

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

21-22 APRIL 2026 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA



Women and Water

A multi-stakeholder panel discussion to strengthen partnerships among women's organizations, research, governments, and UN agencies to accelerate combined progress toward SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 16 and SDG 17.



Diana Barragán

President and UN Representative of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women



Dr. Alena Lohrmann

Researcher at the Chair of Energy Systems Analysis, ETH Zürich



Ruth Richardson

Founder of the Women's Network VIEW at the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management



Pascale Muylaert

UN Representative of Soroptimist International



Mariia Anapreichyk

Member of the ALLATRA Global Research Center



Sheerah Kim

UN Representative of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women

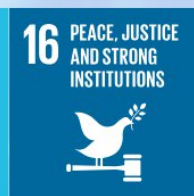


Side Event (in-person)

21 April 2026

Time: 08:30 - 10:00 CET

Room: Concordia 4



Side Event at the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2026

Women and Water

Date & Venue: 21 April 2026, UN Geneva

Room: [Concordia 4](#), floor 2, access: A15



Lead Organizer: International Federation of Business & Professional Women (BPW International)

Collaborating Organizations: International Network of Liberal Women, NGO CSW Geneva, Make Mothers Matter, National Alliance of Women's Organizations UK, Soroptimist International, Latter-Day Saint Charities, Widows Rights International, Women's Federation for World Peace

Background

Water is a fundamental driver of sustainable development, linked to health, food security, climate resilience, and peace. Across the UNECE region and globally, women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of inadequate water access, yet their experiential knowledge and leadership remain underutilized in water governance.

As the 2030 Agenda deadline nears, addressing the intersections of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) becomes imperative. Empowering women as active agents, not just beneficiaries, of water management is key to building resilient, and sustainable systems.

This side event will spotlight innovative approaches led by women and amplify the voices of female leaders, practitioners, and advocates who are shaping the agenda in their communities and beyond.



Objectives

- Strengthen partnerships among women's organizations, research, governments, and UN agencies (SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals) to accelerate combined progress toward SDG 5, SDG 6 and SDG 16.
- Highlight the critical role of women in advancing sustainable water management and governance and share innovative insights to address SDG 6 from Switzerland (and across the UNECE region).

Expected Outcomes

- Strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships promoting women's leadership in water governance.
- Increased visibility and engagement of women's organizations in UNECE and national water policy dialogues.
- A concise policy brief summarizing key recommendations and commitments emerging from the event.

Agenda

08:30	Welcoming participants	09:05	Input: Pascale Muylaert
08:40	Opening	09:15	Panel and interactive session
08:45	Input: Dr. Alena Lohrmann	09:45	Closing
08:55	Input: Ruth Richardson	09:50	Transfer to Forum Opening

Speakers and Panelists

- **Diana Barragán**, President and UN Representative of the International Federation of Business & Professional Women | Opening
- **Dr. Alena Lohrmann**, Researcher at the Chair of Energy Systems Analysis, ETH Zurich | Focus topic: water-energy nexus, critical interdependence of water as a resource
- **Ruth A. Richardson**, Secretary General and Advisor at the International Network of Liberal Women, Founder of the Women's Network VIEW at the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management | Focus topic: Role of women's organizations in bridging policy and practice in water management
- **Pascale Muylaert**, UN Representative of Soroptimist International | Focus topic: Pathways to institutionalize women's participation, reporting back from CSW70 NY and key learnings for UNECE
- **Sheerah Kim**, UN Representative of International Federation of Business & Professional Women, Member of the UNECE taskforce at NGO CSW Geneva | Moderation
- **Mariia Anapreichyk**, Legal advisor, Research & advocacy assistant at WFWPI, Member of ALLATRA GRC global research center /specialized research think tank | Closing



Opening



Diana Barragán is the President of BPW International (2024–2027) and Senior Partner at BARRAGAN HONEGGER Partners Law Firm, bringing over 30 years of experience in institutional leadership, legal practice, and international advocacy. She is a multilingual lawyer and development expert, holds academic qualifications in law in Ecuador, psychology, and development studies from the University of Geneva and IHEID. Active within BPW since 1991, she has held numerous leadership roles at national, regional, and international levels, including twice serving as Regional Coordinator for Latin America. Her work centres on advancing women's legal rights, leadership, and economic participation as drivers of sustainable development and peace.

Panel Presentations



Dr. Alena Lohrmann is a postdoctoral researcher for the Chair of Energy Systems Analysis at ETH Zürich, Switzerland. She received her doctoral degree from LUT University in Lappeenranta, Finland. She also holds bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering and technology in the fields of thermal power engineering and heat engineering. Her research interests include energy system analysis, water footprint assessment, and machine learning for energy modelling. Her current research is focused on the water footprint assessment of energy systems as well as water- and energy-intensive technologies in order to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



Ruth A. Richardson is an international advocate for women's rights, gender equality, climate justice, and human dignity. Born in Aruba and based in the Netherlands, she combines technical expertise in water management and ecosystems at the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management with high-level global advocacy. As Secretary-General of the International Network of Liberal Women (INLW), she drafts resolutions, shapes policy and represents INLW at the United Nations and the European Parliament's FEMM Committee. As has advanced gender-responsive approaches in key global frameworks, including COP26, the Sendai Framework and the UNECE Water Convention. Her work consistently bridges policy and practice, keeping gender equality, climate resilience and human rights at the heart of global decision-making.



Panel Presentations (continued)



Pascale Muylaert, Dr Juris, MBA, is a Strategy Consultant and former international Director with over 40 years of experience, who championed gender equality at Board level throughout her career. She firmly believes that true diversity is a right, a necessity and a benefit for all. As Soroptimist Representative to the UN in Geneva, she actively advocates for the Human Rights of Women and Girls, contributing to the Beijing +30 review, UNECE processes, Special Rapporteur requests and NGO CSW Geneva. She co-authored the Environment background document for the Beijing +30 UNECE review and organised CSW69 events on climate change and women's health. She engages with key environmental forums, including the Geneva Environment Network and the 2025 Ocean Conference.

Moderation



Sheerah Kim specializes in trustworthy AI adoption in the Swiss public sector at Intersections. Formerly Head of ICT at a city administration, she understands how to navigate the challenges of sovereign digital transformation. She is a seasoned facilitator and moderator on multi-stakeholder dialogues at international conferences, including the Swiss IGF and NGO CSW. As a board member at OneGov.ch, she promotes open source and community-driven developments. She is the Co-President of BPW Club Zurich, UN Representative for the International Federation of Business & Professional Women in Geneva and served as Communication Officer of BPW Europe 2021-2024. She holds a Bsc in Business Administration and a CAS in Digital Ethics from HWZ Zurich.

Closing



Mariia Anapreichyk holds a Master's degree in International and European Law from the University of Geneva and serves as a legal advisor and a member of the ALLATRA Global Research Center, a think tank contributing to interdisciplinary research on climate change and environmental challenges. She is engaged as a Research and Advocacy Assistant with the Women's Federation for World Peace International, supporting initiatives related to human rights, sustainable development, and international cooperation. Her professional experience includes work with law firms and notarial offices in Ukraine and Switzerland, with a focus on legal analysis and advisory practice. Mariia is also actively involved in the study of micro- and nanoplastics in water and their effects on human health, as well as in raising awareness of this emerging global challenge.

