



Declaration

of the World Youth Parliament for Water

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We, members of the World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW) on its fourth general assembly, issue this declaration. We defined three focal points, equity; peace; and the environment. We want to work on these issues, through local actions, small scaled decentralized projects; research; education/awareness; and further mobilisation of the network. In all these points and the work we do, we aim to respect for people's beliefs, their culture, traditions and religions.

Focal Points

Equity

Inequity is one of the most dire problems of our time. Water and climate issues both cause and exacerbate inequality. In disasters, conflicts and other crises, the most vulnerable groups of society are often the first and most harshly to be impacted. In our work we aim to be inclusive and consultative, paying attention to cultural knowledge and context, to overcome inequalities.

Peace

There are 263 transboundary lake and river basins on Earth and an estimated 300 transboundary aquifers. Following the theme of the fourth general assembly on "Water and Peace," and as a network of youth from more than 80 countries, our vision for these transboundary water bodies is one of sustainable peace. This sustainable peace must be based on mutual benefit from water resources.

International cooperation over shared water resources is paramount in a globalised and interconnected world. In addition to international cooperation, domestic water management needs to prioritize equal and comprehensive stakeholder participation. Based on these principles, we strive for a positive peace that is built on solidarity among all water users.

We are committed to a peaceful future characterised by the sharing of knowledge and natural resources across administrative and generational borders. This includes intergenerational learning processes, allowing us to reflect on past and present conflicts to strengthen future cooperation.

Next to peace between and within countries, we also recognise the importance of living at peace with the environment.

Environment

The WYPW advocates stronger trust in the environment. Nature is a model of fundamental balance, and should only inspire cooperation. Youth should lead efforts to shift toward sustainable community management of resources. We want to learn from the environment and dare to work with it, focusing on

nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions are defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as 'actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits'.

Actions

Taking action will certainly be the most important part of our work for the coming three years. Accordingly, we present the following lines of reciprocal and interdependent action.

Local action

The WYPW sees on-the-ground action as the most important line of action. We want to come up with concrete objectives about real water issues we have encountered in field work, research and through the experiences of others. We have learned that great work can be done with the resources already accessible and see how young people all over the world are already initiating small scaled projects in water quality and access. We want to work with and support young people committed to decentralized projects on community level.

Research

More research is needed for us to improve our understanding of the connections between environment and society and of the multitude of perspectives related to water resources management. Transdisciplinary research approaches, tackling real problems faced by local communities, play a crucial role in this endeavour. It will be vitally important to translate scientific findings so they can be easily communicated, especially to policy makers and across social contexts.

Awareness raising

Awareness raising may prove to be the most powerful tool in fostering cooperation and peace. This parliament will lead efforts to educate others; both within the water sector, we will educate older generations on the power of youth engagement; and, outside the water sector, we will lead efforts to improve water education, especially for youth, in all countries. Positive and lasting change will only happen through education. Educational activities will be based on our experiences and that of others. We want to increase capacities so all can find and work with resources to engage in on-the-ground action.

Mobilisation

In order to be effective in our actions, we need to further mobilise the network of youth and connect. We want to share stories, incentivise others by giving opportunities and involving them in the international network the WYPW has. We will also push for more youth representation in established institutions and organizations. Future leaders should already be involved.