

WEBINAR 2 - CO-DEVELOPPING THE NARRATIVE

Breakout room sessions summary

Miro board: <https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVGevORw4=>

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 1: WATER FOR PEOPLE

Moderator: Alexandra Chevalier (WaterAid)

Rapporteur: Emira Seidenalieva (CAY4W)

MIRO BOARD CONTENT

Civil society :

- Humanitarian Wash - under the Wash Road Map
- ID6 - to prepare value what we need - to call in the framework of commitment
- more advocacy for the humanitarian crisis caused by water scarcity (Afghanistan) - ID1-ID3 - how to respond to climate crisis - more about adaptation to be funded
- funding to reach the grassroot communities
- strong accountability mechanisms after the conference
- ensure accountability mechanisms to involve private sector more in large water projects - ID1
- water wash link to healthcare system
- private - local - empower local entrepreneurship - ID 6 Financing –
- gaps - human right to sanitation, water resources - more tools to influence on the decisions
- Water access ID1
- gaps in health services (without water) - to ensure that right to water is not lacking

Youth:

- education approach (human right to water) - need for specialists, jobs, accessible education - ID1 - access to scholarships - fund for young professionals
- integrated water resource management - lack of projects - youth
- to promote participation of youth from marginalised communities, indigenous youth

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 2: WATER FOR PROSPERITY

Moderator: Edouard Boinet (INBO)

Rapporteur: Lisa Opperman (EYPW)

MIRO BOARD CONTENT

- Who can participate? e.g. consultation, decision-making
- Question of capacity
- Who needs to be brought around the table to make nexus approaches work in practice?

- Society e.g. teachers
 - Private Sector
 - Government
 - Does innovation offer opportunity for improvement?
 - Artificial glacier (for drinking & irrigation in summer)
 - Innovation yes, but not for innovation's sake
 - new governance system
 - water treatment
 - sufficient irrigation system
 - water stewardship for coordination
 - cheap, durable water tanks to collect water
 - Building on/ learning from what already exists/ has worked
 - citizens science
- What are the biggest inefficiencies or inequities in how water is used across agriculture, industry, cities, and homes?
- Sanitation gaps (e.g. in Peru)
 - inefficient irrigation systems
 - dripping irrigation
 - Reuse water (after treatment)
 - old pipe infrastructure
 - access to water, urban rural divide
 - water law enforcement
 - water use permits
 - pollution & lack of public awareness of impact on water
- What are the main gaps in implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in your region?
- lack of capacity in private sectors (qualification, technology)
 - lack of monitoring impact e.g. SDG tracking
 - lack of capacities & professionals
 - bureaucratic frameworks, need for improving them and make them more accessible
 - Lack of Inclusion of Indigenous knowledge (e.g. engineering classes, policy, etc.)
 - Lack of government capacity (to plan, implement project)
- How does poor water management affect jobs, food systems, or local economies?
- buying water in rural areas is costly & hinders agriculture
 - correlation between access to water and economic development
 - increased migration (rural -> urban)
 - impact of floods: lose jobs/education (primarily women)
 - decrease in fish resources
 - boreholes become dry and new ones are costly

- What specific policy or financial measures should governments adopt to treat water as an economic and social asset?
 - develop and improve new indicators (e.g. water value as part of GDP to show water's economic impact)
 - regulation of AI use/training
 - PPP & awareness raising of proper water use
 - water treatment plants at source of pollution
 - water pricing (increase price)
 - What comes after SDGs?
 - -> maintain what we achieved with SDGs
 - -> keep monitoring & tracking (SDG monitoring exercises)

REPORT

1. What are the biggest inefficiencies or inequities in how water is used across agriculture, industry, cities, and homes?

The fundamental problem is the **low political prioritization of integrated water resource management (IWRM)**, which often leads to a lack of consistency between sectoral policies (agriculture, industry, municipal):

- **Sectoral Fragmentation & Competition:** Water management is siloed, causing uncoordinated competition between agriculture, industry, and municipalities for shared water resources within a basin.
- **Agricultural Inefficiency:** As the largest user (70-72% of global withdrawals), agriculture is characterized by inefficient irrigation, contributing to over-extraction and depletion.
- High volumes of **untreated industrial and municipal wastewater** are discharged into basins, polluting ecosystems and harming downstream users.
 - **Pollution from Industry:** High volume of untreated wastewater discharge—only 27% of industrial wastewater is safely treated in reporting countries—polluting ecosystems and affecting downstream users.
 - **Cities:** Significant volumes of untreated household wastewater (113 billion m³ annually) threaten public health and environments, especially in underserved communities. Additionally, a lack of public awareness causes citizens to actively pollute near water sources to avoid recycling fees.
 - **Sanitation:** Lack of access to sanitation cause pollution and lead to waterborne diseases
- **Institutional water scarcity (rather than physical scarcity)** is a major cause of inequity: Weak basin-level governance creates **inequitable access**. Weak governance, financing, and legal frameworks fail to ensure fair and efficient water distribution between water users. Marginalized groups, ecosystems, and downstream regions are deprived due to poor allocation and a lack of protection of water resources. Clear divides between urban and rural water access can be observed.

- **Critical data and monitoring deficiencies** hinder evidence-based decision-making, leading to overuse, pollution, and inequitable allocation.
- **Outdated systems:** older water permits often do not reflect the changing climate and water uses, thus, allowing for water abstraction by permit holders when water use of the general public has to be restricted due to low water levels.
- **Infrastructure:** Old pipeline infrastructure leads to avoidable water losses and potential pollution from sewage systems.

2. How does poor water management affect jobs, food systems, or local economies?

- **Poor basin-level management** directly undermines economic development and economic and social stability:
- **Threat to Food Systems & Livelihoods:** Water insecurity reduces agricultural productivity and yields as well as decreases the quantity of fish resources, directly threatening **food security** and the livelihoods of rural communities dependent on farming. This is a critical issue, especially as food demand is projected to rise by 50% by 2050.
- **Migration:** Changes in water availability and the connected livability and rentability of crop farming and livestock farming cause increased migration from rural to urban areas.
- **Job Losses and Limited Creation:** Unreliable water supply risks jobs in water-dependent sectors (agriculture, fisheries, industry, tourism). It also limits job creation in water management, circular economy, and green tech due to chronic underinvestment. Moreover, acute water-related disasters such as floods also require immediate relief action, which is often carried out by women. This means that they cannot go to work or school/university which may cause them to lose their job or negatively impact their education.
- **Economic Costs and Reduced Resilience: Growing economic losses from floods and droughts** increase costs for water-related disaster (estimated to rise from US\$260 billion in 2015 to US\$414 billion by 2030). Pollution and resource depletion deter investment and reduce the competitiveness of local economies.
- **Economic Costs for Alternative Water Sources:** When boreholes dry out the government has to invest in new ones being built to ensure water access. This increases government expenditure. Additionally, buying water from alternative sources can be costly, especially in rural areas. This can decrease agricultural output due to decreased water access.
- **Transboundary Tensions:** In shared basins, a lack of cooperative management can stall regional development projects and infrastructure, stifling broader economic growth and integration.

3. What are the main gaps in implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in your region?

Globally:

- **Slow progress:** Global IWRM implementation is at 57% (2023), far from the 91% target by 2030, with projections indicating it may not be achieved until mid-century.

Key gaps are interconnected:

- **Financing:** In reports of SDG 6.5 implementation, insufficient financing for IWRM is consistently the lowest-scoring component globally, and particularly in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Central/Southern Asia. Chronic and severe underfunding for basin authorities and IWRM implementation is the main, essential gap: 85% of countries lack effective revenue-raising for water management.
- **Governance:** Weak institutional and legal frameworks for **operational basin organizations**, especially for transboundary cooperation. Fragmented sectoral policies and slow political prioritization hinder coordination.
- **Capacity & Data:** Limited technical/human capacity and inadequate monitoring networks. Governments face a lack of capacity for planning and implementing projects while the private sector faces a lack of capacity and technology. A general labor shortage in the water sector creates another challenge. Critical data gaps, especially on groundwater, hinder shared, evidence-based diagnosis and planning at the basin level.
- **Integration:** Formal coordination between water management and **climate adaptation planning** at the basin scale is rare, leaving systems vulnerable.
- **Monitoring & Impact Tracking:** Low levels of monitoring and tracking of actual impacts may lead to inefficient expenditure and inefficient implementation.
- **Lack of integration between water and climate policies:** only 50% of countries have formal coordination between water and climate adaptation planning. Only 14% of basins have joint climate adaptation strategies.
- **Participatory Approach:** Indigenous knowledge is still largely excluded from areas such as policy and education.

4. Who needs to be brought around the table to make nexus approaches work in practice?

Effective nexus approaches require **multi-level, multi-stakeholder collaboration anchored at the basin level:**

- **Lead Actors:** National water ministries and **empowered basin organizations** (both national and transboundary) must drive the process.
- **Key Sectors:** Ministries of agriculture, energy, industry, environment, finance, and municipalities to align sectoral policies.
- **Implementers & Stakeholders:** Local governments, water user associations, the private sector (agribusiness, industry, tech), and financial institutions (banks, climate funds).

- **For Equity & Knowledge:** Civil society, academia, research bodies, and representatives of marginalized groups (women, Indigenous Peoples, youth) to ensure inclusive, scientifically informed decision-making. Including teachers in the processes could ensure that children are sensitised from an early age.

However, the focus needs to be on ensuring effective processes and actionable outcomes. Ensuring that the right people are involved at the right stages of the process and in the best suitable manner will lead to the best possible outcome, taking into consideration differences in capacity and knowledge.

5. Does innovation offer opportunity for improvement? Which ones?

Yes, innovation is critical across several fronts:

- **Digital:**
 - Satellite monitoring,
 - IoT sensors and AI (for instance for leak detection and repair to reduce water loss in water supply networks and limit pressures on water quantity).
 - Detection/forecasting, and **shared digital data platforms** for real-time, transparent basin management.
- **Infrastructure & Systems:**
 - **Water reuse and recycling**, with distinction between drinking water uses and non-drinking water uses. Interest of decentralized treatment.
 - **Non-conventional sources:** Desalination, rainwater harvesting, managed aquifer recharge.
 - **Nature-based solutions** (wetland restoration, managed aquifer recharge) for resilience.
 - **Circular economy models:** Nutrient recovery, resource-efficient agrifood systems.
- **Financial:** sustainable financial mechanisms of basin management and basin organizations climate adaptation funds, and payment for ecosystem services to bridge the basin investment gap.
- **Governance:** Digital platforms for stakeholder engagement ("water diplomacy"), knowledge exchange (e.g., twinning between national administrations and basin organizations, like the Twin Basin Initiative), and living labs to pilot nexus solutions.
- However, **innovation just for innovation's sake is not beneficial** (AI, IoT, satellite monitoring among others have many negative externalities and are not silver bullets). Instead a focus should be placed on learning from previous projects to build on what worked well as well as on Indigenous knowledge and practices.

6. What specific policy or financial measures should governments adopt to treat water as an economic and social asset?

Governments should adopt an **integrated policy and financial framework that strengthens basin governance**.

This is essential in particular for the universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. After all, all drinking water taps ultimately depend on the basins of lakes, rivers and aquifers !

- **Strategic use of SDG 6.5 reporting** to identify gaps, guide targeted investments and policy adjustments also after the end of the SDGs in 2030.
- **Policy:** Mandate and legally empower basin organizations. Mainstream water and basin-level climate strategies into National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and development plans. Ratify and implement frameworks like the UN Water Convention to enable transboundary cooperation. Due to the fast increase of the training and use of Artificial Intelligence and its severe impact on water resources regulation is needed to minimise environmental impacts and enhance the positive use of AI in water-related developments.
- **Legal instruments:**
 - Promote ratification and implementation of global frameworks such as the 1992 Water Convention to strengthen legal and institutional cooperation. It is well equipped to do this, since the 1992 Water Convention is serviced by UNECE as its secretariat.
 - Transform the 2008 UN Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers from non-binding guidelines into a fully-fledged, binding UN Convention by 2030, serviced by the UNECE as its secretariat. This new convention would establish clear legal obligations for states, similar to existing watercourse treaties, to govern shared groundwater resources. Its key aims are to mandate cooperation, provide dispute resolution, and integrate climate adaptation measures for these vital freshwater reserves.
 - Provide the 1997 Water Convention with a secretariat (which could also be serviced by UNECE, to ensure synergies and complementarity, and to avoid redundancies)
- **Economic Instruments:** Implement **transparent, cost-recovering tariff systems** with social protections for the vulnerable. Use natural capital accounting to reflect water's value in national budgets. Review water prices to ensure they adequately reflect the price and value of water. Implement the Polluter Pays Principle to ensure that the costs are covered by the polluter instead of the local community and ecosystem. For this, building water treatment plants at the source of the pollution would be an efficient way to reduce pollution and ensure that the responsible party pays the price for the treatment.
- **Financing:**
 - Establish reliable fiscal systems and sustainable financial mechanisms of basin management and basin organizations.
 - Dramatically increase public funding for basin management and monitoring.
 - Leverage climate finance (Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund) and promote public-private partnerships for basin-resilient infrastructure.

- **Inclusive Governance:** Ensure policies support gender-responsive, participatory basin planning that recognizes water as both a social good and an economic foundation.
- **Indicators to reflect water's impact on other sectors:** develop and improve new indicators that show water's economic impact as part of the GDP.
- **Increase consumer awareness** about efficient water uses

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 3: WATER FOR PLANET

Moderator: Bella Lima (SWA) & Marie Bouysse (Coalition Eau)

Rapporteur: Kevin Kamnang

MIRO BOARD CONTENT:

Which climate-related water risks are most severe in your context? Why?

- Scarcity - more drought
- Sharing of uses
- Warmer winter weather
- Population explosion
- Floodings
- Observing and learning from Earth ; having a holistic vision for this ID; thinking of protecting our planet in this ID

What urgent measures are needed to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems?

- Mind shift to look at water, and all type of life on Earth
- Nature knows what to do - observing, learning from Earth
- Radical grassroot organising and legislation driven by science and data
- Rooted in holistic indigenous practices, not for profits but for the planet

How can nature-based solutions be scaled to enhance resilience? How to better integrate the source-to-sea approach within policies? What should governments commit to in order to reduce climate risks linked to water? / to enhance resilience and adaptation to territories in the face of climate disasters?

Having a mind shift to look at water and all type of life on Earth

REPORT

We were a small group of 4 to 5 participants. After brief introductions of each participant, led by our moderator, Bella Lima, we agreed on a discussion approach to make the exchange more inclusive, participatory, and friendly. We chose a Q&A format to encourage interaction and allow everyone to contribute.

During the Q&A session, we focused on capturing perspectives from both civil society and youth. While these perspectives were often similar, we made a conscious effort to categorize

them separately whenever possible. The key points and insights from the discussion are captured in the Miro board of Breakout Room 3 and are summarized below.

Excerpt on Mapping

- **Question from Moderator Bella Lima:** What do we all want, and how should youth and civil society organize their contribution?
- **Key Messages from Participants**
 - First step: map the full landscape.
 - Identify and name stakeholders.
 - Develop a main, unique message that does not repeat existing dialogues.
 - Focus on what is missing.
 - Recognize the overlap between youth and civil society.

Excerpt on Holistic Approach

- **Question from Moderator Bella Lima:** What approach should we take regarding water and the environment?
- **Key Messages from Participants:**
 - Adopt a holistic approach balancing human needs and environmental needs.
 - Avoid focusing solely on water for the economy or investments.
 - Return to the source: Mother Earth sustains us, and we must take care of her.

Excerpt on Risks in France

- **Question from Moderator Bella Lima:** What are the climate-related water risks in your context, and why?
- **Key Messages from Participants:**
 - Main risk: water scarcity.
 - Some villages and towns lack tap water during summer.
 - This is a recent issue, managed risk by risk.
 - The situation is serious but not catastrophic, as risks are addressed individually.

Excerpt on Microplastics and Connection to Nature

- **Question from Moderator Bella Lima:** How do we perceive water and our connection to nature despite risks and modern pressures?
- **Key Messages from Participants:**
 - Elders are cautious about water due to microplastics and other contaminants.
 - The connection to nature is universal and cultural, inherent in all humans.
 - Economic pressures can distract from this essential environmental connection.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 4: WATER FOR COOPERATION

Moderator: Erik Schnetzler (Geneva Water Hub)

Rapporteur: Magdalena Zivanovic (EYPW)

MIRO BOARD CONTENT

Civil society:

- Challenges: legacy of colonial water sharing agreements
- Challenges: different priorities, needs and values
- Need for equitable water cooperation at both intra- and inter-state levels
- Cooperation is essential to ensure equitable WASH and DIGNITY
- Advocacy messages to governments: sanitation key (6.2)
- geopolitics
- including both genders (women)
- water does not recognize political barriers and borders
- need for more funding
- How can local communities, youth, women, civil society and marginalized communities be more meaningfully involved in water governance?
- Involvement in decision making, transparency with data,

Youth

- Advocacy messages to governments: mobilise and unite in decision making - services for the youth
- Advocacy messages to governments: coordination between many agencies, ministries etc on national and international level.
- Advocacy messages to governments: regional youth cooperation system, West Asian corridors, youth water diplomacy track, SDG6.5 reporting to also include youth component, climate peace co-benefit programs
- Emphasize that transboundary water cooperation is not an end in itself. It is rather a means to an end - with the end being peace and justice
- Need for investments even in regions where transboundary water issues are prevalent or securitized. If transboundary water issues are not addressed now, it is particularly the young generation that will suffer the consequences
- Youth message : we are the future...how to be meaningfully involved, institutionalize youth engagement

REPORT

The breakout room discussion started with a brief presentation by Erik Schnetzler (GWH) about the place of water in national and international cooperation, water for peace and water for transboundary cooperation. In the start we agreed that transboundary water cooperation is not an end in itself. It is rather a means to an end - with the end being peace and justice.

The discussion between participants started by them stating the main challenges both civil society and the youth are faced with in regards to Water for Cooperation. Many stated that the history of colonial water sharing agreements, as well as the fact that transboundary countries frequently share different views on water use, are some of the main challenges in this regard.

Having different priorities, needs and values all contribute to the main challenges both civil society and the youth see in the regards of water for cooperation.

Next, faced with the question of advocacy messages to governments, civil society representatives would state the following: improve work on sanitation (SDG6.2), take into account the geopolitics of a region when making decisions, to include both genders in water-related processes (as many countries in Africa and other regions fail to do so), to improve funding of the sector and lastly to acknowledge that water does not recognize political borders, therefore we must act accordingly and cooperate regardless of political tensions – water must not be a weapon. When it comes to the messages of the youth to governments, it would be the following: that the youth is the future, the need to create more regional youth cooperation systems, West Asian and other regional corridors, to track youth water diplomacy, to report in a way that includes the youth and to create climate peace co-benefit programs. Also, a clear message to the governments would be that coordination between various national and international levels are crucial – therefore on intra- and inter-state levels.

Following this discussion, we also touched upon the question of “How can local communities, youth, women, civil society and marginalized communities be more meaningfully involved in water governance?”. It was agreed that it is crucial all levels of society are included in decision-making, that there should be transparency in data, that cooperation between all levels of society is crucial to ensure equitable WASH and DIGNITY.

To conclude, given the limited time for discussion, there was a fruitful discussion based on a consensus regarding the need to cooperate on water-related issues. In the terms of advocacy, it is positive that both youth and civil society views interconnect, therefore our advocacy messages become stronger.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 5: WATER IN MULTILATERAL PROCESSES

Moderator: Johannes Rueck (German WASH Network) & Malesi Shivaji (KEWASNET)

Rapporteur: Marta Zaragoza Navarro (WYPW)

MIRO BOARD CONTENT

1. CSO and youth demands to ensure water remains central, also beyond 2030
2. How can we structure our global water commitments for effective implementation and track them through a clear accountability mechanism?
3. What are the expectations for substantial stakeholder participation in the preparatory process for UN Water Conference 2026 and beyond.
4. What role should the Special Envoy for Water and the UN system-wide strategy on water and sanitation play to cater for our needs?
5. What concrete steps are needed to embed water into broader UN frameworks (incl. COPs)

- a. Continuous inter-governmental process on Water with a strong stakeholder inclusion mechanism
- b. People have diverse relationships to water, social, cultural, ecological and economic. And water has diverse values.
Given the diversity of values and relationships, decision-making bodies should be equally diverse
- c. Youth involvement is a catalyst and should be included in all global commitments with clear strategy / onboarding
- d. A seat at the table in the official segments of meetings
- e. Enough time to prepare for conferences and meetings, to work and agree on joint messages
- f. Support coordination of the very diverse stakeholder groups
- g. Targets and disaggregated data on the inclusion of women, youth, indigenous and people with disabilities
- h. coordinated and diverse set of messages
- i. Importance of better fostering youth engagement within communication goals
- j. Integrate Water into Climate Processes

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE 6: INVESTMENTS FOR WATER

Moderator: Leshia Witmer, Women for Water Partnership

Rapporteur: Gazi Nouman (WYPW)

MIRO BOARD CONTENT

- 1. The Central Role of Communities and Indigenous Knowledge**
- 2. Addressing the Growing Financing Gap**
- 3. Rethinking Innovation — Beyond Technology**
- 4. Expanding Participation in Financing Discussions**
- 5. Prioritizing the Use of Existing Funds**

CIVIL SOCIETY

- **Integrate traditional and Indigenous knowledge** into water investment planning.
- **Empower local communities** by involving them directly in project management.
- **Build capacity** for communities to manage funds effectively and achieve project goals. and also for communities to so beneficiaries understand funding sources and financial flows.
- **Innovation is a dynamic process** — it changes continuously and does not look the same in every context.
- The **technical value alone does not define innovation**; it also requires dialogue, negotiation, and adaptation to ensure solutions fit local realities
- **Financial literacy is essential** — stakeholders need education on how financing mechanisms work and what criteria funders use.
- Understanding these criteria helps identify **how to better meet funders' requirements**.

- **Better financial clarity and accountability** can encourage more investors to support water projects.

CIVIL SOCIETY & YOUTH

- **Financing water requires a participatory approach**, where communities, youth, and citizens are actively involved in understanding water needs and funding mechanisms.
- There is a need for **more dialogue on water financing**, bringing in a wider range of stakeholders.
- **Capacity building is essential** so stakeholders can understand financial perspectives and meaningfully engage in financing discussions.

YOUTH

- **finance systems are collapsing**, creating a significant funding gap for water-related needs
- Participation is low (only a few people in the breakout room), highlighting the need for **broader engagement**
- **Trackability and transparency** must be strengthened to ensure funds genuinely reach local communities
- Funding requests should be **based on reliable data** showing how much support actually reaches communities
- Even in situations of chaos, **opportunities still exist** if actors stay proactive and organized
- **Innovation should not be limited to high-tech solutions** — simple, context-appropriate innovations can also be highly effective
- adapting innovation from similar context must also be supported as innovative.
- **Innovation can also focus on improving investment attractiveness**, not only on technology
- This includes creating **clear, transparent mechanisms** that show how funds are sourced and used.

REPORT

Our discussion brought together insights from experts, youth representatives, and civil society on how to strengthen and rethink investment approaches in the water sector. 5 key messages emerged:

1. The Central Role of Communities and Indigenous Knowledge

Participants emphasized the importance of integrating traditional and Indigenous knowledge into water investment processes. For financing to be effective, communities must be both involved and empowered—understanding where funds come from, how they are managed, and how they can take ownership of projects. Strengthening transparency and financial awareness at the local level is critical for accountability and long-term success.

2. Addressing the Growing Financing Gap

There was a strong recognition that water financing systems are under severe strain, with widening gaps between needs and available resources. Participants highlighted the need for stronger trackability and transparency to ensure that funds actually reach communities. They also noted the importance of using reliable data to demonstrate community needs and justify additional funding. Despite financial and institutional chaos in many contexts, participants stressed that opportunities still exist if systems become more transparent and better organized.

3. Rethinking Innovation — Beyond Technology

Innovation was described as a dynamic, evolving process that must be adapted through dialogue and contextual understanding. It is not limited to high-tech solutions. Instead, innovation can also involve transforming financing processes to make investments more attractive, transparent, and accessible for investors. Clearer mechanisms showing how funds flow and how they are used can help unlock more investment.

4. Expanding Participation in Financing Discussions

Water financing cannot be shaped by experts alone. Participants strongly supported more inclusive, participatory processes that involve youth, citizens, and diverse stakeholders. Many people lack understanding of how water financing works, and building this capacity is essential to meaningful engagement and better policy outcomes. Expanding the dialogue—especially with those most affected by water challenges—strengthens ownership and leads to more grounded solutions.

5. Prioritizing the Use of Existing Funds

A practical insight from the group was that significant donor funding often goes unused simply because people do not know how to access it or meet the required criteria. Strengthening financial literacy and capacity is therefore a “low-hanging fruit” that could unlock resources already available. Improving utilization of existing funds should be prioritized before seeking new financing streams.