



# Women and Water Diplomacy in the Nile Basin



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# Gender equity in water management/governance: history of international commitments

**WOMEN PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN  
THE SUPPLY, MANAGEMENT AND  
SAFEGUARDING OF WATER – Dublin  
Statement (1992)**

**A critical area of concern is the  
gender inequalities in management  
and safeguarding of natural  
resources and in the safeguarding  
of the environment  
- Beijing Platform for Action (2005)**

**Women have a vital role to play in  
environmental management and  
development. Their full  
participation is therefore essential  
to achieve sustainable development  
- Rio Principle 20 (1992)**

**A Water Vision of Africa where there  
is political will, public awareness and  
commitment among all for  
sustainable  
management of water resources,  
including the mainstreaming of  
gender issues and youth concerns  
and the use of participatory  
approaches.  
-Africa Water Vision 2025**

**SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
SDG 6: Achieve universal and equitable access...reduce number of  
people suffering from scarcity...implement IWRM at all levels,  
including transboundary cooperation – Sustainable Development  
Goals (2015)**

# Women and Water Resources Governance

- Broad international recognition of women's important role in the water sector: their *unique experiences, differing needs, and valuable knowledge, skills and perspectives* enhance both equity and quality of decision-making and outcomes
- *Women's rights are human rights* – access to and control over water resources is essential to women's (and children's/households') health, livelihoods and well-being
- Yet, there is demonstrably lower participation of women in formal water governance processes at all levels
  - 20 years after Dublin, only 15% of 65 countries studied had a gender policy for the water sector (IUCN, 2018)
  - Only 12% of natural resource-related Ministries are led by women (IUCN, 2015)
  - 2018 SDG 6 Implementation Report: gender considerations (particularly at the transboundary level) are one of three aspects of IWRM with the lowest levels of implementation as reported by countries.
- Especially at the **TRANSBOUNDARY LEVEL**, women have gained **VISIBILITY**, but **NOT POWER**



# The Setting: Transboundary Basins

- There are 310 international transboundary river basins globally that cross the boundaries of two or more nations
- These transboundary basins encompass 47% of the world's land surface and including ~45% of world's population
- 59 transboundary basins in Africa (62% of land surface)

Transboundary river basins of the world

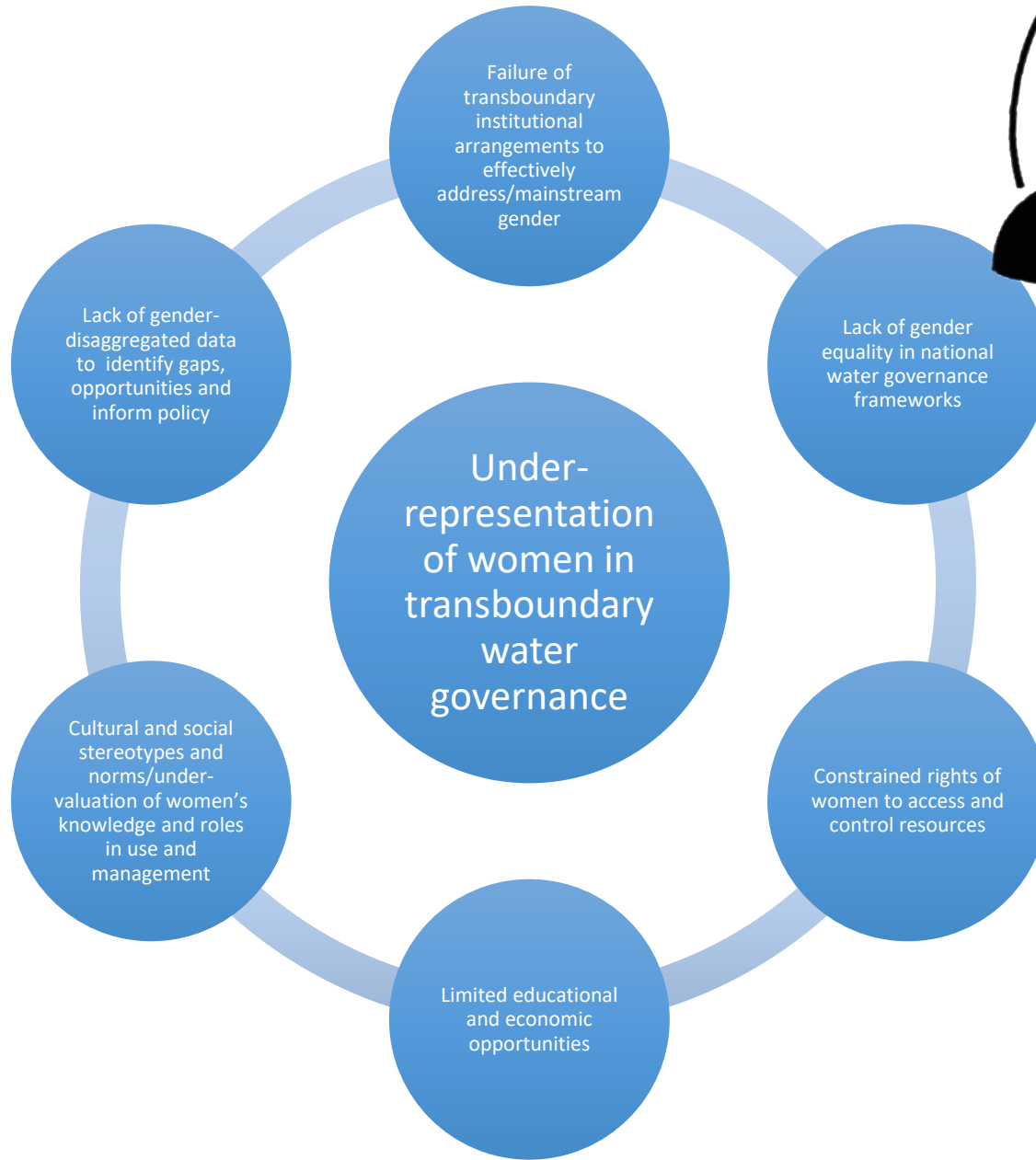


© 2017 Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database  
Oregon State University  
Cartographer: Melissa McCracken  
Robinson Projection

International Basins  
0 1,400 2,800 5,600 Kilometers

*Whether and how countries cooperate in the protection and use of these resources has a profound impact on societies, economies, the environment and the resource itself*

# What drives gender inequities in water governance?



# The Nile: a unique river basin

- Long river, complex geography and hydrology – many tributaries with different characteristics, uneven rainfalls levels, different climate zones and environmental characteristics
- Two main sub-systems: Equatorial Nile Lakes (White Nile) and Eastern Nile (Blue Nile)

## Basic Facts:

- Basin Area: 3.2 Mill km<sup>2</sup>
- ~250 Million people live in the basin;
- ~480 Million people in all riparian countries
- Shared by 11 countries



# Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile (WIN)

- GOAL: to enhance the collective capacity of women throughout the basin and to support the engagement of these women water leaders in decision-making and peacebuilding processes in the Basin.
- Components of program:
  - Annual workshops in basin countries to provide capacity enhancement/technical training and opportunity for relationship building
  - Establishment of a Network of Women in Water Diplomacy to sustain interactions, knowledge sharing, and strengthening of Track 2 diplomacy among women water leaders in the basin
  - Identify key challenges facing women water leaders and emerging leaders to build data-driven advocacy platforms for change at national and basin levels
  - Sharing experiences across basins through publications, expansion of network and potentially shared activities

# Women in Water Diplomacy in the Nile (WIN)

## **1<sup>st</sup> Workshop: Uganda Oct. 2017**

- Parliamentarians, representatives from Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Water, civil society and academia shared experiences and expertise
- Designed as both capacity enhancement/technical training and networking/relationship building opportunity
- Participation from ELI, SIWI, NBI, and senior diplomats from Sweden and Netherlands
- Focus on conflict resolution, negotiation skills, international water law and Nile-specific resource challenges

## **2d Workshop: Ethiopia Dec. 2018**

- Senior and Junior Foreign Affairs and Water ministry staff
- Blend of returning and new participants – expansion of network
- Participation from UNESCO-IHE, SIWI, ELI, ENTRO
- Focus on leadership skills, fostering change, and practical skills building through a full-day role-playing exercise

## **3d Workshop: planned in 2019**

- Knowledge exchange visit with another basin being planned
- Replication in other basins being explored



# Outcomes to Date

- Network of more than 35 women representing Parliaments, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries in charge of water, NGOs, academia in 10 Nile countries
- Online platform for ongoing engagement with network, including:
  - Online training
  - Knowledge sharing and mentoring
  - Opportunities for representation in international fora/training events
- Policy issue paper (ELI and SIWI co-authored) to launch at World Water Week 2019 and participation of network members in Week to highlight experiences