

# GLOBAL YOUTH-LED ACTION FOR WATER

Youth Empowerment in the Groundwater Sector: Advocating for Inclusive Decision-Making

Michel Frem. Chair, UNESCO Groundwater Youth Network (GWYN)  
11 July 2023, 2PM CET

# Groundwater: making the invisible visible

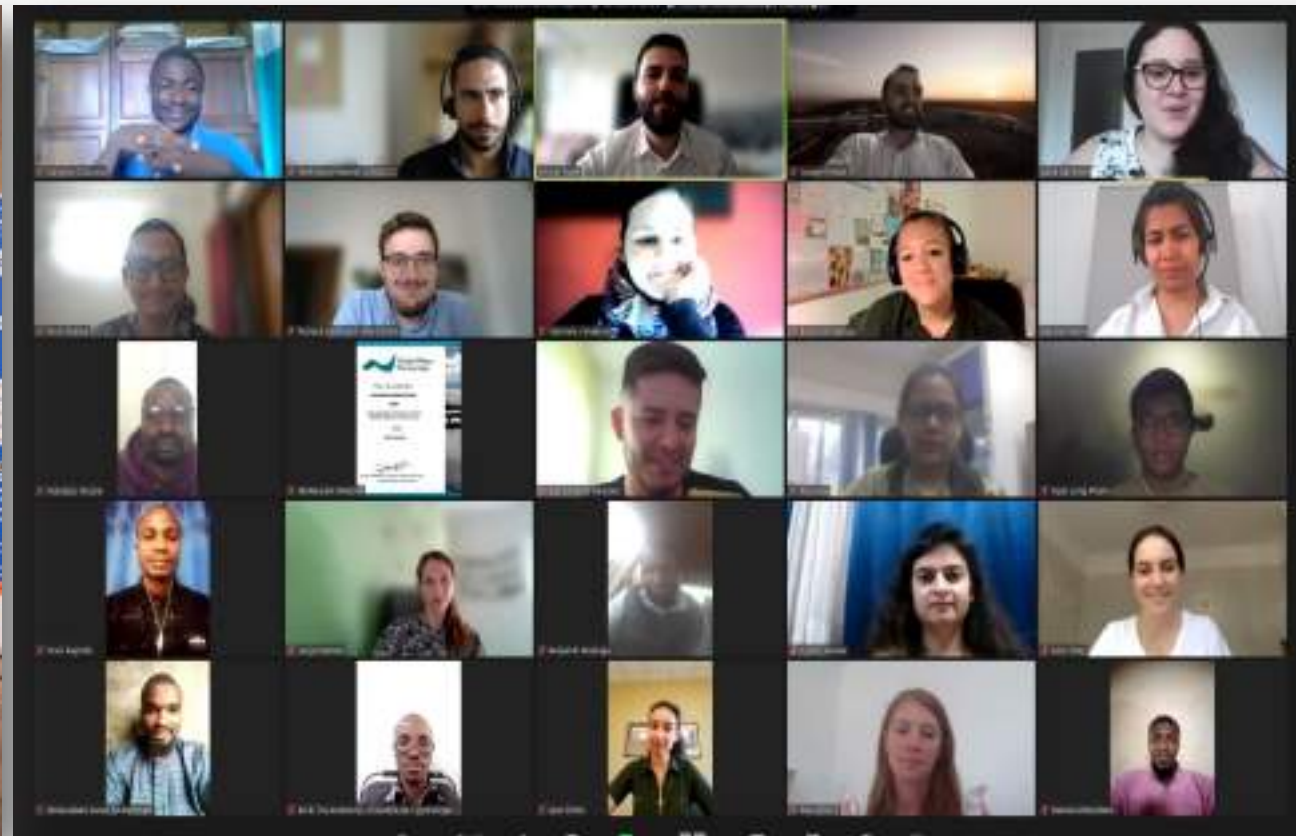


2022 Groundwater



# GWYN

Groundwater Youth Network



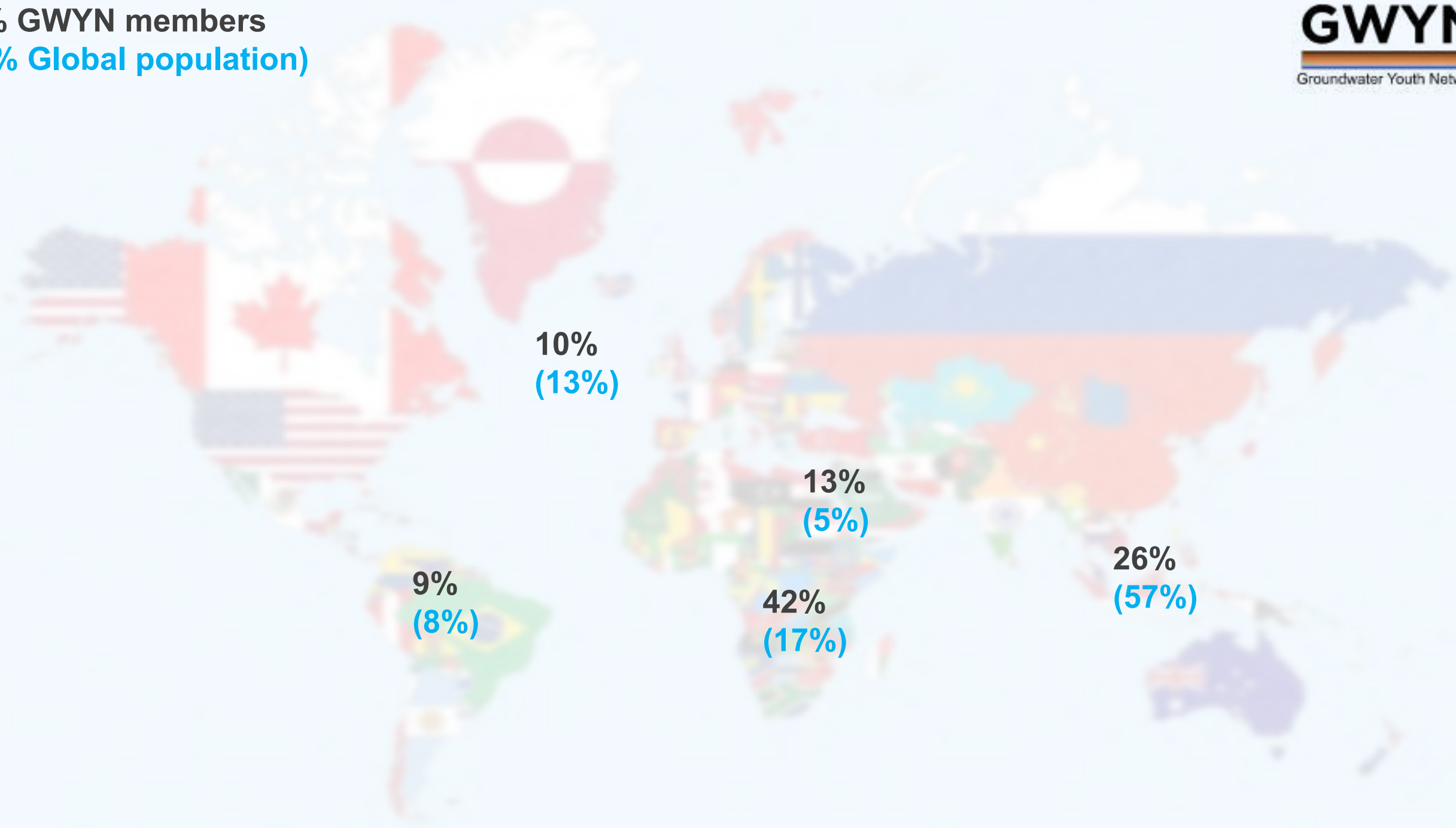
**1350 members**  
July 2023



**850 members**

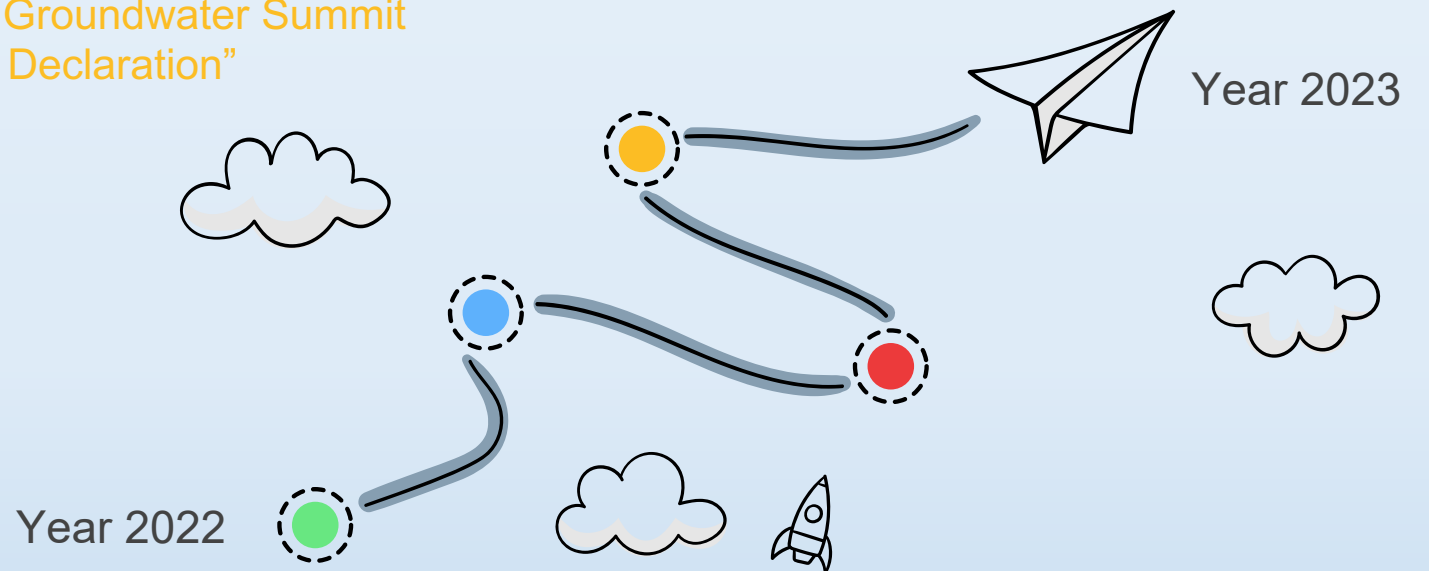
First General Assembly (July 2022)

**% GWYN members**  
**(% Global population)**



# 2022 IN A NUTSHELL ...

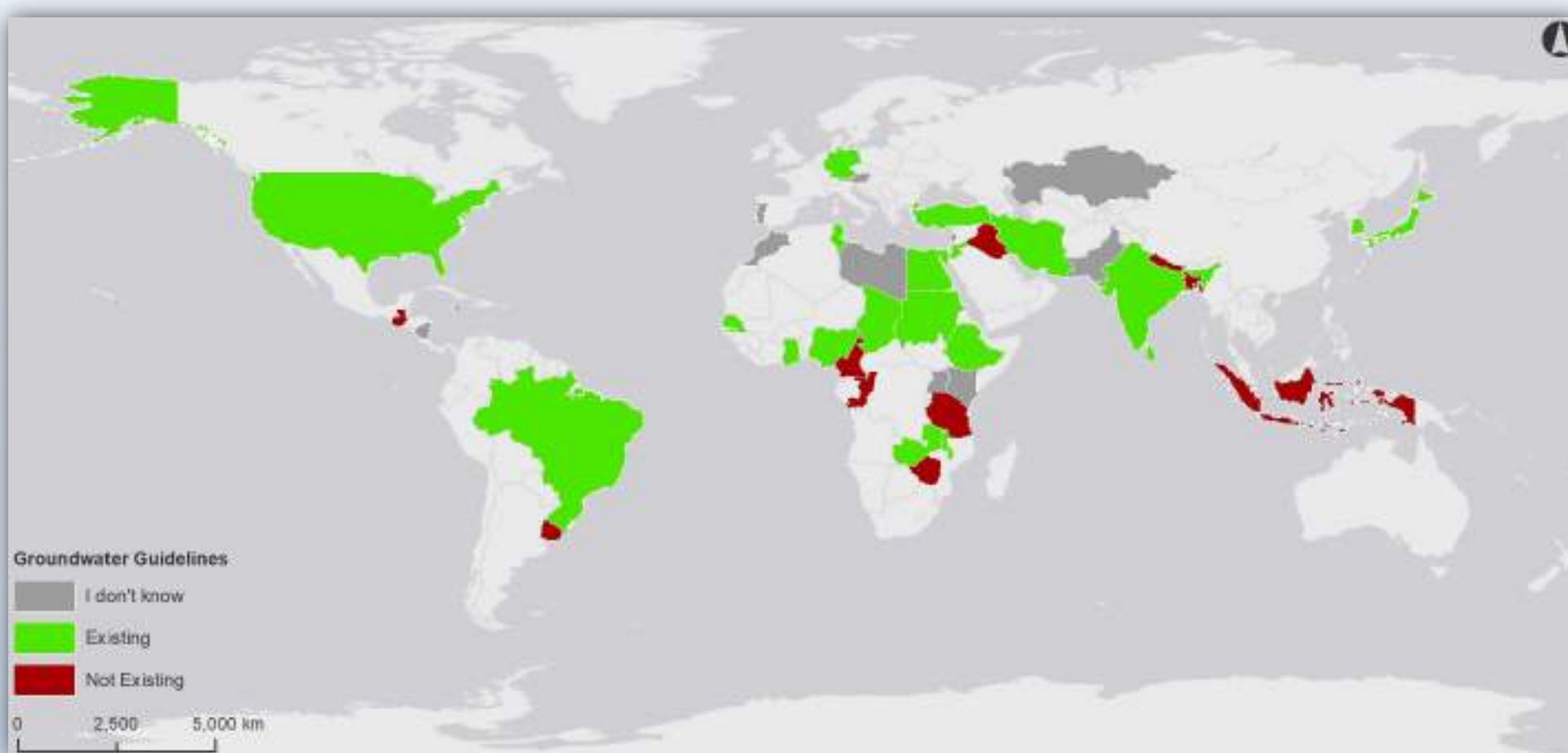
- 14/03/2022: Formation of the GWYN Steering Committee
- 22/03/2022: GWYN launched at Dakar's World Water Forum
- 08/04/2022: First Steering Committee's monthly meeting
- 21/04/2022: IWRA Global Networking Café – Earth Day Edition
- 21/07/2022: First General Assembly
- 10/08/2022: End of the first call to join the GWYN committees
- 23/08/2023: World Water Week 2022 (SIWI)
- 12-23/09/2023: UNESCO Water Resilience Challenge (Indonesia and Vietnam)
- 07/10/2022: UN Youth Office Consultation Session
- 12/10/ 2022: WMO Hydrohub Youth Symposium (Youth Perspective on the Importance of Groundwater Monitoring for Sustainable Water Management)
- 17/11/2022: World Toilet Day Webinar (Managing Sanitation Systems to Protect Groundwater)
- 06/12/2022: Side-event hosted at the Groundwater Summit
- 08/12/2022: Youth Forum and “Youth Declaration”



# YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

✓ Most important groundwater-related issues:

1. Groundwater level decline
2. Groundwater contamination
3. Decrease of groundwater recharge
4. Degradation of GDEs
5. Seawater intrusion
6. Groundwater level rise
7. Land subsidence





## UN-Water Summit on Groundwater 7-8 December, UNESCO HQ

### Youth Declaration on Groundwater

As youth representatives of the 'global groundwater family', we are here today to declare our commitments to improving the management and sustainability of an invaluable resource, groundwater. We are also calling upon all concerned stakeholders, including Governments, private sector, and civil society, to join us in considering these commitments.

First of all, it is recognized that knowledge amongst the general public, as well as amongst decision- and policy-makers, about groundwater and the many ways in which this precious resource is linked to other systems needs to improve further, building particularly on the efforts undertaken during the year 2022 which has been dedicated to groundwater. Our first set of commitments includes to:

- Continue advocating for groundwater education and communication in multiple and innovative ways that seek to mobilize attention and raise improved awareness;
- Promote a vision where the role of groundwater to increase communities' resilience to climate change is fully recognized;
- Promote engagement of the general public in groundwater protection, including through the development of citizen science, or by encouraging student groups in schools and universities, amongst others, to become custodians/stewards of the aquifers upon which they live.

Second, groundwater exploitation largely contributes to economic development. However, with abstraction increasing worldwide by between 1 and 2% each year, it has also in many instances across the world caused irreversible damage to the environment and sometimes to traditional uses, as a result of falling groundwater levels and pollution. In addition, high levels of uncertainty exist over the management of both renewable and non-renewable groundwater resources. Hence, our commitments are to:

- Advocate for a world where policymakers adopt an evidence-based decision-making approach;
- Promote the use of tools and technology that will serve to enhance our knowledge of groundwater systems and flows, including the critical maintenance of flows to groundwater ecosystems, while also respecting the importance of local knowledge;
- Call for investment in groundwater monitoring, which is essential to improving understanding and therefore addressing decreasing groundwater levels and the deterioration of groundwater quality;
- Encourage public authorities to fully engage in the sustainable management of aquifers, especially that of non-renewable groundwater resources and overexploited renewable systems;
- Call on public authorities to address, as a priority, the needs of traditional users as well as the most vulnerable, both of whom are invariably the first to be impacted by situations of over-use and pollution.

**GWYN**

Groundwater Youth Network



UN-Water Summit on Groundwater





- Advocating for groundwater education.
- Advocating for a holistic, cross-sectoral groundwater management approach.
- Promoting the role of groundwater in increasing resilience to climate variabilities.
- Encouraging public engagement in groundwater protection.
- Calling for investment in groundwater monitoring.
- Adopting evidence-based decision-making approaches by policymakers.
- Advocating for investment in research and job creation, open data and science.
- Establishing groundwater legislations and regulatory frameworks.

**BE THE**



**CHANGE**

**YOU WANT**

**SEE IN**

**THE WORLD**



**UN**  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023



*at the*



UN  
2023 WATER  
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK  
22-24  
MARCH  
2023



**PLAN  
YOUR  
CAMPAIGN**

**1**



**CREATE  
AWARENESS**

**2**



**3**

**GENERATE ENGAGEMENT**

**5 SUSTAIN THE  
MOMENTUM**

**ENCOURAGE  
ACTION**

**4**



# Announcements



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Zagreb







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