



Revised draft report

External Review of Geneva Water Hub Programme

**Submitted to:**  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

**Submitted by:**  
Sthlm Policy Group

**Author:**  
Nicklas Svensson

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## Acronyms

CATIE	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza
DCAF	Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
GCSP	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
GoF	Group of Friends
GOWP	Global Observatory for Water and Peace
GPP	Geneva Peacebuilding Platform
GWH	Geneva Water Hub
GHLPPW	Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace
HCSS	The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies
hd	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
ICRC	International Red Cross Committee
ICWC	International Centre for Water Cooperation
IFI	international financial institutions
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ISE	Institute for Environmental Sciences
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
MoU	Memorandum of understandings
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
OAS	Organization American States
OMVG	L'Organisation pour la mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie / The Gambia River Basin Agency
OMVS	L'Organisation pour la mis en valeur du Fleuve Sénégal / The Senegal River Development Organisation
OSU	Oregon State University
RBO	River basin organization
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIWI	Stockholm International Water Institute
SMAB	Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin
SPG	Sthlm Policy Group
TFDD	Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN PBC	United Nations Peacebuilding Commission
UN DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIGE	University of Geneva
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNSC	UN Security Council
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WPS	Water, Peace and Security Partnership
WRI	World Resources Institute
WYPW	World Youth Parliament for Water
CCDP	The Centre on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
DCAF	the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

EC	Executive Coordinator
FDFA	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
GCSP	The Geneva Centre for Security Policy
GDPR	<i>General Data Protection Regulation</i>
GPP	Geneva Peacebuilding Platform
GPPAC	Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict
GPT	Geneva Peace Talks
GPW	Geneva Peace Week
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
QUNO	The Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNOG	United Nations Office in Geneva
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and carried out by Sthlm (Stockholm) Policy Group AB.

The findings of the report are entirely the responsibility of Sthlm Policy Group and cannot be taken as an expression of official SDC's viewpoints.

In the course of this evaluation the consultant had the privilege of interacting with a number of people who generously gave their time and shared their knowledge. Sthlm Policy Group expresses its heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to this evaluation.

## Executive Summary

This external review of the Geneva Water Hub (GWH) aims to assess the relevance of GWH and GWH's contribution to sustainable development and peacebuilding at global and national levels.

The evaluation report is structured around GWH's theory of change and its underlying explicit and implicit assumptions for contributing to change.

The evaluation is informed through interviews with key stakeholders in Geneva, West Africa and elsewhere, as well as a thorough careful review of documentation. Due to Covid-19 interviews were conducted online.

### **Key findings**

The evaluation process includes a number of key findings that identify the strengths and weakness of, as well as the opportunities and threats to GWH.

#### Strengths

- Geneva Water Hub works both with protection issues and conflict prevention.
- GWH is a young, flexible, nimble and responsive organization that offers a global platform for bringing together different actors and using the International Geneva in terms of projecting Geneva as a place to have discussions and formulate policy and water diplomacy.
- GWH has successfully developed the 'safe space' concept to meet and discuss sensitive water and peace-related issues to identify potential opportunities for collaboration and solutions.
- GWH has through the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, established a connection with the UN-system.
- The institutionalization of GWH within the University of Geneva (UNIGE) provides excellent opportunities for research and training. The International Water Law Platform of the UNIGE has played a particular important role in the development of training programs and research products (particularly the "*Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure*").
- GWH has worked successfully with the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat, as well as with several other UN- and international organizations such as UNICEF and ICRC.
- GWH has successfully introduced music, art and festival to bring attention to issues related to peace and development, and to involve and empower communities and youth to reflect, discuss and explore ways to improve the lives of the communities.
- GWH's listening approach and respect for local solutions empowers local stakeholders and strengthens local ownership and sustainable results.

#### Weaknesses

- Geneva Water Hub's theory of change needs further unpacking to better understand what underlying assumptions are driving GWH's success. The assumptions underlying the linkages between research, teaching, networking and the think tank functions exist and need to be made explicit in order to ensure continuous and consistent success and progress.
- GWH's many commitments to different initiatives, projects and partners require human resources and there is a risk for being overstretched. GWH's long-term and annual work plans needs to prioritize partnerships and activities to ensure that GWH's support to partners such as Group of Friends continues to add value to their work.
- Roundtable discussions, safe space meetings and recommendations from different meetings need follow-up in order to ensure implementation of activities and initiatives.

#### Opportunities

- Geneva Water Hub is well placed to ‘*bridge the gap*’ between peace and hydro-political actors by convening them around key issues.
- GWH is well placed to strengthen the International Geneva-New York linkage by working with key peacebuilding actors in New York.
- Stakeholders highlight that it is easier to start working with technical ministries related to water before engaging with political actors/processes of the country.
- Transboundary river basin organizations (RBOs) have important roles to fulfil in water diplomacy, and seek peaceful means to coordinate and manage transboundary water resources. RBOs can be institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution addressing complex potential conflicts in relation to transboundary water resources.
- The Global Observatory for Water and Peace (GOWP), a global and inclusive network of existing water and peace organizations that makes use of a Geneva-based platform to act effectively on hydro-diplomacy for water, peace and security, is still in progress to develop its global reach and content.
- GWH has established a regional node in West Africa through a partnership with the Pôle Eau Dakar. GWH adds value to the Pôle Eau Dakar and its regional partners by connecting them with GWH’s international network, and strategy development to address the water and peace nexus.
- The GOWP is appreciated for its the breadth of discussions and ‘*out-of-the-box thinking*’ rather than purely technically.

#### Threats

- The competition for funding among organizations focusing on water and peace can affect the willingness and transparency of effective international collaborations. Subsequently, sharing of knowledge and experiences within partnerships and collaborations can be hampered.

#### Conclusions

Geneva Water Hub’s efforts and results in the past three years are well aligned with SDC’s Global Programme Water Strategic Framework 2017 – 2020. GWH’s work feeds into SDC’s different strategic components, and particularly the component for water governance, but also to different degrees to the other three components (Water Solutions; Water Voice; and Young People and Gender Equality).

Geneva Water Hub’s efforts to contribute to the scientific evidence that water cooperation contributes to dialogue and peace is increasingly being recognized among policy makers through GWH’s research collaborations. The role of GWH as think tank and convener in International Geneva is more important than ever to elevate the role of water in policy discussions, public awareness and strategic interventions to promote sustainability or ameliorate peacebuilding. GWH has raised political attention to water and peace at the UN-system, amongst diplomats and security actors. GWH has a potential to be a conduit between International Geneva and New York.

The GOWP and ‘*safe spaces*’ are useful approaches and methods to connect actors and share knowledge and experiences to find solutions to water challenges. GWH’s focus on and inclusion of river-based organizations in many initiatives and activities seems highly relevant from a peacebuilding perspective.

#### Recommendations

The full list of recommendations is available on page 47.

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# 1. Introduction

This report presents the findings and conclusions of the evaluation of the Geneva Water Hub (hereafter referred to as GWH), carried out by Nicklas Svensson at the Sthlm Policy Group AB between June - November 2020. The report provides recommendations to the Geneva Water Hub.

## 1.1 Purpose, scope and objectives of the evaluation

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the External Review of Geneva Water Hub (GWH) Programme seeks to analyze GWH's corporate performance - past evidence and future potential - with respect to its contribution both to the Sustainable development agenda 2030 and to peace building promotion using water as an innovative instrument to reach this objective.

The purpose of the evaluation is to *"assess the current relevancy of GWH's programme and GWH's contribution to sustainable development and peace building at global and national levels."*

In addition, the ToR states that the results of the evaluation will inform the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's (SDC) future positioning and steering as a donor of GWH.

Lastly, the evaluation shall provide insights on how SDC can contribute with the help of its contribution to strengthening further GWH's strategic orientation and systemic approach towards the three pillars (environmental, social, economic) of sustainable development and peace building.

The ToR states that the scope of the evaluation encompasses an assessment the overall Geneva Water Hub programme including its three main functions, in accordance with the main objective and the 4 expected outcomes presented in the project document. The evaluation comprises a regional case study focusing on West Africa.

## 1.2 Evaluation criteria and evaluative questions

The evaluation seeks to answer the below evaluation questions to better understand the relevance of GWH in relation to SDC's global priorities and the water and peace nexus; as well as to identify opportunities for SDC's contribution to strengthening GWH's strategic orientation towards interlinking the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development and peacebuilding.

Key Questions	Sub-Questions
How does GWH contribute in a systemic way to sustainable development (in its three dimensions: environmental, social and economic development)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How is the basic assumption that water cooperation can contribute substantively to dialogue promotion and ultimately peace building translated by GWH into scientifically credible narratives and coherent interventions?</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the evidence for the effectiveness of GWH's approaches to social and economic challenges?</li></ul>

How does GWH contribute in a systemic way to peace building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the basic assumption that water cooperation can contribute substantively to dialogue promotion and ultimately peace building translated by GWH into scientifically credible narratives and coherent interventions?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the evidence of GWH's contribution to systemic change on the understanding of water as an instrument for peace building?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the evidence for the effectiveness of GWH's approaches to peace promotion?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the evidence of GWH's contribution to systemic change?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the GWH contribute to finding consensus around water cooperation at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at United Nations Headquarters (Group of Friends on Water and Peace and Group of Friends on Water respectively) around the debates and trade-offs with regard to this basic assumption?</li> </ul>
How does GWH approach and operationalize the equitable and just governance of water resources as a development and peace building prerequisite?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How credible is GWH's evidence base on the role of water in promoting peace?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does GWH promote social inclusion (gender; vulnerable communities and groups)?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does GWH promote meaningful participation of the young people?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the evidence that GWH promotes social equity through enhanced governance of water resources?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the evidence that the GWH promotes the political participation of women at all levels?</li> </ul>
What is GWH's contribution to international and national policy coherence for sustainable development and peace building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and to what extent does GWH's programmes and projects proactively respond to national and/or regional development strategies?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and to what extent is GWH contributing to the shaping of national and/or regional development strategies?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are past highlights and future potential of GWH's contributions to policy development at regional and global levels?</li> </ul>
What is GWH's value added in the international cooperation architecture for sustainable development and peace building?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the institutional benefit of the GWH in promoting the Water – Peace - Development nexus (added value of having institutionalized the GWH)?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is GWH's contribution to the water cooperation with regard to the reduction of water-related tensions and the use of water as a peace instrument?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other international organizations and/or agencies are specialized in promoting Water cooperation for peace and what is the</li> </ul>

	benchmarking between GWH and such organizations/agencies?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have knowledge, lessons and experiences from GWH benefitted other multilateral and bilateral development agencies?</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Methodology

The evaluation questions have guided the evaluation processes. It has at times been difficult to distinguish between the evaluation questions as they either directly or indirectly at times overlap. They have helped to frame the evaluation around the linkages between sustainable development and peacebuilding, and water cooperation, water governance and water diplomacy. In order to understand GWH's contributions to sustainable development and peacebuilding through its work on water cooperation, water governance and water diplomacy, the evaluation has applied contribution analysis methodology to assess the causality between identified outcomes (results) and GWH's activities. The evaluation seeks to better understand the linkages between GWH's three main operational functions and its four outcomes. An important starting point for the evaluation process was to re-engineer GWH's theory of change. This is an ongoing process as implicit assumptions are continuously identified. Thus, the theory of change is therefore continuously tested and refined based on the assessment of documentation and interviews in an iterative process.

The evaluation questions are addressed by information reported by GWH in their documentation corroborated by interviews. The evaluation includes approximately 50 interviews<sup>1</sup> with key stakeholders providing broad and in-depth perspectives on the evaluation questions helping to validate GWH's theory of change and the underlying assumptions, as well as short- and intermediate outcomes, that is, changes that occurred on the way to longer-term change. The evidence is sometimes demonstrated by actual products such as research products, collaborations, memorandum of understandings (MoU), other times by triangulation of several sources. The evaluation used open-ended interviews to gather information enabling identification of patterns, regularities and resemblances, as well as to triangulate conclusions. This approach also included a careful review of documentation,<sup>2</sup> including evaluation reports, programme proposals and activity reports.

### 1.4 Limitations

The consultant was not able to travel during the evaluation due to Covid-19. Initially, it was planned that meetings and focus group discussions would be held in Geneva and in Senegal, but these were managed online using several different social media tools such as Zoom, Teams, Skye, etc. These meetings have however worked well. Field visits usually create a certain momentum during the evaluation due to the intensity of meetings during a short period of time. Working online has meant that meetings have been scheduled over a longer period of time depending on interviewees availability.

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for list of interviewees.

<sup>2</sup> See annex 2 for documents reviewed.

The report structure follows themes that have emerged in line with GWH's assumptions for achieving results. The answers and analysis of the evaluation questions are distilled under these themes.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The Geneva Water Hub's theory of change

The Chairman's Foreword to the Panel Report, "*A Matter of Survival*", by the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace (GHLP-WP) from 2017 introduces the reader to a catalogue of problems and challenges related to water. Some countries are already facing these problems today, and others are likely to face them in the future if they are not addressed. This report notes that "*water problems are becoming ever more central in armed conflicts of our era, a tendency that serves as a dramatic reminder of the fundamental nexus between water, security and peace.*"<sup>3</sup> The Panel Report notes that the growing scarcity of freshwater is exacerbated by growing global population and the climate change effects, and thus increasing the risks for food insecurity, rising tensions and violent conflicts. In addition, the Panel Report also notes that parties to a conflict are violating International Humanitarian Law by increasingly targeting water resources and installations in armed conflicts. This, the Panel Report states, calls for international water cooperation as an instrument for strengthening international stability and peace, and conflict prevention.<sup>4</sup> The Panel Report outlines specific recommendations on addressing current and future water problems identified by the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, ranging from policy on protection of water resources and installations in armed conflict, to using UN conventions as a platform for strengthening water cooperation, measures to strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation of water projects and innovative financial instruments to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, as well as using water diplomacy and strengthening capacity to leverage water for peace.<sup>5</sup>

The Panel Report and subsequent follow-up reports are the basis for why Geneva Water Hub does what it does. The GWH set out to make contributions to address these water problems and challenges by developing a theory of change building on GWH's three key functions:

- Knowledge and education;
- Networking; and
- Think tank (stimulating transboundary & international water cooperation)

These functions produce outputs that subsequently aim to lead to outcomes contributing to an impact. Geneva Water Hub works with partners to influence global and national policy-makers, diplomats, the United Nations, academic community, civil society and businesses to engage constructively in water-related issues to contribute to sustainable development and peace. Geneva Water Hub produces outputs such as, *inter alia* research products, participants in courses with greater knowledge of water related issues, participants (stakeholders) in events who have established new contacts and relations, inclusion of stakeholders in policy processes on water governance and water management, awareness amongst community members about water related issues, etc..

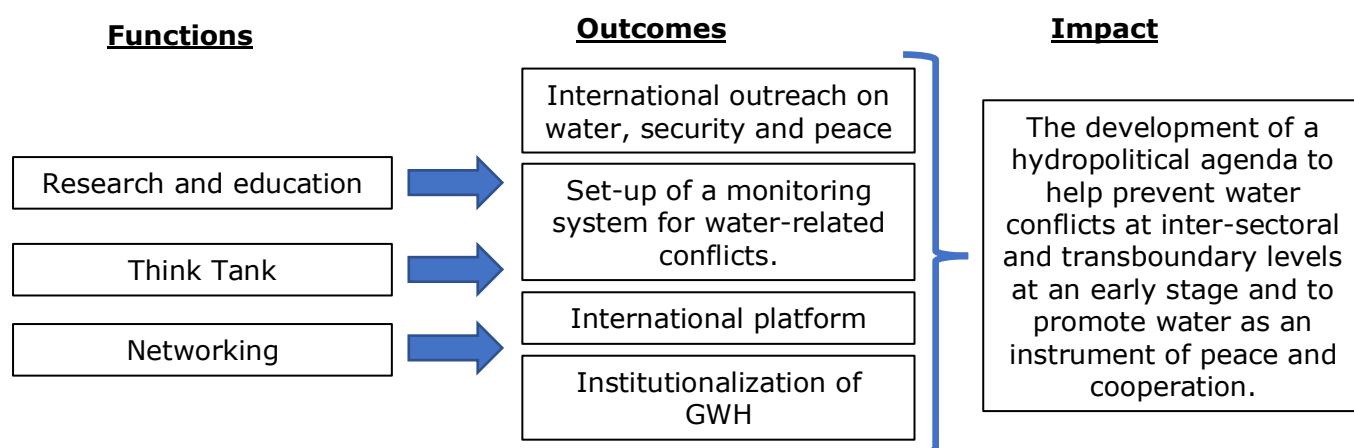
Figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, part of the Blue Peace Initiative, "*A Matter of Survival*", Geneva Water Hub & Strategic Foresight Group, Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation, Université de Genève, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 4-6.

<sup>5</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 5.



Some high-level assumptions underlying the theory of change are mostly implicit such as there is an interest and commitment amongst policy-makers to use research for policy-making; or participants in training activities will be able to apply their new knowledge; or new established relations amongst regional stakeholders will translate into dialogue and collaboration on transboundary issues. The next level of assumptions are then that any potential policy will be enforced; national and regional organizations are formed and increased capacity and practices are applied to manage water resources; and established relations enable constructive dialogue to prevent disputes and water conflicts.

A key assumption is that the function of *'research and education'* influences policy-making by drawing on an international scientific network on hydro-politics to inform both international and national decision-makers on hydro-politics. Another assumption is that *'research and education'* leads to strengthening the capacity of water management actors by providing skills and tools for analysis of hydro-politics. The *'research and education'* function comprises (i) Distance Learning Course on International Water Law and the Law of Transboundary Aquifers in English, French and Spanish; (ii) Summer School in Water Governance: Frameworks and Negotiations; (iii) Massive Open Online Course on Water Resources Management and Policy, and International Water Law; (iv) UNESCO Chair in Hydro-politics at the University of Geneva (UNIGE) seeking to develop tools for improved understanding of hydro-politics and water diplomacy; (v) a scientific network seeking to follow up and advance the work on the recommendations by the Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace (GHLP-WP); (vi) hydro-political database monitoring hydro-political tensions and identifying key factors driving tensions and cooperation; and (vii) targeted training of decision-makers and diplomats.

A key assumption is that the function of *'networking'* amongst hydro-political actors in International Geneva with Swiss and global actors leads to strengthening the mobilization and collaboration to catalyse their joint capacity to influence policy-making at regional and international level.

Another key assumption is that the function of *'think tank'* by linking international expertise in International Geneva and elsewhere with regional nodes consisting of regional institutions for water resources management, and offering them a platform for dialogue and collaboration leads to solving hydro-political issues. The platform can include both global themes and local issues. Furthermore, the assumption is that by convening key actors in a safe space to discuss crucial water related issues at a local level leads to reducing or mitigating

conflict risks and tensions over water resources and promote peace. This includes Geneva-based actors and elsewhere with dialogue and mediation capacity for resolving local, cross-sectoral and transnational water conflicts.

The Geneva Water Hub's three functions are interconnected and implemented activities create outputs that feed into different outcomes. A simplification of GWH's theory of change indicates that GWH is either involved in or seek to contribute to strengthened capacity, influence policy change, or promoting sustainable development and conflict prevention. Outcomes are interdependent on GWH's advocacy efforts to influence policy on water and peace as well as capacity building of organizations and facilitation of networking. The assumption is that these efforts provide an essential infrastructure leading to policy change, and subsequently, to social change. In some ways GWH's efforts serve as a strategy for creating political will to support specific policy initiatives on water and peace, and commitment to prevent water-related conflicts.

The Geneva Water Hub has since its inception aimed to promote water as an instrument of peace and cooperation by convening global and local water actors and raising their awareness and knowledge around hydro-politics<sup>6</sup>, and influence policy makers to recognize and commit to the political importance to develop coordinated policy measures for managing transboundary water resources – the aquifers, and lake and river basins shared by two or more countries. This will contribute to preventing and resolving water-related intersectoral and transboundary conflicts, as well as promoting peace through dialogue and cooperation.

Both GWH's overarching theory of change and specific intervention logics are guided by problem analysis of water and peace issues. As mentioned earlier, the Panel Report is very much the basis for GWH's overarching theory of change whereas GWH's specific interventions are based on regional and local, or thematic, context analysis informing the design process of GWH's interventions.

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<sup>6</sup> In order to understand the concept of hydro-politics this evaluation has relied on a discussion by Anthony Turton & Roland Henwood (editors) in *Hydro-politics in the developing world: A Southern African Perspective*, African Water Issues Research Unit (AWIRU), 2002, pp. 13-19.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Water, sustainable development and peacebuilding

The Geneva Water Hub operates within the field of sustainable development and peacebuilding. For GWH peace and sustainable development are intertwined. Peace is when a society can enjoy the benefits of sustainable development. GWH is therefore focusing on areas of fragility where societies are not enjoying a decent quality of life due to *inter alia* lack of access to clean water. GWH believes that conflict has to be tackled early on by conflict prevention through preventive diplomacy – hydro-diplomacy – to use water to preempt conflict. Another water organization, the UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC) hosted at SIWI in Sweden shares a similar approach to water and peace. It states that *“water diplomacy is a dynamic process that seeks to develop reasonable, sustainable and peaceful solutions to water allocation and management while promoting regional cooperation and collaboration. It enables countries to negotiate agreements on the allocation and management of internationally shared water resources.”*<sup>7</sup>

The Geneva Water Hub’s hypothesis is that peace is about sustainable development by tackling the drivers of fragility undermining the capacity of countries to meet the SDGs through water cooperation. This hypothesis is also shared by the ICWC stating that water cooperation assists *“decision-makers and practitioners at local, national and regional levels to reduce conflict and increase economic development and growth.”*<sup>8</sup> The fact that these organizations share the same hypothesis that peace and sustainable development are intrinsically linked with each other demonstrate their interest to make policy makers pay attention to these issues and interlinkages. Research on water-induced peace is conducted by academic institutions globally and is increasingly providing examples of governments coming together or maintaining a dialogue around the need for transboundary water cooperation.

Some observers from both funding agencies and partners believe that GWH is more inclined to work with protection issues rather than prevention and root causes of conflict. This is partly based on the Panel Report, GWH’s connection to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), issues related to protection and the ensuing work on the *“Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure”*, as well as other contributions to protection issues. Furthermore, GWH is associated with the humanitarian landscape of international humanitarian organizations in Geneva.

However, it is not possible to place GWH only within protection sphere since it is not limited to protection issues. As described above GWH has a broader view of itself beyond the protection issues which encompasses conflict prevention. This is important for understanding GWH’s work. GWH should recognize that different stakeholders hold different views of what GWH represents in terms of protection and conflict prevention. GWH has adapted its focus to different thematic and geographical context.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.siwi.org/what-we-do/international-centre-water-cooperation/#water-cooperation>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.siwi.org/what-we-do/international-centre-water-cooperation/#water-cooperation>

### 3.2 A refined theory of change for water and peace

The Geneva Water Hub's approach focuses on linkages between water and peace. Every context has its own unique linkages, but using the understanding of '*water, peace and security*' nexus as a lens for analysis helps to identify linkages that are either unique or general. These linkages can in many ways be seen as assumptions at different levels. GWH's contribution to this field has to be seen within such theory of change framework. In order to do that the evaluation has reconstructed (revised) a theory of change for GWH (figure 2) that builds on the previous ToC (described under section 3.1) and identified a number of assumptions for achieving results at different levels.

GWH comprises three currently/four in the next phase key functions which in short aim to *i)* integrate the water, peace and security nexus with development, humanitarian and peace agendas (also referred to as triple nexus<sup>9</sup>); *ii)* manage a Global Observatory for Water and Peace (GOWP) that follows up on the recommendations of the GHLP-WP; *iii)* establish a legal framework for water in and during armed conflicts; and *iv)* support academia and practitioners with research and education on water and peace.<sup>10</sup> The cumulative effects of these actions aim to prevent water-related conflicts and promote water as an instrument for peace and cooperation. Thus, in order to understand GWH's contribution to sustainable development and peacebuilding it is useful to unpack GWH's theory of change and the causality between the different result levels. A revised theory of change with underlying assumptions for contributing to the prevention of water-related conflicts and the promotion of water as an instrument for peace and cooperation can have the design presented in Figure 2 based on GWH documentation and interviews with the GWH staff, partners and stakeholders. It is important to understand that GWH does not implement projects. However, GWH supports other organizations that implement projects and programs. GWH initiates, supports and manages initiatives and processes, as well as implements training programs and organizes safe space meetings, and other events.

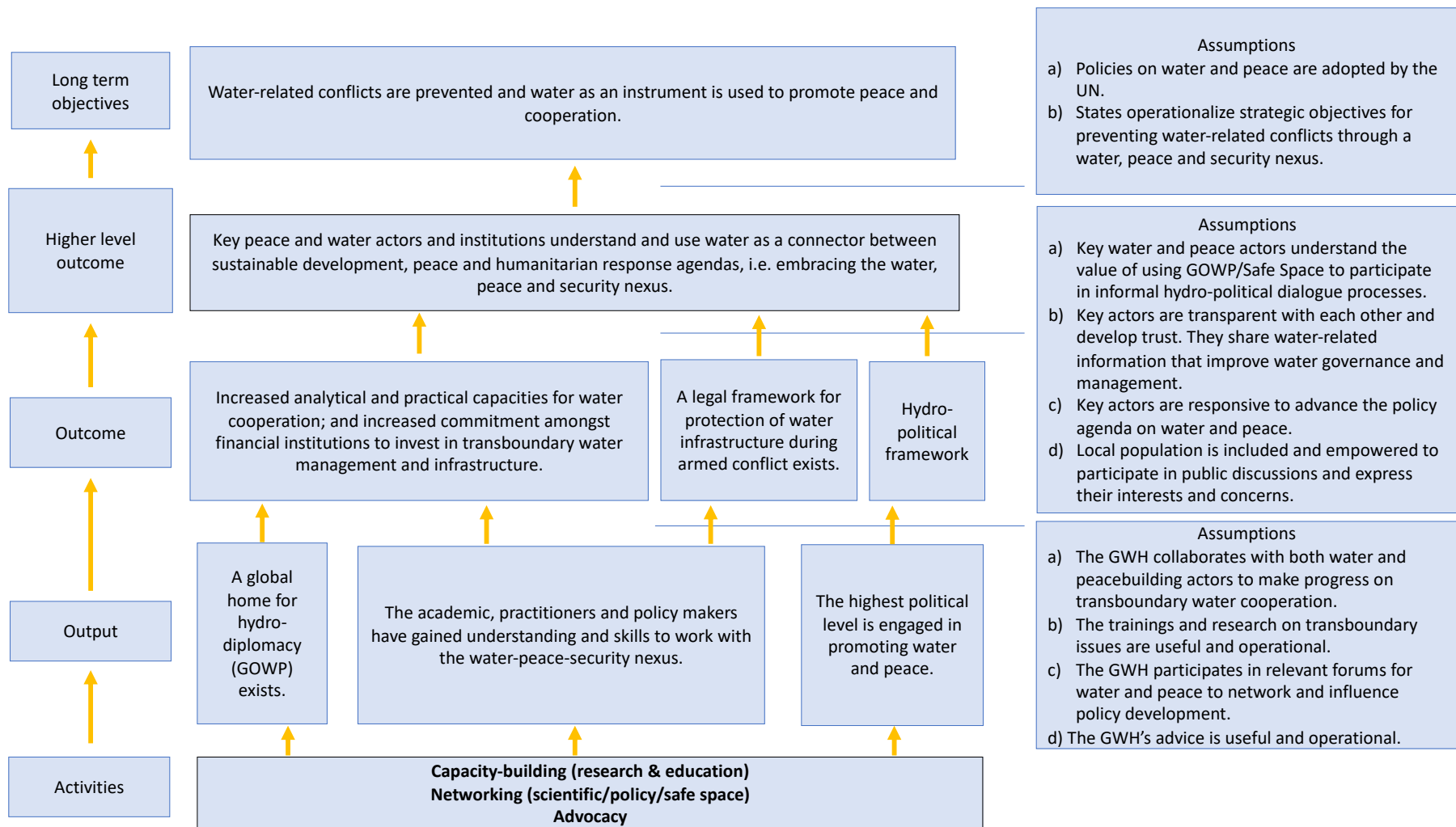
The theory of change below outlines the results chain for how GWH has brought about the desired results – outputs, and subsequent chain of outcomes and impacts on sustainable development and peacebuilding. The assumptions behind GWH's theory of change, *i.e.* what conditions have to exist for a result at the output level will lead to results at the immediate outcome level, are often implicit underpinning the logic of attribution and contribution by GWH to sustainable development and peacebuilding. Different outputs made by GWH's work and activities hold different assumptions for why they will lead to the next level of change.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-5019>

<sup>10</sup> The GWH elaborates on an implicit theory of change in the latest Programme Document for Phase III (August 2020 to July 2023) "Geneva Water Hub – Hydropolitics towards peace and security", see pp. 17-18.

Figure 2. Geneva Water Hub's Theory of Change (reconstructed by the evaluation team)



### 3.3 International Geneva and GWH

An important assumption underlying GWH's theory of change, as outlined in Figure 2, is the utilization of International Geneva. It implies drawing on the expertise and experience of the international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scientific and academic actors, civil society and private sector who are located in the city of Geneva and work to find solutions to global challenges. The city of Geneva is a platform for cooperation and multilateral diplomacy. It is in this context an assumption that organizations (or initiatives) like GWH connects and collaborates with actors in International Geneva.

The Geneva Water Hub has worked with many actors across a broad spectrum of issues related to water, nature conservancy, sustainable development, human rights, and peacebuilding. Each one of these partners has its own expertise or focus such as research, capacity building, advocacy, policy development, service delivery, or monitoring. In addition, amongst these partners there is expertise in water law, water governance, hydro-politics, hydrology, and peace and security. The organizations represent the international diplomatic community, the UN agencies, international organizations, and academic institutions in International Geneva and elsewhere.

The Geneva Water Hub is hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva. WMO is part of GWH's network in a same way as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UN-Water, UNICEF, United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Red Cross Committee (ICRC), and several others. There are 33 UN agencies with water programs and none of these organizations have water as their core mandate. Many of these organizations have their own research, advocacy and policy teams with whom GWH interacts, and they are invited to events, round table discussions, and engaged in research collaborations to elevate policy discussions. Over the past years, GWH has developed a particular close working relationship with the *UNECE Secretariat for servicing the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*. Although GWH is engaged with many actors in International Geneva, some interviewees note that GWH could be more engaged with International Geneva and connect even more with these actors. Please see Annex 3 for an overview of relevant Geneva-based organizations in the Geneva Ecosystem with an interest in water and/or peace.

GWH is also outward focused and engaged in activities outside of the International Geneva. GWH's field of operation is in many ways global but with International Geneva at the center. It is therefore not only a hub for International Geneva-based actors but a global platform that draws on whatever resources are relevant in Geneva or elsewhere to promote peace and cooperation through water cooperation. Interviewees note that GWH is not an organization in itself but a platform that brings together different actors and uses the International Geneva in terms of projecting Geneva as a place to have discussions and formulate policy and water diplomacy from Geneva. It is also recognized that Geneva has an important role in terms of diplomacy through the United Nations. Some interviewees find GWH's approach pragmatic with a bias for enabling solutions to specific problems where GWH can make an impact through engaging practically with actors in a 'safe space'.

It raises a question about finding the right balance between serving as a hub in Geneva and connecting global and local actors to organizations within the International Geneva and being engaged in global and local initiatives. The evaluation notes that it does not need to be mutually exclusive but finding a balance between these roles will likely reinforce either role, and it *assumes* that GWH has the capacity to effectively engage in all different initiatives and processes both in Geneva and elsewhere. GWH's work is interconnected through the three functions. As described above each function comprises a range of activities requiring human and financial resources as well as strategic attention which have to be considered against GWH's strategic priorities. GWH's work is a mix between activities that are planned in advance and other activities that are responses to requests from stakeholders. The latter type of workstream is more difficult to predict because it is often generated by GWH's former type of work. For instance, participants in an event organized by GWH might learn about something they find relevant and useful for their context. They might then request assistance from GWH to support them in or set up a process for addressing a water-related issue. Also, GWH's long-term engagements in research and education, as well as in policy development can generate follow-up work as well as requests for GWH's assistance. Thus, it requires organizational capacity to deliver on both planned activities and upcoming requests. This discussion underscores perhaps an implicit assumption that GWH's relevance and effectiveness is enhanced where there is a need for GWH's 'services' and when there is an explicit request from an actor.

The Geneva Water Hub is a flexible, nimble and responsive organization with great ambitions. It has gained legitimacy from working with the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, and its close collaboration with the former Chair of the GHLP-WP<sup>11</sup> has been very helpful in terms of accessing the higher political echelons within the UN-system. The institutionalization of GWH within the University of Geneva (UNIGE) provides excellent opportunities for research and training. Similarly, the director of research & training is also the UNESCO Co-Chair for Hydro-politics which gives GWH further credibility and access to key academic partners. GWH is a small organization (secretariat) with highly motivated individuals which mainly rely upon their partners for delivering research and other services and products. The different initiatives are not funded separately but each partner in a collaboration funds its own time to the initiative. Thus, the transaction costs are rather small in comparison to the outputs that GWH produces.

The Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) is another important actor group in International Geneva. The Group of Friends (GoF) on Water and Peace was launched in Geneva in 2016, and GWH has since then been the Secretariat of GoF. Today, the GoF consists of 40 countries represented by their Permanent Missions. GWH supports the Chair of the GoF to organise events, preparing and submitting statements on behalf of the group, advocating for specific courses of action for Member States, and broad lobbying on given issues or resolutions. The participation of the Permanent Missions in the GoF is an opportunity to learn about specific issues, but also to make statements and report back to

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<sup>11</sup> Professor Danilo Turk served served as President of Slovenia from 2007 to 2012. He was the first Slovene ambassador to the United Nations, from 1992 to 2000, and was the UN Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs from 2000 to 2005.

their capitals. The GoF meets on regular basis to discuss water-related issues and how to advance water, peace and security in the global agenda.<sup>12</sup>

Some interviewees note that the GoF can be developed and used even more. Many Permanent Missions are very busy and have little time to prepare for meetings and do not have talking points from their capitals. They can therefore be passive. Addressing this and making the Permanent Missions' actively participate in GoF-meetings and understand how GoF can be used to influence for instance the agenda setting of a session of the Human Rights Council (or other Geneva-based fora) or prepare a resolution on water and peace requires resources and prioritization. GWH does not currently have a dedicated political/diplomatic advisor who is the focal point for liaising with the Ambassadors of the Permanent Missions and members of the GoF, as well as supporting them with preparing key messages to their capitals and New York. Interviewees noted that GWH is well positioned to facilitate briefings and draft key messages that reflect the narrative of the Panel Report on water and peace for Permanent Missions and diplomats. A focal point at GWH could also work closely with the Chair of the GoF to prepare countries e.g. with *'talking points'* in advance to take the floor on particular topics, as well as plan for key events in Geneva where GoF should try to influence by elevating the water and peace topic.

### 3.4 Bridging peace and water actors

A key assumption for advancing the role of water as a *'vehicle'* for peace is to connect peace actors with hydro-political actors to come together for joint policy discussions on transboundary water management and linking their agendas. GWH notes that transboundary water cooperation cannot be resolved by water specialists or politicians responsible for water issues alone, nor by peace actors alone as it needs a profound understanding of transboundary water management. GWH has in the past three years since the Panel Report was launched in the fall of 2017 been seeking to bridge the gap between peace and hydro-political actors. It raises questions about who is a peace actor? And, what is an effective way to involve peace actors?

This evaluation has noted a general attitude that there is a difference between water and peace sector in regard to their competence, operational mandate and objective. The role of GWH is not to be either or, but to integrate their competencies with each other. GWH does not have a specific agenda for peace, but a toolbox with its three functions to assist actors at different levels (global, regional, national). The gaps between peace and hydro-political actors look different at different levels. At the global UN policy level the gap is more prominent, whereas at the regional and local levels the gaps are smaller. Many interviewees underscore that *'bridging the gap'* by engaging the peace sector is difficult because the peace sector works with so many different issues and water does not rank very high on the priority list. This is often referred to in the context of global policy discussions. When interviewees note that GWH needs to focus more on including and working with peace actors it is primarily within the policy context. However, GWH's policy efforts are linked with research

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<sup>12</sup> Groups of friends are coalitions of United Nations (UN) member states, who band together in order to further and actualise particular goals and outcomes related to specific issues or situations. The model of *'Groups of Friends'* within the UN-system seeks to leverage multilateralism to address issues as diverse as climate change, human trafficking, and to work towards just outcomes for indigenous populations.

collaborations with a range of both academic and non-academic institutions with expertise and experience in water diplomacy, hydro-politics and other disciplines.

The Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure has for instance provided an opportunity to potentially collaborate with the French Army on integrating the Geneva List as part of a military manual for their officers.

Both the Panel Report and the Geneva List provided opportunities to work with the International Institute of Peace (IPI) in New York to promote the Panel Report and the Geneva List to missions and diplomats at the UN in New York.

Although GWH's participation in Geneva Peace Week, Paris Peace Forum, and Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa helps to advance the narrative around the water, peace and security nexus, it is also desirable that conflict and peace experts and economists are explicitly involved and engaged in collaborations on research, methods development and advocacy. The mix of expertise, including more prominent conflict and political economy perspectives in the water and peace discourse will likely offer additional perspectives on the development of technical, economic and legal solutions to water-related issues. It is however important to note that GWH does integrate a conflict perspective though in a more subtle and implicit way into its activities. For instance, GWH's contribution to water diplomacy is in the context of strengthening the linkage between technical knowledge with political processes, and trust-building between parties to resolve water-related issues. These efforts contribute either directly or indirectly to stability, community resilience, conflict transformation, peacebuilding and regional cooperation. The technical knowledge is grounded in either GWH and partners' research within water diplomacy and hydro-politics. For example, GWH is part of the Universities Partnership for Water Cooperation and Diplomacy, a global consortium of academic expertise in fields related to water resources, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, that connects with many universities globally focusing on socioeconomic and geopolitical issues in shared water management. The University Partnership has set out focus areas and a work plan that are well in line with GWH's role, and there seems to be good synergies between the University Partnership and GWH. The University Partnership serves different target groups through research and education. The University Partnership is not as much of a platform for policy outreach than it is for coordination and networking amongst researchers on different water diplomacy-related topics. GWH and the Pôle Eau Dakar have initiated a first meeting between West African partnerships and the University Partnership which will further contribute with local perspectives.

Some interviewees find that GWH can strengthen its peace component at the implementation level. GWH is however already active at the implementation level. The Global Observatory for Water and Peace (GOWP) is linked to both geographical and thematic nodes comprising different actor groups such as military, youth as well as local peacebuilding actors. GWH and the Pôle Eau Dakar in Senegal organized '*safe space*' meetings through the GOWP-platform and convened military and security, as well as local peacebuilding actors to discuss strategies for tackling fragility in Sahel by integrating a water perspective in the analysis of peace and sustainable development (in terms of access to clean water for health, livelihood, energy,

etc.). The discussions generated 12 recommendations which have been presented to the G5 Sahel.<sup>13</sup>

GWH's implicit theory of change at the intervention level in a region where there is tensions or conflict over water starts often with technical cooperation through dialogue and confidence building to ultimately achieving peace. Water is highly political and sensitive. Therefore, GWH notes it can be easier to start discussions and cooperation with technical ministries related to water than before engaging with political actors/processes of the country.

Thus, GWH's approach to water diplomacy at the local and regional levels is not always necessarily geared towards typical peace actors but instead towards river-based organizations. This is partly based on GWH's belief that international/transboundary river basin organization (RBOs) has an important role to fulfil in water diplomacy. GWH is particularly engaged in West Africa where it collaborates with OMVS (L'Organisation pour la mise en valeur du Fleuve Sénégal / The Senegal River Development Organisation)<sup>14</sup> and OMVG (L'Organisation pour la mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie / The Gambia River Basin Agency).<sup>15</sup> OMVS and OMVG are sub-regional institutions (river based agencies) set up by member states to jointly control availability of water and seek peaceful means to coordinate and manage transboundary water resources. RBOs can be institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution addressing complex potential conflicts in relation to transboundary water resources (surface water and ground water resources). The conflict resolution mechanisms can be highly technical and sophisticated. It does not easily lend itself to non-water professionals, but it is equally important that the language of hydrology is translated into workable language for political decision-makers without losing the essence of what is most effective and sustainable solution from a technical perspective. GWH sees great potential in leveraging the role of the river-based organizations as institutions for peace and cooperation, which could possibly turn into a model to be replicated in other regions around the world.

GWH has drawn lessons from the role of OMVS during and after the 1989-conflict which was partly water-related. Although Senegal and Mauritania cut relations with each other they never cut their relations with OMVS. Although peace and security was not central to the development of OMVS, it played a peacebuilding role after the conflict. GWH has been able to showcase the OMVS to Central Asian actors from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to share experiences how a river-based agency can contribute to diffuse tensions and conflict, and normalize relations between countries. The dispute over Tajikistan's Rogun Hydropower Plant Project was for long a source of tension between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as Uzbekistan is starved of water and Tajikistan is deprived of energy posing a threat to regional stability. Today, the relations have improved and cooperation between the countries is re-established.

What is striking about GWH's collaboration with OMVG for example is how they underscore the importance of the linkage between highly technical solutions and the involvement of local actors. The technical solutions can be '*innovative financing mechanisms*' to fund investments

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<sup>13</sup> G5 Sahel countries consist of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. It is an intergovernmental cooperation framework to coordinate regional responses to shared security challenges.

<sup>14</sup> OMVS includes the following member states: Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal.

<sup>15</sup> OMVG includes the following member states: Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal.

in water infrastructure, and the *'involvement of local actors'* can be organizations, communities and individuals who have a stake in the development of their societies and can affect peace and stability. The approach is very much to ensure that people have access to their resources (water), as well as engaging the communities in developing the water infrastructure together to consolidate stability and cooperation in the areas of the river basins. A typical peacebuilding approach applies a conflict lens to programming by focusing on conflict drivers in the local context with a particular attention to dividers or what divides people in a society. GWH implicitly recognizes such a peacebuilding approach by applying a rights-based approach by involving and consulting communities affected by investments.

Another reoccurring theme about GWH's role in relation to OMVS and OMVG is the role of being a third-party convener through *'safe spaces'* and the methodology of sharing experiences from river basins in other regions around the world. GWH is principally organizing and facilitating dialogues between the member states and the river-based organizations in a *'safe space'*. GWH has taken on a role and developed capacity to structure processes including the problematization and discussion about water-related issues, and demonstration of cases to illustrate how other regions have resolved transboundary water issues and how to manage ground water resources (aquifers). Parties to the dialogues try to draw from the knowledge and experience from other cases by applying it in their own context with practical tools and methods to manage their water resources. What has been particularly useful for OMVG was to learn how to initiate a dialogue within the framework of the water conventions and how inter-state dialogue ensures that local populations have a voice in these processes. OMVG ambition is that there is a framework of the river basin that ensures that the water resources are managed and governed to benefit people at the local level so they can remain in their areas with access to the water resources. Working with river-basins organizations does not solely include governments but also local and regional civil society organizations.

GWH has since 2018 supported the establishment of Pôle Eau Dakar, and developed and started to implement local and regional initiatives to promote transboundary water cooperation and peace. As a regional node of the Global Observatory for Water and Peace Pôle Eau Dakar will conduct a mapping of water sources that have the potential to lead to conflicts in West Africa region. This approach resonates with typical peacebuilding approaches that begins with understanding the causes and effects of particular conflicts and seeks to devise peacebuilding strategies accordingly. This approach is driven by the problem that wants solving: what caused this particular conflict and how can those causes be redressed? This approach invites more holistic assessments of conflict contexts that consider interrelationship among multiple factors. This is not to say that GWH and Pôle Eau Dakar will focus on wider effects of root causes to a conflict, but their focus will be on water-related issues to which they can provide assistance for solutions. Already, the network of Pôle Eau Dakar includes civil society organizations focusing on the linkages between effects of competition over natural resources or the fragility of communities and societies and conflicts. This can relate to situations when herders are seeking access to water for their cattle, or fishermen are trying to access waters to fish. These types of analysis will increasingly play a role in the discussions to prevent or mitigate water conflicts, but also in terms of strengthening the role and capacity of the river basin organizations. Through these initiatives GWH is engaged with peacebuilding communities at the local and regional level in West Africa supporting solutions to water-related challenges and prevent tensions and conflict. Yet, the

primary focus is on the river basin organizations, and GWH and Pôle Eau Dakar provide assistance to link technical with political processes at different levels and through different means in order to facilitate the implementation of policies, but also to offer a platform (safe space) for dialogue and collaboration.

The above illustrates that GWH does not necessarily work in a traditional way with peace actors but more with technical and legal actors that are key to a peacebuilding process. GWH and Pôle Eau Dakar play important roles to convene and connect actors from different sectors to promote water cooperation and peace. And, the river-basin organizations are important institutions for conflict resolution. However, GWH with its location in Geneva has also access to the Maison de la paix (House of Peace) where the Graduate Institute, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Interpeace, and Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (GPP) are hosted. In addition, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (hd) is Geneva-based. These are all typical and traditional peace actors with different mandates, and GWH should explore opportunities where they have joint interests. As the organizer of Geneva Peace Week, GPP has a large network of peace actors worldwide that GWH can probably use. Furthermore, hd is currently at stage of exploring how they can integrate water conflicts in their work. hd is interested in learning more about GWH and find out whether there is scope for collaboration.

In 2018, an initiative was established that includes the Water, Peace and Security Partnership (WPS), supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded, including IHE Delft, World Resources Institute (WRI), Deltares, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS), Wetlands International and International Alert. This initiative reflects some of the core ideas of GWH. The WPS aims to develop innovative tools and services that help identify and address water-related security risks. The initiative focuses on raising awareness, developing capacities and supporting dialogue that together underpin coordinated action.<sup>16</sup> The initiative has a strong focus on specific actions on the ground to prevent or mitigate human security risks related to water. The initiative applies a system level approach which can include conflict drivers such as corruption that cause grievances of the local population in relation to access to natural resources. Partners within the initiative contribute with their expertise.

GWH and IHE Delft are partners within the Universities Partnership collaborating on research and development of conceptual frameworks on hydro-politics and water diplomacy. The discussions and collaboration with IHE Delft are important in order to avoid duplication and overlap, but instead catalyze mutual strengths and synergies.

### 3.5 Linking policy discussions in International Geneva with New York

There is an underlying implicit assumption to GWH's overarching goal to contribute to the prevention of water conflicts at inter-sectoral and transboundary levels, and it relates to bringing the water, peace and security discourse to the UN-system in New York.

International Geneva is a center of expertise in environment and sustainable development, of which water is part. Although International Geneva offers expertise in many other areas

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<sup>16</sup> <https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/about-wps>

such as humanitarian affairs, human rights, health, trade, etc., the UN-system in New York is important to the water and peace agenda because of the UN Security Council (UNSC), UN Secretariat and the main UN Peacebuilding actors are located in New York.

The Geneva Water Hub knows how the UN-system works. It has a clear idea about where water fits in within the UN Secretariat and its different departments and mechanisms such as the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and the peace envoys and political and peacebuilding missions in the field. These are all New York-based actors. GWH notes it is not easy to gain their attention or the diplomatic UN-delegations to engage in water and peace. The UN Security Council impacts the daily work of the delegations as well as the UN Secretariat. The access to actors and platforms within the UN-system in International Geneva is no guarantee for accessing actors and platforms within the UN-system in New York. GWH is therefore playing an even greater role for bridging the water-related work in Geneva with the peace-related work in New York. GWH's collaboration with the International Peace Institute (IPI) in New York is very much about elevating the pursuit of amplifying the voice around the connection between water issues and peace. This is a partnership that aspires to take some of the Geneva-based discussions and bring them to New York, which would help to bridge the '*division*' between Geneva and New York. This is important because there are institutional differences due to different set-ups. The focus in Geneva is very much on humanitarian affairs and human rights, while in New York the UN-system is very much focused on peace & security, and development. The UNSC in New York tends to dominate the discussion in New York and also politics of the member states, and particularly security discussions. Furthermore, the dynamics of the Group of Friends in Geneva and New York are different. The situation in New York is more politicized than in Geneva, but the GoF-model is more active in New York. The Group of Friends in Geneva and New York are more often disconnected from each other, and there is no natural integration between them. Bringing the water, peace and security discourse to New York will require systematic and continuous efforts. So far, GWH has had access to both institutions and individuals thanks to the former Chair of the GHLP-WP, but the IPI can be a very strategic partner to continue this work. The IPI does political work and is well positioned to contribute to advance water issues within the UN-system in New York. GWH and the IPI had planned for 2020 to start organizing '*safe space*' roundtable discussions about the same topic in Geneva and New York and then put together recommendations for the systems in Geneva and New York. As mentioned above there is a need to include '*peace actors*' in the water discussion and a way forward is to involve the UN Peacebuilding Commission in New York as they are engaged in conversations as it relates to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.6 Policy mechanism for inclusion of a water and peace perspective

Not only is it important to include the peace actors in the discussions on water and peace but the peace and security system also needs to be *responsive* to different forms of crisis situations. This assumes there is a *mechanism* for integrating a water lens or perspective into decision-making processes of the UN Security Council (UNSC). A recognition of the political dimension of water issues and that it has to be addressed diplomatically is underpinning GWH's work. GWH goes beyond the technical dimension of water cooperation.

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, Peacebuilding and sustaining peace, A/74/976 & S/2020/773, 30 July 2020, p. 11-13.

GWH would like to see that when the UN Security Council discuss recommendations of a *'Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council'* it should pay attention to water-related issues. Ideally, the *'Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council'* includes a section on the protection of water-related infrastructure in armed conflict. The UNSC should then have to articulate a response and decision on the recommendations. This is a highly political process and requires joint efforts by many actors.

To date, the UNSC has not yet articulated any decisions on actions to protect water infrastructures. This is also where the partnerships are important. GWH (and the International Water Law Platform of the University of Geneva) and UNICEF share the same goal to promote the protection of water infrastructure. UNICEF tries to advocate for a UN Security Council resolution on protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The GWH has been engaged with UNICEF on the *"Water under Fire"* report (three volumes). This initiative aims to link the protection of civilian and civilian infrastructure with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). UNICEF calls on governments, partners and parties in conflict to stop attacks on water and sanitation infrastructure and personnel through *inter alia* policies and legal measures to protect vital civilian infrastructure and personnel.<sup>18</sup> UNICEF does not have a specific mandate<sup>19</sup> for water resources and found therefore the cooperation with GWH during the preparation of *"Water under Fire"* particularly useful as the GWH helped UNICEF to frame water issues in a broader policy context. This type of cooperation has brought attention to the water, peace and security nexus. The UNSC is highly political and can be difficult to influence to achieve policy outcomes. However, these efforts demonstrate the importance of cooperation in order to advance the policy development on water and peace.

In addition, the river-basin organizations at a regional level constitute important institutional mechanisms for conflict resolution to prevent and mitigate conflicts. They can be responsive to emerging risks and transboundary water issues, and an important platform for dialogue. The GOWP and Pôle Eau Dakar have important roles supporting river-basin organizations to enhance their analytical capacity to identify, assesses and address water-related conflict issues from a broader socio-economic perspective ensuring the inclusion of voices of local communities and marginalized groups. Both GWH and partners have a system thinking that consider power structures, relationships between actors, and implications of actions. This enables GWH and partners to identify crucial areas for intervention to redress potential or existing grievances and promote sustainable solutions.

### 3.7 The institutionalization of GWH within the University of Geneva

The institutionalization of GWH within the University of Geneva has contributed to the rich platform of internal and external experts who are involved in different initiatives aiming to raise awareness and knowledge and developing frameworks and mechanisms for managing transboundary water resources in a sustainable and peaceful way. Not only does the effectiveness of GWH depend on the relevance of partners and experts but also the *relevance and utilization of the research and analysis* produced or supported by GWH that is contributing to water and peace.

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<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, *"Water under Fire"*, 2019, p. 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF does not have a specific mandate for water issues. Water is however an issue for UNICEF's target groups, and is therefore an important area to address when it can cause harm to its target group.

The institutionalization of GWH is also by itself an implicit assumption because the hosting of and interaction between research, education and policy (political advocacy) in one organization (a hub) is assumed to promote and ensure mutual understanding between researchers and policy-makers through continuous dialogue and learning leading to collaboration between the involved actors. This is a concept referred to as a university-based *'boundary organization'*. The academic work describes the concept boundary organization as *"a way to explain the way of organizing the interface between science and policy"* and *"by incorporating actors from both sides of the science-policy boundary, the boundary organization allows for the co-production of knowledge, which results in boundary objects and standardized packages. Through this process, the outcomes become credible, relevant, and legitimate for both policy and science. Simultaneously, by facilitating the co-production of knowledge, the boundary organization contributes to the stabilization of the boundary between policy and science, guaranteeing each actor its unique legitimacy."*<sup>20</sup> This concept is often used in the context of environmental policy and science. Thus, GWH has capitalized on the *'boundary organization'* concept that the institutionalization and organizational structure of GWH has offered during the short period of its existence. It has enabled smooth and flexible collaboration with other university faculties since it is hosted at the Institute of Environmental Sciences (ISE) of the University of Geneva. ISE is an inter-faculty institute comprising e.g. the Faculty of Law where the International Water Law Platform is situated. In addition, the Scientific Director of the Research and Education Function of the GWH is also co-chairing the UNESCO Chair in Hydro-politics along with his colleague from the ISE. The UNESCO Chair has also reinforced the anchoring of GWH within the UNIGE and constitutes the scientific function of GWH. The UNESCO Chair makes the UNIGE and GWH part of UNESCO *'water family'* and Swiss Commission for UNESCO. It also opens up for a huge network of universities and partners, and entry points to access UNESCO partners which is very useful for GWH's academic work and partnerships.

The Geneva Water Hub collaborates with a large network of partners with different expertise. GWH currently hosts the coordination of the Universities Platform for Water Cooperation and Diplomacy (UPWCD). It is a research collaboration that brings together research and teaching competencies from various institutions and disciplines. The research collaboration with partners within the UPWCD has allowed GWH to draw on their knowledge and experience. The Geneva Water Hub's partners find it is important that GWH does not retreat from its *'boundary organization'* but continues its close collaboration with the broad spectrum of actors liaising with both research and policy.

GWH's function of *'networking'* is important as it is through convening and connecting different key actors that GWH contributes to sustainable development and peacebuilding. It is the collaboration and cooperation amongst organizations that knowledge and ideas are exchanged and mobilized, and synergies catalyzed to advance the agenda for water and peace. GWH's collaborative approach offers many opportunities for exploring ideas that link technical water expertise on transboundary water with water security. GWH's research is particularly well placed, led by the research director, for examining how the peace dividend concept can be used in a water and peace context.

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<sup>20</sup> Karin Gustafsson & Rolf Lidskog, *"Boundary organizations and environmental governance: Performance, institutional design, and conceptual development"*, Elsevier B.V. Climate Risk Management, Volume 19, 2018, pages 1-11.

There are many partners and stakeholders who call for GWH's attention and support, which has to be balanced against GWH's capacity and strategic priorities. The scope of GWH's work is broad including a wide range of engagements and collaborations with different actors. The institutionalization of GWH within UNIGE helps define GWH's governance mechanism, including three bodies (i) Advisory Board, (ii) Strategic Committee, and (iii) Scientific Committee.<sup>21</sup> This is helpful and it will be important that there are formal mandates outlining roles and responsibilities to ensure both participation, commitment and accountability. There is a desire among GWH's partners to have a greater formal influence on GWH's agenda setting and strategic priorities, and subsequently shaping GWH's activities. Formal participation and clarity of roles and responsibilities will likely improve the transparency and coherence of GWH's strategic direction.

### 3.8 Utilization of research

The Geneva Water Hub promotes knowledge generation through scientific research networks by convening actors with specific knowledge and expertise to contribute to greater understanding of developing strategies for water governance, water management and water cooperation.

The Geneva Water Hub's primary objective is not to strengthen water management or water governance, but to promote international and regional water cooperation that will improve water management and water governance. This approach aims to empower actors to make informed decisions on managing transboundary water resources. GWH's efforts to highlight the importance of integrating a transboundary waters perspective in promoting sustainable development are highly relevant because sustainable development requires transboundary water cooperation to secure water availability and water quality, as well as the protection of the planet.<sup>22</sup> Throughout this evaluation it has been outlined that the GWH applies a system thinking approach aiming to understand the circular nature of sustainable development, and the role and power of research and policy shaping the conditions and structures for managing risks and challenges to sustainable development. GWH's approach to combine research, training and policy is appreciated amongst many stakeholders. GWH's approach to examine (research) problems (observing events or data, identifying patterns of behavior overtime, surfacing the underlying structures that drive those events and patterns) before acting (advocating for policy change) allows GWH to engage with partners to change structures that are not serving states and communities well, but instead expand the choices for affected states and communities and create satisfying, long-term solutions to problems facing sustainable development. GWH does this in an unorthodox way. They combine curiosity, compassion, courage and willingness to see a situation more fully, recognize that many issues are interrelated often requiring multiple interventions to a problem. For example, GWH's engagement in Senegal involved young people to develop their ideas by making short films about the importance of clean water for sustainable development. One film describes for instance how littering of plastic kills fish and other livestock for people and making it difficult people to secure enough food. The film illustrates a fisherman from a small village at the banks of the Senegal River and how he is struggling with fishing due to plastics in water. This is an important example for how GWH has engaged both youth and local community to raise

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<sup>21</sup> GWH, Program Document, (ProDoc III), Phase III August 2020-July 2023, 30 March 2020, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Francesco Sindico, p. 32.

awareness about sustainable livelihoods and social-ecological systems. This is a small example but important for promoting water governance at the local level where the public is involved in addressing local water issues, as well as changes in behavior of people and communities.

Another example of GWH's work in the West Africa region is an initiative to convene regional stakeholders from the four riparian countries together with experts on transboundary collaboration to strengthen water resource management of the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB). The initiative has helped to establish a common understanding amongst the parties that water security is strategically important to secure for major cities and development of the rural economy in the West Africa region.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, experts identified a need for reinforcing the institutional and technical framework of cooperation for the joint management of the SMAB.

The GWH has successfully mobilized research capacity in the follow-up to the recommendations of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace. The GWH is the Secretariat of the GHLP-WP and in this role GWH is tasked to follow up on the implementation of the Panel recommendations.<sup>24</sup> The work on the recommendations comprises research and exploration of ideas and solutions. The research process is consultative, using round table discussions with experts and stakeholders, helping to understand what is realistic to achieve.

The research outputs are useful for preparing for round table discussions, negotiations or 'safe space' meetings to better understand both technical hydrological issues, as well as hydro-political as well as socio-economic implications of solving water-related issues. The analytical work helps structure dialogue processes from identifying stakeholders (who should be invited to negotiations to shape a solution), expertise that is needed, issues that need to be discussed and negotiated.

The research is characterized by a high degree of pragmatism and utilization. There are a number of research outputs that are directly linked with the implementation of the Panel recommendations. A result ensuing the Panel Report was the drafting of the "*Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure*".<sup>25</sup> It was born out of the Panel Report recommendation to strengthen respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law in relation to water. The objectives of the Geneva List are twofold (i) "*to systematize the applicable international law rules to the protection of water infrastructure and water-related infrastructure during armed conflicts as well as post-conflict periods.*"; and (ii) "*to set forth the good practices and recommendations regarding their protection during these phases*".<sup>26</sup> The Geneva List is also the result of the collaboration between the GWH, the International Water Law Platform of the University of Geneva, UNICEF, and several other organizations. The Geneva List was officially launched in the fall of 2019 and since then GWH

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<sup>23</sup> Geneva Water Hub & UNECE, Supporting a Dialogue on Transboundary Collaboration on the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB), 14th meeting of the Working Group on IWRM (Geneva, 22-24 October 2019), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> GWH has produced two follow-up reports on activities and implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace: *Determined Steps* in 2019 and *Intensified Action* in 2020.

<sup>25</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Geneva Water Hub, "The Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure", Geneva 2019, p. v.

has identified three key areas for the follow-up of the Geneva List and the implementation of the principles. One area is to promote the role of water in the military manuals. A second area is related to establishing or using an existing mechanism to monitor attacks against water infrastructure and water-related infrastructure. A third area is related to accountability in terms of holding individuals accountable for violating the principles of international humanitarian law and protection of water infrastructure. These three areas require a mix of efforts by GWH of which networking and education (two of the GWH's functions) will play a significant role. Awareness raising about the Geneva List is one important element to engage international organizations and the permanent missions of UN member states in Geneva and New York. A positive outcome is that the French Army is willing to work with GWH to include the Geneva List in a military manual and to train military staff. The GWH is also currently discussing cooperation with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo to train military staff in the Geneva Principles. GWH and the International Water Law Platform have also supported the ICRC in updating ICRC's *"Guidelines on the protection of natural environment in armed conflict"*.<sup>27</sup> The organizations appreciated the collaborations drawing on the GWH's expertise making the reports accessible to policy makers within the UN-system.

Another example is the Panel recommendation under chapter 5 *"People's Diplomacy, Inter-sectoral Water Management and Decision Making"* on developing a Voluntary Code of Practice on Water Management.<sup>28</sup> GWH started to do research and examined whether a Code of Conduct for the mining industry would help improve the environmental and social conditions by reducing the risks and impacts for adjacent communities and environment from a water perspective. The initial research found that a Code of Conduct would not resolve the problems alone but GWH would be more effective with the mining industry and multinational companies to work long-term on water challenges. GWH decided to continue researching and facilitating dialogue and collaboration with multinational companies to achieve tangible results in relation to water, sustainability and peace.

Another example is related to the Panel recommendation under chapter 6 *"Financial Innovation for Water Cooperation"* to encourage the private sector to *"develop innovative financial instruments such as blue bonds to finance transboundary water cooperation."*<sup>29</sup> The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and GWH did research to test whether the recommendation was realistic in terms of *'Blue Peace holdings'* (transboundary water organizations and municipalities) issuing *'Blue Peace bonds'* (financial instrument) that invests in water-related livelihood assets and public goods.<sup>30</sup> The research included also consultations with the river-basin organizations (OMVS and OMVG). This experience was a start for further collaboration between GWH, SDC, UNCDF to support the OMVG and members states to develop a planning tool, a Master Plan for Integrated Development of OMVG river basins (the Gambia river basin, the Kayanga/Geba river basin and the Koliba/Corubal in The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau

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<sup>27</sup> ICRC, *Guidelines on the protection of natural environment in armed conflict*, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Pio Wennubst, Jaffer Machano, Rukan Manaz, Johan Gély, Isabella Pagotto, and Francesca Valentini, *Blue Peace Invest in Peace Through Water*, 2019, p. 10, 13-14.

and Senegal) and to identify innovative financing mechanisms.<sup>3132</sup> This illustrates the level of utilization of research conducted by or through GWH's partners. Interviewees have emphasized that analyses and background information provided by GWH to key actors to the OMVG river basins added value to the consultations for project development, because it helped them to better understand and how to meet water, peace and security challenges.

Interviewees note that the production of research products by GWH and the International Water Law Platform is important for policy development at global, regional and national level. Tools for international water law are recognized as important contributions to capacity building through technical and legal support. This is particularly relevant for supporting United Nations Economic Commission on Europe (UNECE) Water Convention Secretariat and implementing the Panel recommendation - *"States should adhere to the principles of International Water Law and promote their full implementation. The Panel calls for wide accession by States to the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention and the 1992 UNECE Water Convention, now open for accession to all UN Member States."*<sup>33</sup>

Panel recommendation under chapter 4 *"Quantity and Quality: Strengthening of the Knowledge-Based and Data-Driven Decision Making and Cooperation for Security and Peace"*<sup>34</sup> is also the basis for GWH's work on providing further knowledge about what triggers cooperation or conflict within the water sector. GWH and ISE collaborate with Oregon State University (OSU). OSU has developed the database, *Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database (TFDD)*, which is widely recognized as one of the key databases for integrating spatial and socio-political data relating to the world's international river basins.<sup>35</sup> GWH implements a project on monitoring for a national hydro-political tensions. The aim is to identify variables that allows getting ahead of the crisis curve. The project has two components. One is at the global level - analysis of large data sets (treaties, events, river basin organizations) which is done by OSU. The second component is indexing – using quantitative analysis through a series of case studies using discourse analysis and social network analysis to identify patterns (variables to characterize hydro-political risks) for conflicts or cooperation. The case studies on river basins will help understand the shaping of local and regional discourses, dynamics, power relations between actors within negotiations and processes. GWH and ISE are undertaking GWH's collection of case studies will enhance the understanding of local dynamics and patterns of cooperation or conflicts in river basins. It contributes to understanding of the importance of local solutions for local problems. The first case is focusing on Sixaola binational river basin, shared by Costa Rica and Panama. For the coming two years, GWH will try to replicate the methodology in other basins throughout the next two years. This qualitative research will be compared with the database, and efforts will be made to improve and update the different databases (basin, treaties, events, RBOs, construction of dams). Data and information will be visualized on GWH's platform for researchers and policy makers. GWH aims to supplement the quantitative data with

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<sup>31</sup> OMVG, Workshop Report, *Regional Workshop to launch the drafting process of the OMVG Joint Investment Plan*, Banjul The Gambia, 8-9 October 2019, pp. 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> OMVG, Terms of Reference of the Master Plan for the Integrated Development of The Gambia, Kayanga-Geba and Koliba-Corubal River Basins, p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 41.

<sup>34</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 51.

<sup>35</sup> OSU, <https://transboundarywaters.science.oregonstate.edu/content/transboundary-freshwater-dispute-database>

qualitative data to provide analysis of on-going conflicts or corporation dynamics. The results will feed into the global observatory and linking it with research and policy processes and can be used for developing tools and methods for cooperation frameworks. Linked also to this is exploring with the Economist Intelligence Unit how to integrate data and information from GWH's case studies with the Blue Peace Index.<sup>36</sup>

IUCN is a partner of GWH and has been called upon to participate in round table discussions and provide input into research processes and developing joint research products. IUCN brings experience to support processes for formulating and elevating specific water-related issues into policy debates in the diplomatic circles and to advance an agenda that is dependent on diplomacy and cooperation. IUCN provides a testimony on what is being done on the ground. By connecting IUCN with key policy actors, GWH has access to testimonies from the field and expertise since IUCN works with local civil society, governments, parliamentarians, and commissions around the world. Currently, GWH, UNIGE and IUCN are collaborating on an initiative on legal and institutional frameworks relating to construction, operations of dams in transboundary basins. The collaboration aims to undertake a comparative assessment of the state of the art in terms of legal and regulatory framework for building and operating dams in transboundary rivers, and to provide recommendations for improving the management of dams in transboundary basins from a governance perspective.

### 3.9 Utilization of training

The Geneva Water Hub's contribution to sustainable development and peacebuilding comprises efforts to strengthen international and regional key actors' capacity to engage with transboundary water cooperation. GWH's efforts to improve partners and stakeholders' access to science, adequate skills, tools and methods, and financing opportunities aim to have long-term positive effects on lives and livelihood of people. Both individuals and organizations have through GWH's activities learned about transboundary water resource management and the underpinning legal and institutional frameworks. This knowledge generation aims to contribute to better informed decision-making that will have positive effects on sustainable development and peacebuilding.

When GWH organizes a two-weeks summer school in Geneva it tries to select participants with particular backgrounds (civil society, policy makers, RBOs, international and local levels) or from specific regions. It enables interesting exchanges, discussions and bonding amongst participants from, e.g., the ministries in Central Asia or the Middle East. It creates a community of practice and builds trust. The participants from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan go back to their ministries with not only enhanced skills and knowledge, but also new acquaintances, which can be built on for future collaboration. It is particularly viewed as an opportunity to foster mind-sets and relations amongst younger bureaucrats who have not been shaped by the past institutional legacy of '*anti-cooperation*'. Old attitudes and practices are difficult to change, and therefore working with younger generations through summer school is considered more effective in terms of achieving long-term results according to participants. The summer school is seen as an opportunity to discuss different narratives about conflicts, problems or solutions, and by listening to these diverse narratives the participants might change perspectives or develop their own narrative that is based on an

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<sup>36</sup> <https://bluepeaceindex.eiu.com/#/>

exchange of experiences. The summer school has also the potential according to participants to establish technical cooperation where there is common ground between countries that can potentially evolve over time towards more political policy outcomes. Participants find the networking, the exchange of knowledge and perspectives most rewarding from the summer school. These steps are important assumptions because they have significant strategic impact on fostering long-term relations.

Participants in summer school have different experiences depending on their professional background. As the summer school comprises different modules the participants gain knowledge differently from each other. For some participants the module on water governance was most relevant, while others find the module on hydro-politics or international water law most relevant. The participation of representatives from river-basin organizations are appreciated as they can often speak about their experiences and challenges to the transboundary water management. The summer school is considered intense but highly relevant with many practical experiences from different regions, which makes the training highly interactive. What is missing is a platform for an alumni network to facilitate continued collaboration amongst former participants, as well as more time allocated to the theory on negotiations. Currently, the students do a course evaluation and provides GWH with their feedback on the modules, but there is no systematic tracer study of the students in terms of what the professional career path and impacts.

In the follow-up of the summer school a journalist with a scientific background who was very familiar with hydrology and had the opportunity to learn more about water diplomacy during the summer school had the opportunity to carry out an in-depth story on water diplomacy in Central Asia and water cooperation between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan. Part of the story is linked to young water experts promoting sustainable development, water as an instrument for peace and joint actions for transboundary rivers in Central Asia. GWH and the Blue Peace movement<sup>37</sup> also collaborate with World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW). The journalist recognizes the importance of providing young people with opportunities to prepare themselves for taking on greater political responsibilities in the future as countries transition from autocratic and closed systems to more opened and democratic systems. The participation of a journalist in the summer school is rather strategic as it contributes to conveying messages and raise awareness about water and peace around the world.

The MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) includes several courses: *(i)* Water Resources Management and Policy, *(ii)* Ecosystem Services: A Method for Sustainable Development", and *(iii)* International Water Law. These courses are open to anyone and user can access the courses through a platform. For the past three years 32,000 students have participated in GWH's MOOCs, and there is no follow up with the students. They have registered online and GWH has no personal interaction with them.

In addition to the summer school and the MOOC, GWH also provide tailored trainings on requests. For instance, GWH has provided trainings for a ministry of Iran, the Organisation

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<sup>37</sup> Blue Peace is an initiative supported by SDC aiming to foster peace, stability and sustainable development through water cooperation among borders, sectors and generations. (<https://www.thebluepeace.org>)

internationale de la Francophonie, and the Kazakh-German University on hydro-politics and hydro-diplomacy.

Interviewees have expressed that when GWH came along it added a jolt of energy, and particularly in capacity building, because many of the problems in water diplomacy are that people are either trained in water or diplomacy, and not both. And, it is important to have people who understand the political implications of water decisions and conversely how you might think explicitly about using water to induce dialogue. Some interviewees note that one of the main effects of GWH's work is related to GWH's training (education) of people at the post-graduate level and beyond, including professionals in the twin concepts of water and diplomacy. Although the outcome results are not immediate the training of individuals and the strengthening of knowledge and skills will translate into more systematic and institutionalized results later. A second effect of the establishment of GWH is the raised awareness of the diplomatic corps about water and peace. Although some diplomats might have been cognizant of water, there has been more concerted activities thanks to the work on the Panel report and the recommendations to inform the UN Security Council.

GWH and UNECE Secretariat have carried out joint activities to promote transboundary water management and support countries and key actors with technical expertise. UNECE Secretariat supports countries in managing transboundary water resources to foster peace in different regions around the world. Herein, the focus is on peace through transboundary water cooperation and sustainable usage and management of water resources. The UNECE is the key UN agency with a mandate to bring together different stakeholders and actors dealing with transboundary water resources around the world. This goes hand in hand with the GWH's function for networking and convening key actors and stakeholders. The collaboration with the International Water Law Platform and GWH is important for UNECE Secretariat because the GWH's development of legal trainings in international water law, water resources management and policy, etc. through MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) are used as tools for strengthening the capacity of countries. The collaboration includes specific regional trainings for practitioners on Global Water Convention and international water law. The collaboration with GWH and the International Water Law Platform is important for UNECE since one of the key issues facing many countries is the lack of knowledge of international water law resulting in lack of or weak policies and fragile water cooperation. Thus, UNECE considers the trainings important in order to promote and also support countries to work effectively with the implementation of the 1992 and 1997 Conventions. GWH and UNECE organized a regional practitioner to practitioner training in Dakar for transboundary water resource experts from the Francophone countries in West and North Africa on global water conventions and international water law. The three days-training contributed to enhancing knowledge and skills of professionals representing countries, EU-delegations, the UN-agencies, African Development Bank, and river-basin organizations by exchanging practical experiences from water cooperation. This help them to work more effectively to promote and implement access to the two Conventions. What made this training special was that GWH and UNECE manage to bring the professionals together and have an inside discussion and reflect on how to use the conventions and international water law to support transboundary water cooperation. GWH supports also UNECE's Pan-Africa Training on International Water Law and Water Governance to improve transboundary water investment in Africa.

### 3.10 Added value of GOWP

Interviewees note that there is too much '*compartmentalization*' (separation) between different disciplines or sectors. Governments can work in silos, and so can the UN-system and academic institutions. The lack of coordination and cooperation to address complex problems effectively have a negative effect on tackling critical challenges. Interviewees appreciate therefore GWH's multidisciplinary approach bringing diverse competencies and experiences together for dialogue and collaboration that strengthening global and regional analytical capacity and supports advancement of the development of policy related to water and peace.

The Global Observatory for Water and Peace (GOWP) is an example of this multidisciplinary approach and '*boundary organization*' concept. The GOWP is one of the main recommendations by the GHLP-WP and sprung out of one of the key conclusions that there is a "*lack of agency*" at the political and diplomatic levels for hydro-diplomacy.<sup>38</sup> The GOWP is still in progress to be further institutionalized. It is very much an extension of GWH as it connects actors and sectors, as well as promotes collective action at the political and diplomatic levels beyond water management. GWH wants the GOWP to be seen as a global and inclusive network of existing water and peace organizations that makes use of a Geneva-based platform to act effectively on hydro-diplomacy for water, peace and security. In addition, global research can through GOWP access different actors at regional and local level. The vertical exchange of experience and knowledge between global and local levels are an important aspect of the GOWP.

The concept of GOWP aims to facilitate, promote and energize "*diplomatic efforts to leverage water for comprehensive peace.*"<sup>39</sup> To support this data is collected and analyzed to refine the understanding of different discourses and the configuration of actors in different regions to shape transboundary interactions. Through GOWP and the regional nodes (regional partnerships) the data and analysis will be the basis for dialogue and cooperation helping to build trust amongst regional stakeholders and offer peaceful outcomes.

GWH has so far made most progress in West Africa-region in terms of advancing the idea of a regional node. Partnerships in the Middle East and Central Asia is still being worked on by GWH. In Latin America, GWH has through UNIGE negotiated an agreement with Organization American States (OAS) for OAS to be a hub in the Americas. The regional coordinator is a former minister of environment in Costa Rica who is now associated with Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) in Costa Rica. The collaboration is suggested to jointly develop a methodology to classify, evaluate and potentially rate transboundary collaboration efforts in the Americas. There is a lot of information that needs to be systematized for transboundary situations in all of Americas. GWH could assist with information and data management. A second step would be to apply this methodology to cases of interest to the OAS and GWOP.<sup>40</sup> The results from these studies can be used and tested in a '*safe space*' for negotiations. These efforts could be a negotiation between Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, or between Bolivia and Argentina about a river. GWH's

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<sup>38</sup> *A Matter of Survival*, p. 69 & 72.

<sup>39</sup> Geneva Water Hub & Strategic Foresight Group, *A Matter of Survival*, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) & Université de Genève, 2017, p. 73.

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Alvaro Umaña Quesada, CATIE / OAS, Terms of Reference for the collaboration, May 30, 2020.

assistance is important to create a *'safe space'* where the negotiation can take place. The parties in a negotiation need same information and education about the system of transboundary water resources, including how to include the voices of local communities. It is critical that the parties involved in a negotiation should have the same information. The GOWP and GWH can be helpful in many ways by providing tailored training of water professionals (emphasizing water diplomacy) specifically to the case, relevant cases (lessons learned) from other parts of the world, as well as assisting with developing scenarios in relation to areas of conflict and different parties' interests. The GOWP and *'safe spaces'* can be an alternative dispute resolution mechanism instead of going to the courts (e.g. International Court of Justice).

The Geneva Water Hub notes that it is important that the regional nodes are independent and neutral regional institutions with analytical capacity, and commitment to the water and peace discourse in order to have legitimacy and trust from regional stakeholders in situations of dispute resolution. The underlying idea of the GOWP is to utilize the analytical capacity within the International Geneva and elsewhere to facilitate and catalyze existing knowledge and actors through round table discussions or *'safe space' meetings* to advance both technical and political water cooperation. The links between the regional nodes and International Geneva and elsewhere aim to capitalize to existing knowledge and platforms to generate ideas and options to mitigate and manage transboundary water issues. It is often noted by interviewees that each region has its own set of problems. Thus, the regional nodes will be useful to support regional key actors to identify specific problems and depending on the political willingness and resources available the actors can deploy different types of actions.

GWH has set-up the Pôle Eau Dakar in Senegal for the West Africa-region. The Pôle Eau Dakar is an organisation specialised in hydropolitics and hydro-diplomacy. GWH supports the Pôle Eau Dakar strategically by supporting it in terms of technical expertise and through financial support. It is hosted at the Ministry of Water of Senegal and holds an international mandate with the approbation of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. GWH supports a local coordinator in Senegal who organizes practical arrangements of implementing regional initiatives. The statue of the Pôle Eau Dakar is under review by the Ministry in Senegal, and it is examined whether the Pôle Eau Dakar can be brought to a regional level rather than being currently sub-regional. The Pôle Eau Dakar is in many ways in a start-up phase in terms of defining its role and positioning itself in the region by developing networks of actors, raising awareness about what the Pôle Eau Dakar can offer, and informing about research products (tools, etc.). It is currently compiling data for a regional report on water and peace that feeds into a GOWP-report administrated by GWH. It is also developing a regional atlas aiming to facilitate assistance to local and regional stakeholders to induce water cooperation to reduce tensions and conflict and promote collaboration and peace. The assistance comprises expertise and training to develop new thinking and practices to strengthen the institutional capacity of national and regional actors in hydro-diplomacy to meet water, peace and security challenges. GWH brings value to the Pôle Eau Dakar by connecting regional and local actors with GWH's international network, and strategy development to address the water and peace nexus. The Pôle Eau Dakar hopes to achieve (i) strengthened hydro-diplomacy and cooperation for peace in the sub-region; (ii) strengthened knowledge and innovation in the water sector through networking; and (iii) the establishment of a strong think tank in the field

of water in the region, the follow-up of the recommendations of the world water forum in Dakar.

The past year is the first year when the Pôle Eau Dakar has started to work on concrete initiatives. In 2019, GWH and UNECE Secretariat started to jointly develop a structured format for a dialogue process on Transboundary Cooperation on Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin (SMAB) including The Gambia Guinea Bissau, Senegal, and Mauritania, as well as the river-basin organizations (OMVS and OMVG). GWH and UNECE Secretariat facilitate discussions between the participating countries to develop a project aiming to strengthening the transboundary cooperation on the shared aquifers in the region.

In addition to the regional nodes, the GOWP also includes societal nodes that represents specific social actor groups such as youth, women, media, Group of Friends, and the GHLP-WP. There are many different areas being covered or expected to be covered by GWH through the GOWP. GWH's role to call in experts for sharing their expertise on specific topics enable the regional nodes, Group of Friends and other stakeholders to access to experts. Both youth and gender are reflected in GWH's activities through invitations to representatives of organizations focusing on particular issues related to water such as women in water diplomacy or World Youth Parliament for Water. GWH collaborates with OOSKANews in producing *'The Water Diplomat'* aiming to engage broader audiences as well as water professionals in understanding the water, peace, and security nexus. It is believed to be important to bring messaging about water issues to broader communities and elevate the subject of water beyond water professionals and report on what the public position is in regard to policy prioritization around water. It is noted that GWH is well placed to engage with mainstream media to elevate the water issues to broader communities. The summer school is a useful platform for GWH to continue inviting journalists to strengthen their knowledge of water diplomacy.

Within the GOWP framework GWH assists partners to organize events, meetings or more long-term processes. It requires a high degree of flexibility and swiftness to meet all requests, and GWH's human resources can risk to be overstretched to manage these requests. It is important for GWH in the coming years to define its scope of work to avoid being overstretched and not being able to deliver quality in its services, and to stay in the forefront of the water and peace agenda. GWH operates in a landscape of actors with high expectations and many priorities. It is therefore important to use the opportunities when key actors' attention is given to water and peace issues. One actor group that needs extra care is the Group of Friends in terms of organizing events which requires logistical support, but also support in terms of identifying and developing topics on water and peace that goes beyond the Panel report. Some interviewees consider GWH too focused on the Panel recommendations and expect GWH to be more agile to respond to new emerging issues and trends related to water and peace, as well as to make more use of International Geneva by including more Geneva-based organizations in contributing to advancing the policy discourse on water, peace and security.

The GOWP is the think tank and subsequently many topics can be introduced for discussion and learning. For instance, a key issue is that many governments are willing to negotiate transboundary agreements themselves but not include local communities. It raises important

questions about how to secure the involvement of local communities. Another issue is intra-national conflicts related to water, for instance between mining operations and towns/communities due to groundwater pollution (arsenic contamination), and how to mediate among the affected stakeholders. The procedures for structuring these processes are not different from transboundary negotiations, which can call for GWH's role. For example, GWH has supported the Government of Mongolia, liaised by the Permanent Mission of Mongolia (member of the GoF), to facilitate dialogue between local community and a global mining corporation, Rio Tinto. The local community is living in the desert region of Mongolia on the border to China, an area rich in mineral reserves (copper and gold deposits). The local herders are concerned that the pastures are polluted and poisoned by the mining. The company has communicated that the groundwater is not polluted, but local environmental groups and local communities do not agree. The Government of Mongolia has therefore decided to bring in a third party as an independent expert who can provide the parties with scientific evidence on the water availability and water quality, as well as assisting the Government of Mongolia on the process for negotiation between the parties. The Swiss identity of GWH was in this case very important combined with SDC's larger role in the global water sector to not stir up strong reactions in neighboring countries and a legitimacy to engage with a global corporation. After having reviewed documentation made available by the Government of Mongolia and the development of a concept note, GWH and parties are planning a meeting in Geneva to discuss a way forward to resolve the conflict.

In the follow-up of the Panel Report, GWH has supported the implementation of the Panel recommendations related to the Financial Innovation for Water Cooperation. GWH has convened international financial institutions (IFIs), development donors, UN-agencies, World Bank, private sector, banks, and insurance corporations, and provided them with tailored analysis and technical assistance for their involvement in the pre-negotiation phase. As mentioned earlier, when the foreign ministries adopted the resolution to collaborate on a Master Plan for Integrated Development of OMVG river basins (the Gambia river basin, the Kayanga/Geba river basin and the Koliba/Corubal in The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal) it was the result of a series '*safe space*' meetings that was supported by relevant analytical products (analyses) that help shape a process and dialogue to make sound investment decisions that incorporate analysis of risks and impacts of an investment. GWH helped shaping the process in a non-conventional way and offered '*safe spaces*'. What many participating organizations particularly appreciate about the process is the breadth of discussions and '*out-of-the-box thinking*' rather than purely technically. There is sometimes a risk that these meetings become more discursive but this format demonstrates that it helps to build confidence and trust between the stakeholders. Subsequently, the basin countries could sign a MoU with the UNCDF. Both the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and GWH play a role in enabling these processes due to the legitimacy they bring to the process.

Many interviewees appreciate GWH's ability to link many different perspectives on water and peace, while at the same time some interviewees strongly emphasize the need to keep a focus on hydrological technical data but keeping it simple. They believe that peace and water cooperation must be built on trust and transparency, which requires transparent and shared data. Thus, the easier the technical system is to monitor and data the greater trust will be amongst stakeholders, and ultimately it will help countries to predict their available water

resources and plan accordingly. GWH in collaboration with WMO are supporting a pilot project in West Africa focusing on strengthening the capacity of RBOs (OMVS & OMVG) for data digitalization which is not only important for investment decisions but also to strengthen trust. GWH tailored the technical support to the RBOs and utilized the services and expertise of WMO in data digitalization.

### 3.11 Added value of 'Safe space'

The 'safe space' approach is partly linked with the implementation of the Panel recommendations. 'Safe spaces' are structured indirectly along with the chapters of the Panel report in order support the operationalization of the Panel recommendations. The application of the 'safe spaces' has however grown somewhat beyond the original idea of focusing on the Panel report. Most 'safe spaces' have so far been global and thematic, but fewer regional 'safe spaces'. The global 'safe spaces' are often linked to global advocacy to influence the policy agenda on water and peace.

The 'safe space' approach is predominantly part of a political process and includes advisors to ministers, experts, academics and key stakeholders (e.g. social actor groups like youth or women) who are offered an informal setting under the Chatman House Rule to build trust through dialogue in order to address political issues related to water and peace. Mainly, the 'safe spaces' focus on political challenges and less on technical issues. It is demand-driven. An actor can request GWH's involvement to organize a 'safe space' but it requires that the other regional stakeholders approve and can agree on a specific mandate for GWH to support a regional group of actors to set up a platform for dialogue on a specific transboundary water issue. Then, GWH works closely with the actors to organize the 'safe spaces'. An important step in this process is the selection of people who should participate in the meetings, which is partly framed by where there is common ground to start dialogue amongst the participants.

The 'safe spaces' are tailored and used for different purposes but are always closely interconnected with research. GWH's user-oriented research amplifies the relevance of material provided (e.g. relevant concept and case studies, using same issues and challenges through other cases) to the members of a 'safe space' meeting. Interviewees state that the quality of research in combination with the convening power of relevant experts and stakeholders allow for 'out-of-the box thinking'. The strong link with research (scientifically based evidence) helps participants in a 'safe space' to access relevant tools to advance water cooperation in their specific context. The 'safe space' gives time for reflection and a broader discussion that helps to better understand the water, peace and security nexus and identify critical pathways for sustainable water cooperation. GWH is very aware of not imposing any ideas or recommendations but let instead the participant have ownership of the process and come up with recommendations for solution.

It is important to not take the 'safe spaces' for granted as a method for an immediate or even intermediate outcomes. There can certainly be 'safe spaces' without any concrete outcomes. Some interviewees find it desirable if GWH within the 'safe space' context agree with partners on what they should do together to follow up the conversations in the 'safe space'. It suggested that GWH should even more strongly structure track II processes that regularly follow up with the parties to resolve water-related tensions and conflicts.

There is no predetermined structured process for a ‘safe space’. Research products and specific expertise are often used as inputs to the meetings. But, so far, GWH has not used trainings prior to ‘safe space’. As mentioned above, some interviewees think it is critical that parties to a negotiation have similar knowledge about the substance. Thus, it is important for GWH and partners to consider when training can be used in an appropriate way to strengthen the positive dynamics of a ‘safe space’.

### 3.12 GWH and West Africa

The Geneva Water Hub is currently involved with four initiatives in West Africa in parallel with supporting the Pôle Eau Dakar. Two these initiatives ‘*Project on Senegal River mobilising art for water and peace*’; and ‘*Intercommunity dialogue on water and peace in Sahel*’ are currently on hold and will be implemented later. However, the pilot phase of the ‘*Project on Senegal River mobilising art for water and peace*’ was finalized in early 2020. The project aims to be presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Dakar in 2021 focusing on Water Security for Peace and Development.<sup>41</sup> The project supports OMVS to organize strategic dialogues with riparian communities for reflection on how to build resilience and mitigate fragility. GWH and OMVS are using culture to raise awareness about the role of water in the life of local populations.<sup>424344</sup> The project is using music, art and festival to bring attention to issues related to peace and development, and to involve and empower communities and youth to reflect, discuss and explore ways to improve the lives of the communities. In a highly innovative way the communities developed messages and channels to inform how to better manage collective water resources. A short film was produced to illustrate the importance of water for the communities. The effectiveness of this initiative will be highly interesting to monitor and follow up in order to learn about how the community have changed their attitude and behaviour in relation to the collective water resources.

The second initiative focuses on organizing safe spaces with community leaders of hot spots in Sahel to discuss visions of peacebuilding in relation to water. This initiative aims to include donors in the Sahel region. The initiative is currently suspended due to Covid-19 and regional election cycles.

The third and on-going initiative, ‘*Dialogue on Transboundary Cooperation on Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin*’, is the result of Senegal as party to the Water Convention calling for UNECE Secretariat’s support (or request for meeting of the parties) to facilitate the cooperation on groundwater with the riparian countries. Senegal is sharing transboundary water resources with other riparian countries and it does not exist any joint arrangement or platform for sharing data amongst the users for the aquifer basin. The countries lack knowledge and capacity about assessing the usage of water resources and making their own projections of usage of water resources in the future. The aquifer basin is very strategic for these countries, particularly Senegal and Guinea Bissau. SMAB supplies the capital of Senegal, Dakar, with approximately 50-60% of its total water usage, and the capital of Guinea Bissau, Bissau, with 100%. Thus, SMAB has significant strategic importance to these countries.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.worldwatercouncil.org/en/dakar-2021>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm5eoW-wk3k>

<sup>43</sup> GWH, Mobilizing Art for Water & Peace in the Senegal River

<sup>44</sup> GWH, Note conceptuelle relative au Projet - Voix du fleuve Senegal, Voix globale – porté par le Geneva Water Hub, April 30, 2020

Representatives from the countries were invited to the 40th anniversary of the transboundary cooperation between France-Switzerland on the Geneva Aquifer (Nappe du Genevois) in November 2018, and the parties were inspired by what they learned about the French-Swiss experience to do something similar for Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin with GWH's support. Instead of starting a bilateral dialogue between Senegal-Mauritania the initiative also involved other riparian countries of the basin, Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. When the countries met in February 2019 they had never met before to discuss water issues, and it became clear to the participants during the meeting that they were not familiar to the different water issues the countries are facing. For instance, salination of the water resources in Guinea-Bissau is an important issue because it impacts people's access to clean drinking water. Furthermore, they do not know how much water resources are available in 10-20 years. Senegal has more data but is lacking knowledge whether they can recharge the aquifer and what their options are to do that.

The dialogue process started off with series of meetings and consultations identifying and discussing these technical aspects with support from OMVS, OMVG, UNECE Secretariat and GWH. The meetings were very helpful to the participants to start identifying key issues within their own countries, and then also understand how the usage of water resources affect the transboundary issues. These linkages help the countries to understand why they need to cooperate. As the process evolved heads of states for Senegal and Mauritania<sup>45</sup> met early 2020 and mutually recognized the strategic importance of the dialogue on SMAB and made their commitments to support the continued dialogue and to seek a regional treaty of the management on the SMAB to strengthen resilience, sustainable development and stability in the region. All four countries have now politically committed to support the SMAB. The political leaders in the sub-region are committed to the initiative addressing five main issues related to the management of SMAB: *(i)* improving the knowledge of the SMAB; *(ii)* improving data collection for resources assessment and monitoring; *(iii)* quality of the resources; *(iv)* governance and the link between the use of SMAB and socio-economic and development; and *(v)* financing.<sup>46</sup>

A regional working group, including representatives from the four countries and OMVS and OMVG, was set-up in May 2020 to generate ideas for a framework for water cooperation of the aquifer for the sub-region. Currently, the regional working group and a regional consultant are producing the project document and an action plan for establishing a sustainable mechanism for concerted management of SMAB, as well as deliverables (assessment reports and baseline studies) to support strategic and project choices.<sup>47</sup> GWH and UNECE Secretariat are assisting regional working group on data collection, assessments and reporting. Each country will submit a report to the regional working group that will validate the reports before they feed into the joint project. Thus, the assessment of countries' capacity to implement joint arrangements before moving into negotiation of an agreement is a key step. This is a

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<sup>45</sup> [https://www.pressafrik.com/Visite-du-President-Macky-Sall-en-Mauritanie-6-accords-signes-la-Peche-la-Securite-l-Energie-l-Hydraulique-et-l\\_a211972.html](https://www.pressafrik.com/Visite-du-President-Macky-Sall-en-Mauritanie-6-accords-signes-la-Peche-la-Securite-l-Energie-l-Hydraulique-et-l_a211972.html)

<sup>46</sup> GWH & UNECE, Report of the Roundtable of experts on transboundary collaboration around the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin, June 2019, pp.13-15.

<sup>47</sup> OMVS and OMVG, Work plan and modalities for the Design Phase of the Joint Project around the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin led by the Regional Working Group, 17 July 2020, p. 3.

prerequisite for establishing a transboundary cooperation on the ground according to interviewees.

Currently, GWH and UNECE Secretariat's main focus is to encourage the members to develop a joint project by making them reflect on key issues and develop actions to be included in the project plan. The process contributes to transparency and subsequently strengthening water governance. There are general destabilizing structural factors linked to population growth, urbanization, salination and climate change in West Africa. GWH and UNECE Secretariat's integration of a conflict, peace and sustainability perspective is important as it helps thinking about conflict prevention in the context of transboundary water cooperation. Thus, the competition over water resources is a concern that can be addressed by effective transboundary water cooperation.

The next ongoing initiative is the *'Table ronde sur l'eau et la paix au Sahel'*. GWH organized a roundtable meeting in November 2018 to conceptualize concrete actions for promoting peace and security in Sahel through water cooperation. The roundtable sought to identify synergies and collaboration between peacebuilding activities and actors and water cooperation in the Sahel region. Three objectives guided the roundtable: (i) understand the issues related to access to water and natural resources for local communities and the risks related to the presence of armed movements; (ii) discuss the role of the armed forces in the use of water as a vector of peace and the opportunities and risks associated with the overlapping security and development agendas; (iii) identify how financial mechanisms can support programs/projects by strengthening synergies between peacebuilding and development.<sup>48</sup> The roundtable produced 12 recommendations for action ranging broadly in focus and targeted a diverse set of actor groups. The recommendations provided many lines for work in the future, and one area of intervention was to propose to the G5 Sahel to prioritize protection of water infrastructure, particularly through the training of the armed forces, as well as to engage in more activities related to development through access to water. Since then, GWH has engaged G5 Sahel and Alliance to prioritize water projects in the Emergency Development Programme.

Participants at the roundtable in Geneva in 2018 noted that GWH was instrumental connecting them to other participants and their networks through the use of *'safe space'* where they had opportunities to develop relations and build trust to continue working on a concrete project in Sahel. What was appreciated with the 2018-Geneva meeting was the time and space for reflection which for some participants was important in terms of developing their organizations and projects. One example is the *'More Water for Sahel Initiative'* seeking to bring peace and stability in complex and poorly secured rural areas. But, still it has been difficult to translate the discussions and recommendations into concrete actions in the countries and on the ground. What is missing from the roundtable and afterwards is a clear understanding among participants of how the recommendations will be implemented. The value of the initiative is the process itself where participants find it useful to exchange knowledge and experiences with others.

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<sup>48</sup> GWH, Rapport de la table ronde: L'Eau, vecteur de la paix au Sahel, February 2019, p. 4.

The roundtable recommendations also focused on the local population in Sahel. This is a highly relevant topic for Sahel, and the participants welcomed the opportunity to have had a chance to raise awareness about the water issues for local population and how it links to peace and security. The roundtable was an opportunity for participants to highlight the importance of local ownership by identifying and working with key actors on the ground in a dialogue process on defining the problem and designing activities that contribute to solutions. Participants from the region at the roundtable note that more focus on the grassroots is needed and more work with the communities to understand the root causes of conflicts in order to address tensions and conflicts is also needed. GWH's listening approach and respect for local solutions is very important, and not trying to impose or apply formal or normative solutions over locally owned solutions.

One participant explained that conflict prevention works when all actors are included in the dialogue. He gave the example of if there are six communities sharing a water resource they all need to be included in the dialogue to understand everyone's perspective: women, youth, herders, nomadic population that move through the territory. Efforts are needed to ameliorate or improve the knowledge of different groups so that they understand the culture of each other. Efforts have been made by local actors to convene different groups (the nomadic populations and settling populations) in discussion forums (community dialogues) to help them communicate and understand each other, which help humanize the other group and not see the other as an enemy. It helps to contribute to social and peaceful cohesion and an ability to share collective resources.

The management and governance of resources is a crucial aspect in understanding conflict drivers. Bad governance of resources can increase frustration and lead to worsening of conflicts within communities, and it is exacerbated in areas where certain communities feel discriminated by leaders or are excluded from accessing natural resources. The conflict dynamics can be intensified when the frustration is politicised or instrumentalized along religious or ethnic lines and groups that can feed into existing tensions and worsen conflict. It is important to assess the access to and pricing of water to ensure that all group have access to water by instituting simply, fair and transparent water management mechanisms. The local participants who represented regional NGOs think these mechanisms are important and need to be better integrated with overall water management system in fragile contexts.

This approach requires political will and technical solutions for communication and dialogue, and efforts are followed-up and monitored in a way it is sustainable. A key element is conducting thorough assessments and understanding the who are the legitimate key actors in the community to be included in the dialogue process who have traction within the communities. Local participants appreciate GWH for their competence to support these types of process, and link them with a national level with government institutions.

## 4. Conclusions

The Geneva Water Hub's efforts and results in the past three years are well aligned with SDC's Global Programme Water (GPW) Strategic Framework 2017 – 2020. GWH's work feeds into SDC's different strategic components, and particularly the component for water governance, but also to different degrees to the other three components (Water Solutions; Water Voice; and Young People and Gender Equality). GWH contributes particularly to outcomes that will *“foster new types of evidence-based dialogue, building trust and promoting sound decision-making in a context where water is increasingly important in international affairs, particularly when it comes to relations within transboundary basins; promoting international water law and institutional framework at global, regional and basin level, e.g. through river-basin organizations, as a conflict prevention measure addressing surface and groundwater.”*<sup>49</sup>

The Geneva Water Hub's efforts at global, regional, national and community level are directed towards sustainable development and peacebuilding from a water lens. The scientific evidence that water cooperation contributes to dialogue and peace is increasingly being recognized among policy makers through GWH's research collaborations. However, the international policy community on peace and security is still not recognizing water cooperation as a key instrument for peacebuilding. More broadly, water needs attention and funding, but foremost stronger political commitment by the United Nations and governments to drive progress. Besides the focus on access to water and sanitation, many other areas are ignored such as water governance. The role of GWH as think tank and convener in International Geneva is therefore even more important than ever to elevate the role of water in policy discussions, public awareness and strategic interventions to promote sustainability or ameliorate peacebuilding.

The Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace is a road map and has set the tone for the water and peace narrative in the past three years. The guidance of the eight chapters of the Panel Report has helped frame many initiatives and activities. GWH is instrumental in implementing and making progress on the Panel Report, but they are not solely responsible for achieving all the recommendations of the Panel Report. A major result to which GWH has contributed is raised political attention to water and peace at the UN-system, amongst diplomats and security actors. GWH has a potential to be a conduit between International Geneva and New York by working closely with New York-based partners to facilitate and coordinate policy discussions on water and peace in these the two locations.

GWH's networking function is crucial for GWH's other functions as it connects research with practitioners and policy makers. The institutionalization of GWH within the University of Geneva has successfully contributed to strengthening the research-policy linkage. GWH has an effective platform for international research collaborations with research partners worldwide sharing knowledge between the Global North and the Global South. GWH's collaboration with the Platform for International Water Law at UNIGE is a cornerstone of GWH's research and education function. Likewise, the cooperation with Oregon State University on the hydro-political database has great potential to feed both research and policy processes with evidence on what kind of cooperation mechanisms work for sustaining peace in transboundary areas.

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<sup>49</sup> SDC's Global Programme Water (GPW) states in the Strategic Framework 2017 – 2020, p. 14.

There is further potential for GWH to explore and consult experts in mediation and dialogue, hydrology, media, gender and youth in International Geneva for regional initiatives aiming to promote transboundary water cooperation.

Summer school and MOOC are not only offering qualitative training in water diplomacy, water governance and water management, it also fosters new relations and mindsets that can have long-term positive effects.

The Global Observatory on Water and Peace is increasingly taking shape in regard to the establishment of a regional node in West Africa, and increased capacity of GWH to respond to requests for supporting, organizing and facilitating dialogue processes on water cooperation through *'safe spaces'*. The GOWP needs to be further developed and communicated to clearly define what purpose it serves to its target groups and stakeholders.

GWH's facilitation of dialogue on peace and water in Sahel identified critical linkages between water cooperation, dialogue and peace at the local level. The unpacking of social and economic factors in relation to water and peace help local communities and key actors to better understand conflict drivers and peace opportunities. In times of climate change impacts with rainfall deficits and severe droughts, heavy rains and devastating floods the need for water cooperation, dialogue and peace is even more critical. The GOWP and *'safe spaces'* are useful approaches and methods to connect actors and share knowledge and experiences to find solutions to water challenges. GWH's focus on and inclusion of river-based organizations in many initiatives and activities seems highly relevant from a peacebuilding perspective. GWH's corporation with OMVS and OMVG has strengthened their role, capacity and influence on transboundary water cooperation in West Africa and has potential to serve as effective institutional conflict resolution mechanisms. This is a model that should be further researched in order to be replicated for the purpose to function as a recognized conflict resolution mechanism.

The Geneva Water Hub is still a young organization and is still growing. The scope of GWH's work is broad in terms of partners and stakeholders, geography, thematic orientation, as well as issues. The width of the scope combined with GWH's limited organizational capacity subsequently requires GWH to set priorities to ensure it mobilizes its resources effectively to have a coherent strategic impact on the water and peace. GWH is currently at a stage when it is time to define its scope, role and long-term strategic direction. Priorities have to be set in relation to its available resources, comparative advantages and potential for greatest impact.

The Geneva Water Hub must continuously pay attention it has the right balance between serving as a hub in International Geneva and being engaged in regional and local initiatives. GWH's strategic and operational decision-making has to ensure that this balance exists even when it gets involved in specific local or regional initiatives. For this reason, the regional nodes should be able to ease the responsibility of GWH in a specific context after some time to organize *'safe spaces'*. However, it requires that the regional node has sufficient capacity and legitimacy to shoulder the responsibility. It is therefore important that GWH continues to strengthen the capacity of the Pôle Eau Dakar before establishing a new regional node.

An upcoming landmark in the calendar is the midterm review of the Water Action Decade in 2023. Given GWH's experiences, networks and legitimacy it has the potential to support a policy process that is leading up the midterm review conference in March 2023 in New York. GWH's experience from the GHLP-WP can be very helpful in preparing, convening and mobilizing key actors to discuss what is the role of UN on water, what kind of policy direction, or what kind of strategy can be proposed to promote implementation of water-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

## 5. Recommendations

This chapter presents the recommendations, drawing on the findings and conclusions.

### Research & Education

1. GWH should continue to develop the hydro-political database.
2. GWH should continue to follow-up on the dissemination and usage of the Geneva List.
3. GWH should continue to develop the education component.
4. GWH should consider targeting peacebuilding actors for training in water diplomacy and hydro-politics.
5. GWH should considering incorporating economic perspectives into its research allowing for more integrated solutions to better understand the economic benefits of peace promotion.

### Networking

6. GWH should consider recruiting a political diplomatic advisor for liaising with the Permanent Missions in Geneva and the UN-system in New York.
7. GWH should consider developing a work plan for leading the preparation for the midterm review of the Water Action Decade in 2023.

### Think Tank

8. GWH should consider developing the regional nodes incrementally with an emphasis on one regional node at the time. GWH should together with its partner develop clear strategic objectives, work plan and budget.
9. GWH should consider developing the ‘safe space’ concept to be tailored for socio-economic grievances at the community level linked to conflict over water resources. The concept should integrate a gender perspective and aim to include an equal representation of women.
10. GWH should consider developing a media strategy that aims to engage mainstream media in water issues.
11. GWH should consider partnering with Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
12. GWH should consider developing its political work with Ambassadors of the Permanent Missions of the Group of Friends in Geneva and support them in engaging with their capitals on water issues. GWH should consider developing an annual work plan with the Chair of the Group of Friends.
13. GWH should considering incorporating economic perspectives into its think tank allowing for more integrated solutions to better understand the economic benefits of peace promotion.

### Institutionalization of GWH

14. GWH should consider developing clear and formal mandates outlining roles and responsibilities of GWH’s governance mechanism, including three bodies (i) Advisory Board, (ii) Strategic Committee, and (iii) Scientific Committee.
15. GWH should consider including representatives from the societal and regional nodes in the most appropriate governance body.
16. GWH should consider developing a monitoring system for its initiatives and activities.
17. GWH should consider be outcome-focused.



## Annexes

## Annex 1 – List of interviewees

Name	Title	Organization
Andrea Aeby	Counsellor	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations
Coulibaly Baba	Directeur general adjoint	l'Institut des Sciences Humains de Bamako
Jean Bosco Bazié	Director	NGO Eau Vive
Nadia Benani	Programme Manager	SDC
Francesca Bernardini	Consultant	Independent
Yusupha Bojang	IWRM focal point	Department of Water Resources, Gambia
Christian Bréthaut	Professor, director of research and education	GWH
Marlies den Boer		Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Natasha Carmi	Lead Water Advisor	GWH
L. Boisson de Chazournes	Professor	Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub Reader, Faculty of Law and Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva
Ciarán Ó Cuinn	Center Director	MEDRC
Sarah Dousse	Executive director	International Secretariat for Water - Secrétariat International de l'eau
David Duncan	Editor	Water Diplomat, OOSKAnews
Omar El Hattab		UNICEF
Fatine Ezbakhe	Researcher	GWH
Ilmas Futehally	Director	Strategic Foresight Group
Franck Galland	Directeur	Environmental Emergency & Security Services et Membre pour la France du Panel

		mondial sur l'eau et la paix
Johannes Gullman	Scientist	WMO
Thomas Häusler	Journalist	SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen
Alejandro Iza	Director	IUCN Environmental Law Programme
Marko Keskinen	Associate Professor on Water Resources Management	Programme Director, WAT Master's Programme Water & Environmental Engineering, Aalto University, Finland
Christina Leeb		World Bank
Adam Lupel	Vice President	International Peace Institute
Makane Mbengue		UNIGE
Francois Muenger	Director	GWH
Ababacar Ndao	Secretary General (SG) Former SG	The Gambia River Basin Agency (OMVG) Senegal River Development Organisation (OMVS)
Niokhor Ndour	Coordinator of Pôle Eau Dakar	Director of Planning and Management of National Water Resource, Senegal
Isabella Pagotto	Senior Advisor / Programme Manager	Global Programme Water (GPW), SDC
Dr. Katia Papagianni	Director, Policy and Mediation Support	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Caroline Pellaton	Corporate Operations Manager	GWH
Géraldine Pflieger	Professor	Directrice de l'Institut des Sciences de l'Environnement, UNIGE
Federico Properzi	Chief Technical Adviser	UN-Water
H.E. Lundeg Purevsuren	Ambassador	Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the UN, WTO and other International

		organizations in Geneva.
Diana Rizzolio	Coordinator	Geneva Environment Network, United Nations Environment Programme
Emmanuel de Romémont	Former Gen of French Air Force, Founder of the initiative	More Water for Sahel
Bodé Sambo	Conseiller technique	Haute Autorité pour la Consolidation de la Paix du Niger
Komlan Sangbana	Officer Co-manager of the SMAB initiative	UNECE Water Convention Secretariat
H.E. Sabina Stadler Repnik	Ambassador	Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN, WTO and other International organizations in Geneva.
Dr. Susanne Schmeier	Senior Lecturer in Water Law and Diplomacy Manager Water	Peace and Security (WPS) partnership, IHE Delft
Arnaud Sterckx	Hydrogeologist and data specialist at, member of the SMAB initiative consultation team	IGRAC, IHE Delft
Micheal Talhami		ICRC
Dr Mara Tignino	Lead Legal Specialist	Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub Reader, Faculty of Law and Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva
Dr. Danilo Türk	Former President of the Republic of Slovenia	GHLP-WP
Alvaro Umana	Former Minister of Environment of Costa Rica	Organisation of American States
Jean Willemin	Senior Project Officer	GWH

Aaron Wolf		Professor of Geography College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences	Oregon State University
Maricela Munoz Zumbado		Minister Counsellor	Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, WTO and other International organizations in Geneva.
<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	
Andrea Aeby	Counsellor	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations	
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Jean Bosco Bazié	Director	NGO Eau Vive	
Nadia Benani	Programme Manager	SDC	
Francesca Bernardini	Consultant	Independent	
Yusupha Bojang	IWRM focal point	Department of Water Resources, Gambia	
Christian Bréthaut	Professor, director of research and education	GWH	
Marlies den Boer		Dutch Ministry for Foreign Affairs	
Natasha Carmi	Lead Water Advisor	GWH	
L. Boisson de Chazournes	Professor	Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub Reader, Faculty of Law and Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva	
Ciarán Ó Cuinn	Center Director	MEDRC	
Sarah Dousse	Executive director	International Secretariat for Water - Secrétariat International de l'eau	
David Duncan	Editor	Water Diplomat, OOSKANews	
Omar El Hattab		UNICEF	
Fatine Ezbakhe	Researcher	GWH	
Ilmas Futehally	Director	Strategic Foresight Group	

Franck Galland	Directeur	Environmental Emergency & Security Services et Membre pour la France du Panel mondial sur l'eau et la paix
Johaness Gullman	Scientist	WMO
Thomas Häusler	Journalist	SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen
Alejandro Iza	Direcor	IUCN Environmental Law Programme
Marko Keskinen	Associate Professor on Water Resources Management	Programme Director, WAT Master's Programme Water & Environmental Engineering, Aalto University, Finland
Christina Leb		World Bank
Adam Lupel	Vice President	International Peace Institute
Makane Mbengue		UNIGE
Francois Muenger	Director	GWH
Ababacar Ndao	Secretary General (SG) Former SG	The Gambia River Basin Agency (OMVG) Senegal River Development Organsiation (OMVS)
Niokhor Ndour	Coordinator of Pôle Eau Dakar	Director of Planning and Management of National Water Resource, Senegal
Isabella Pagotto	Senior Advisor / Programme Manager	Global Programme Water (GPW), SDC
Dr. Katia Papagianni	Director, Policy and Mediation Support	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
Caroline Pellaton	Corporate Operations Manager	GWH
Géraldine Pflieger	Professor	Directrice de l'Institut des Sciences de l'Environnement, UNIGE
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Dr. Susanne Schmeier	Senior Lecturer in Water Law and Diplomacy Manager Water	Peace and Security (WPS) partnership, IHE Delft
Arnaud Sterckx	Hydrogeologist and data specialist at, member of the SMAB initiative consultation team	IGRAC, IHE Delft
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Dr Mara Tignino	Lead Legal Specialist	Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub Reader, Faculty of Law and Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva
Dr. Danilo Türk	Former President of the Republic of Slovenia	GHLP-WP
Alvaro Umana	Former Minister of Environment of Costa Rica	Organisation of American States
Jean Willemin	Senior Project Officer	GWH
Aaron Wolf	Professor of Geography College of Earth, Ocean,	Oregon State University

	and Atmospheric Sciences	
Maricela Munoz Zumbado	Minister Counsellor	Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, WTO and other International organizations in Geneva.

## Annex 2 – List of documents

Author	Title	Date
Département fédéral des affaires étrangères DFAE	Eau et sécurité, Lignes d'action du DFAE	14 September 2015
Johan Gély, Jaffer Machano, Rukan Manaz, Isabella Pagotto, Francesca Valentini and Pio Wennubst	Blue Peace – Invest in Peace Through Water	2019
Geneva Water Hub	A Matter of Survival - Report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace	2017
Geneva Water Hub	Determined Steps: Follow-up activities and the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace "A Matter of Survival"	March 2019
Geneva Water Hub	Intensified Action: Second progress report on the follow-up activities and the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace "A Matter of Survival"	June 2020
Geneva Water Hub	Programme Document Phase III (August 2020 to July 2023)	30 March 2020
Geneva Water Hub	Rapport opérationnel Période du 1er avril au 31 mars 2018	
Geneva Water Hub	Rapport opérationnel Période du 1er avril 2018 au 31 mars 2019	
Geneva Water Hub	Rapport opérationnel Période du 1er avril 2019 au 30 septembre 2019	
Geneva Water Hub	Rapport opérationnel Période du 1er octobre 2019 au 31 mars 2020	
Geneva Water Hub	Rapport de la table ronde: L'Eau vector de la paix au Sahel	Février 2019
Geneva Water Hub	Report of the Roundtable of experts on transboundary collaboration around the Senegal-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin	June 2019
Humanitarian Policy Group/ODI, Sarah Adamczyk	Twenty years of protection of civilians at the UN Security Council – Policy Brief 74	May 2019
OMVG	TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAMBIA, KAYANGA-GEBA AND KOLIBA-CORUBAL RIVER BASINS	
OMVG & OMVS	THE GLOBAL OBSERVATORY FOR WATER AND PEACE: HUB FOR THE AMERICAS	July 17, 2020
Francesco Sindico	<a href="#">Transboundary Water Cooperation and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO-IHP Advocacy Paper)</a>	2016
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Proposition de crédit No. 7F-9770.01	10 Février 2017
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Proposition de crédit No. 7F-08448.02	10 Février 2017

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Crédit principal consécutif a un credit d'ouverture No. 7F-08448.01	12 May 2014
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Global Programme Water (GPW) Strategic Framework 2021-2024	June 2020
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Portfolio 2019, Global Programme Water	
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC	Credit proposal Nr. 7F-08448.03	14 April 2020
Dr. Alvaro Umaña Quesada	THE GLOBAL OBSERVATORY FOR WATER AND PEACE: HUB FOR THE AMERICAS	30 May 2020
UNICEF	Water under Fire – For every child, water and sanitation in complex emergencies	March 2019
The Water, Peace and Security Partnership	WPS Policy Brief – Challenges for Central Mali	August 2019

## Annex 3 – Geneva Ecosystem of multilateral and international organizations

<b>UN Family</b>
<u>Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Geneva Liaison Office</u> *
<u>International Labour Office (ILO)</u> *
<u>International Organization for Migration (IOM)</u> *
<u>International Telecommunication Union (ITU)</u> *
<u>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva</u> **
<u>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)</u> *
<u>United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)</u> * /**
<u>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Geneva</u> * / **
<u>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)</u> *
<u>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)</u> * /**
<u>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Geneva Liaison Office (GLO)</u> * /**
<u>United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Geneva</u> *
<u>United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)</u> * /**
<u>United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)</u> *
<u>United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)</u> *
<u>United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Geneva Office</u> **
<u>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)</u>
<u>UN-Water</u> *
<u>World Health Organization (WHO)</u> *
<u>World Meteorological Organization (WMO)</u> *
<b>International organizations</b>
<u>Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)</u> **
<u>Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)</u> **
<u>International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)</u> **
<u>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</u> **
<u>Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)</u>
<u>South Centre</u>
<u>World Bank Geneva Office</u> *
<b>Academic institutions &amp; NGOs</b>
<u>Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue</u> * /**
<u>Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation</u> **
<u>DiploFoundation</u> **
<u>Global Humanitarian Lab (GHL)</u>
<u>Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies</u> **
<u>International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)</u>
<u>Interpeace</u> **
<u>Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy (FORAUS)</u> **
<u>University of Geneva (UNIGE)</u> * /**

\* Are organizations based in International Geneva and are members of UN-Water. It means that they consider that they have an interest in water issues.

\*\* Are organizations based in International Geneva with an interest in peace and security