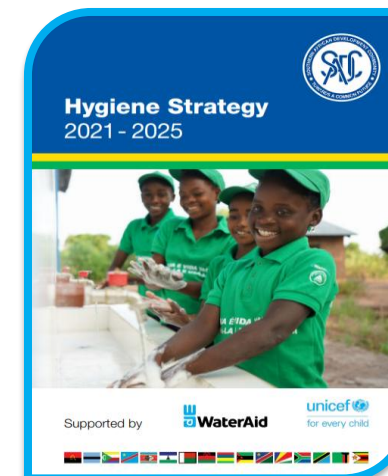
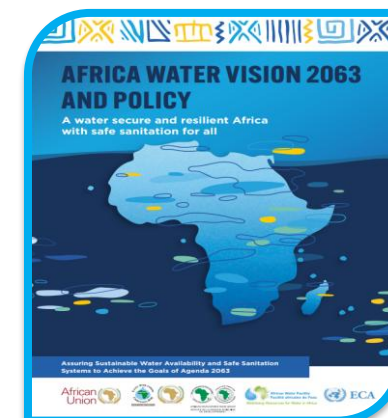
- USD 30B annually by 2030
- WASH as foundation for health, prosperity & gender equality
- Aligned to SDGs 5 & 6

### *African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) & Africa Water Vision 2063 and Policy (AWVP63)*

- Water as strategic asset under Agenda 2063
- Youth & Gender Inclusion Strategy (2023)
- Women's participation in governance
- Data-driven systems

### *SADC Hygiene Strategy (2023-2025)*

- Prioritizes women's and girls' needs in WASH
- Safe school sanitation
- Menstrual hygiene focus
- Inclusive planning



High-level political commitment across Africa recognises gender-responsive WASH as central to transformation and growth

### 3. GENDER INCLUSIVITY AT EWSC



Governance  
Level (50%)  
Executive Level  
(43%)

Intentional Workforce Inclusion

- EWSC Gender Strategy
- 2020 – 20%, 2025 -25%

Representation in STEM (31%)

- ↑ No. of Engineers, Ass. And Pipe fitters and TPOs

Structured Recruitment: DEI Target of 40%



Equitable Service Delivery Outcomes  
Inclusive Infrastructure Planning  
Improved Customer Engagement  
Measurable Equity

*At EWSC, inclusion is not accidental — it is intentional.*



# 4. WOMEN AS CATALYSTS FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER GOVERNANCE

Under EWSSAP, EWSC implemented targeted community-based interventions, appointing trained local operators to strengthen the link between rural communities and formal water services.



## KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION



### JOB CREATION

Contractors encouraged to recruit local women, while remaining mindful of the labour-intensive nature of the roles.



### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) programmes target women to promote improved hygiene practices and sustainable sanitation behaviours.



### COMMUNAL KIOSKS

Reduced travel distance for safety and convenience.



### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Issues affecting women and girls are actively raised, heard, and integrated into planning and service delivery.



Women operators bridge technical water management and community realities, strengthening service delivery, deepening trust, and creating a more sustainable and socially responsive water system.

# 5. DESIGNING FOR DIGNITY

Gender-Inclusive Sanitation in Action	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Target: 10,041 sanitation units.</li> <li>○ Sanitation facilities extended;                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 432 sanitation facilities constructed in 36 schools</li> <li>• 16 sanitation facilities constructed in 4 health centers</li> <li>• 1,787 sanitation facilities for informal settlements.</li> <li>• Under procurement: 7,806 VIPs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilities located within safer, accessible proximity to households</li> <li>○ Reduced exposure to gender-based violence linked to distant, secluded sanitation access</li> <li>○ Improved privacy and menstrual hygiene management</li> <li>○ Strengthened school attendance and retention</li> </ul>



System-wide Outcomes

Economic Participation

Educational Continuity

Contribution to SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Water & Sanitation), 3 (Health), and 4 (Education)

## 6. CONCLUSION: POLICY TO ACTION

- **Institutionalize Women’s Leadership in Water Governance:** Put women in decision-making roles at all levels of water governance – from community water committees to national ministries and transboundary bodies.
- **Invest in Gender-Responsive Infrastructure & Technology:** Close the gap between policy and practice by designing WASH solutions that meet women’s and girls’ specific needs.
- **Align Financing with Gender Priorities:** AU’s \$30 billion annual WASH financing target must be matched with gender-responsive budgeting and accountability, prioritising investments that directly benefit women and girls — including rural water access and sanitation in schools and health facilities. (Source: UNWomen)
- **Foster Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange:** The Women in Water (WiW) programme launching at the IWA World Water Congress 2026 in Glasgow is a timely platform to foster such partnerships.

A high-speed photograph of water splashing, with numerous droplets and a large, dynamic splash of water. The water is clear and blue, set against a light background.

# Thank You



# RESILIENT BY NATURE: DESIGNING AND INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING WATER SECTOR

## Panel Q&A



# RESILIENT BY NATURE: DESIGNING AND INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING WATER SECTOR

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<https://cwiw.org/events>

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# UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



**WEBINAR**

**Planetary Boundaries and  
Absolute Sustainability in the  
Water Sector**

**IWA**  
the international  
water association

 **12 March 2026**  
14:00 GMT

**REGISTER NOW**  
[www.iwa-network.org/iwa-learn](https://www.iwa-network.org/iwa-learn)



Learn more at

<https://www.iwa-network.org/learn/planetary-boundaries-and-absolute-sustainability-in-the-water-sector-1>

# UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



**IWA** YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONALS  
the international water association

## YWP GET-TOGETHER

### Career Skills - Session 4: Making the most of your IWA YWP membership

 23 MARCH 2026  
14:00 GMT

**REGISTER NOW**  
[www.iwa-network.org/iwa-learn](http://www.iwa-network.org/iwa-learn)

**IWA** YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONALS  
the international water association  
Steering Committee  
(2024-2026)

Learn more at

<https://www.iwa-network.org/learn/ywp-get-together-career-skills-session-4-making-the-most-of-your-iwa-ywp-membership>

# UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



Learn more at  
<https://iwa-let.org/>

# UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



**IWA**  
the international water association

*Water Action – The Path to Resilience and Prosperity*

# World Water Congress & Exhibition

GLASGOW UK  
4-8 OCTOBER 2026  
[www.worldwatercongress.org](http://www.worldwatercongress.org)

The poster features an aerial view of Glasgow, Scotland, with the River Clyde flowing through the city. The River Clyde is a prominent feature, with several bridges crossing it. The city skyline is visible in the background, including the Glasgow Science Centre and the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. The text is overlaid on the image, with the IWA logo in the top right corner. The main title 'World Water Congress & Exhibition' is in large white letters. The dates and location are in blue text at the bottom right. The website URL is in blue text at the bottom right. A blue wavy line is at the bottom of the poster.

Learn more at  
<https://worldwatercongress.org/>

# UPCOMING IWA WEBINARS & EVENTS



## Digital Water Summit

ISTANBUL TÜRKIYE

24-26 Nov 2026

Join the Transformation Journey

[www.digitalwatersummit.org](http://www.digitalwatersummit.org)



Learn more at  
<https://digitalwatersummit.org/>

# JOIN OUR NETWORK OF WATER PROFESSIONALS!



IWA brings professionals from many disciplines together to accelerate the science, innovation and practice that can make a difference in addressing water challenges.

## SCAN THE QR CODE



Use code **WBNR26IWA20**  
for a **20% discount off**  
new membership.

Join before 31 December 2026

inspiring change

