



INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR WATER
SOLIDARITY WATER EUROPE

KURA-ARAKS RIVER BASIN YOUTH NETWORK DECLARATION



This is a joint statement of young water professionals from Armenia, Georgia and Turkey who met in Batumi, Georgia from the 14th to the 18th of July 2022, for the workshop “Connecting Kura-Araks youth for water and Peace”

Declaration of Intent

We have come together in Batumi because we care.

We are at a crossroads in history.

We have come together in Batumi because we are united by our common concerns and goals and the time to act is now.

Affirming our commitment to the principles of sustainability, identified in the UN General Assembly Declaration No. A/70/1 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Further recognising the importance of sharing experiences among the regional youth to harmonise views on water-related issues and provide collective solutions to global challenges,

Noting with concern that

The ability of the water to support natural ecosystems in the Kura Araks River Basin is now at risk. Human activities lead to reduction and change in hydrological flow, deterioration of water quality, ecosystem degradation and flooding. Anthropogenic climate change is also accelerating the adverse effects occurring in the basin. Despite all of these topics, political issues have prevented the nations in the basin from reaching a common accord yet. Exchange of data on water is insufficient and there is incompatibility of water management and monitoring systems. There is lack of cooperation or communication between civil society and academia from basin countries on water issues, absence of youth involvement in local decision making processes, and lack of environmental education and low public awareness.

In the light of insufficient actions at government level, we propose to create a platform, where young professionals from Armenia, Turkey and Georgia can meet, share, and work together to drive changes towards sustainable transboundary water management and peace.

We encourage further involvement of other riparian countries in this basin.

We speak with one voice and call on the Kura-Araks river basin community to work with us to do more, do better, and reach further.

In a world full of challenges, we the youth of Kura-Araks River Basin commit ourselves to:

- Maintain trust, willingness and transparency to share information, knowledge and best practices in the Network,
- Contribute to the tackling of challenges in the following areas:
 - Policy and legal frameworks
 - Institutional arrangements & participation
 - Water management instruments and monitoring systems
 - Infrastructure and financing
 - Cooperation context
 - Public awareness and environmental education
 - Youth empowerment and involvement in local decision making processes
- Further develop partnership between universities in the basin countries,
- Develop joint research projects and support the publication of joint work.
- Create comprehensive databases to share data and develop a data standardization framework.

We call on our National Societies to:

Enhance support for impactful youth-led initiatives and actively pilot and scale up youth-led innovations, especially research-focused and community-based, to inspire and effect further action.

Institutionalize youth participation in decision-making in order to go beyond tokenism. Youth should be actively and meaningfully included in policies, solutions, statements, and planning.

Prioritize safe water access for all through integrated water resource management (IWRM) and increase collaboration in the creation of sustainable, resilient, and community-based solutions, that would protect our waters along with all its biodiversity and ecosystems and maintain essential balance in the context of climate-change induced alterations.

Build youth capacity on IWRM using best practices.

Support for the Transfer of Experience. to involve a full range of water and environmental management, sustainability, climate change and data management and other specialists from public, private sectors, civil society and academia, to promote best practices in basin countries.

Contribute to the collection, analysis and standardization of data by all stakeholders and societies related to water bodies and the natural world, study freshwater ecosystem dynamics through citizen science initiatives and engage in identifying and delivering solutions.

Enhance Confidence Building Measures. Emphasis should be placed on the use of proactive measures to identify potential sources of conflict and assessment of mechanisms.

Strengthen Legal Instruments. to participate in the development and implementation of transboundary river basin management cooperation and agreements.

After the workshop, the participants commit to further continue the collaboration, engagement and empowerment of the youth of the Kura-Araks river basin.

We hereby state our membership to the Kura-Araks Youth Network.