UN Water Conference 2026

Virtual side event concept note

Water for People: From Youth Voice to Action for Universal, Equitable and Climate-Resilient Water and Sanitation in Africa

Approved virtual side event | Event ID 158

Event detail	Confirmed information
Date	Wednesday 9 December 2026
Time	15:00–16:30 GMT | 19:00–20:30 Abu Dhabi (UTC+4)
Platform	Zoom | Registration required
Languages	English and French translation
Lead organizer	Young Visionary Leaders International (YVLI)
Convening platform	African Youth Water Forum (AYWF)

Register to participate: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/y9eWvyK6So-aoHrdXhaakg

Background and rationale

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene are essential to health, dignity, education and resilient communities. Across Africa, underserved communities face barriers to reliable services, while climate risks increase pressure on water resources and infrastructure. Young people bring local knowledge, innovation and community networks, yet need meaningful opportunities to influence decisions and secure support for practical action.

This approved virtual side event brings together youth leaders, WASH practitioners, advocates, researchers and innovators to connect community experience with policy and delivery. The dialogue aligns with the Conference theme Water for People and gives particular attention to women and girls, persons with disabilities and underserved communities.

Purpose

To move from youth voice to practical action by identifying ways to expand equitable, climate-resilient water and sanitation access, strengthen youth participation in governance, and connect youth-led solutions with institutions, technical expertise and resources.

Objectives

- Present priorities emerging from AYWF-led youth and community consultations, with transparent recognition of their coverage.
- Explore practical approaches to inclusive water governance, accountable services and climate-resilient WASH.
- Share experience in sanitation delivery, water conservation, natural water distillation and storytelling for water action.
- Identify support for youth-led solutions through partnerships, finance, skills and technical assistance.
- Capture priority recommendations and voluntary commitments with responsible actors and follow-up milestones.

Discussion themes

The discussion will examine water access for homes, schools and underserved communities; meaningful youth participation in water decisions; sanitation and climate resilience; affordable innovation and conservation; and film and storytelling as tools for public engagement. Participants will consider how institutions and partners can support locally led solutions and turn recommendations into action.

Participation and format

The event is open to interested stakeholders, including youth networks, community organizations, public institutions, researchers, development partners, civil society and the private sector. Registration is required through Zoom. English–French translation will be available. The 90-minute session will combine speaker contributions, participant questions, discussion of recommendations and voluntary commitments.

Expected outputs and follow up

The event will generate a concise record of priority messages and recommendations and an action register of voluntary commitments, responsible actors and milestones. It will connect with the AYWF-led African Youth Water Position Paper and priority brief, with consultation coverage stated clearly. A one-page summary of the event's key recommendations and messages will be submitted to the Conference Secretariat by 10 January 2027. Follow-up will inform engagement toward the African Youth Water Summit on 22–23 September 2027 in Accra, Ghana.

Organizers and partners

Led by Young Visionary Leaders International through the African Youth Water Forum, in collaboration with World Water Film Festival, Facilitated Learning for Universal Sanitation and Hygiene FLUSH, Nigeria Youth Climate Preservation Network and Action-Formation-Recherche en Eau (AFREAU).

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Speaker profiles

Joseph Tettey Afangbe

Founder and Executive Director, Young Visionary Leaders International | Continental Convener, African Youth Water Forum



Joseph Tettey Afangbe is a Ghanaian development practitioner and youth leader with over a decade of experience advancing equitable water access and community development. Through Young Visionary Leaders Ghana, he leads initiatives that bring safe water closer to homes and schools and improve sanitation and hygiene. As Continental Convener of AYWF, he champions youth participation in water governance, water justice and climate resilience. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Ghana CSOs Platform on SDGs and a United Nations ECOSOC Representative. He received the Joy News Impact Maker Award 2025 in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Robert Strand

Founder and Executive Director, World Water Film Festival



Robert Strand founded the World Water Film Festival to use film and storytelling to educate, inspire community engagement and inform water policy discussions. Under his leadership, WWFF has participated in more than 35 events across 10 countries, collaborating with water experts, educational institutions, filmmakers and international organizations. His background in global brand partnerships, media and strategic engagement informs his work connecting documentary film, water science, public understanding and policy engagement.

Lena Musoka

Associate Consultant, FLUSH



Lena Musoka is a sustainability practitioner working across safe water and sanitation, waste management, climate and energy. At FLUSH, she provides research, monitoring and evaluation, and communications support to development organizations. She has worked with governments, cities, funders and private-sector partners across Africa for more than five years. At Fresh Life (Sanergy), she led urban sanitation projects in six countries with partners including UNICEF and AMCOW. She has designed monitoring and learning systems with Water Mission and Agenda for Change and holds graduate degrees in public health and sustainability management.

Professor Saeed Alhassan Alkhazraji

Professor of Chemical Engineering, Khalifa University | Founder, Manhat



Professor Saeed Alhassan Alkhazraji is a full professor in the Chemical Engineering Department at Khalifa University and founder of Manhat, an Abu Dhabi-based deep-tech startup focused on natural water distillation. His expertise spans water, colloids, polymeric materials and surface sciences. He has authored 105 journal articles and two book chapters and holds six patents. His awards include the inaugural Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid Medal for Scientific Excellence in 2017 and two Sheikh Rashid Awards for Scientific Achievement.

Nithya Tammana
Founder, Save Drop



Nithya Tammana is a 12-year-old water conservation advocate and inventor from New Jersey, USA. She founded Save Drop at age nine and promotes conservation through youth education, public advocacy and the #ServeHalfGlass campaign. She developed the patent-pending Bio Layer gravity filter to support affordable drinking-water treatment. Her work has earned recognition through the 2026 Mott Million Dollar Challenge, Cox Conserves Heroes and Action for Nature's International Young Eco-Hero programme.

Rukaiya Muhammad
Founder, Nigeria Youth Climate Preservation Network | Programme and Climate Change Director, CAPI



Rukaiya Muhammad is a Nigerian climate advocate and youth development leader with over a decade of experience in programme management, resource mobilisation and community-led initiatives. Her work advances water security, climate justice, ecosystem restoration and gender inclusion, connecting grassroots communities, young people and policymakers. She is an Advisory Board Member of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and champions meaningful youth participation in environmental decision-making, particularly for vulnerable communities.

CO-ORGANISING ORGANISATIONS

