

EMERGING WATER LEADERS FORUM | 11 DECEMBER 2025

FUTURE-PROOFING WATER – EMPOWERING EMERGING LEADERS FOR RESILIENCE AND IMPACT

In an increasingly unpredictable global landscape, the water sector faces unprecedented pressures, ranging from intensifying climate shocks and weak governance systems to institutional capacity gaps, population growth, and deep-rooted inequities in access and participation. Young professionals entering the field are not only expected to manage these complexities but to lead boldly through them.

The **7th IWA Emerging Water Leaders Forum** will address this call by convening early-career water professionals from across the globe for a full day of shared learning, critical dialogue, and collaborative action. Taking place during the IWA Water and Development Congress & Exhibition in Bangkok, Thailand (8-12 December 2025), this seventh edition of the Forum will focus on building the leadership, foresight, and systems-thinking capacity needed to secure a resilient and equitable water future.

With the theme “Future-Proofing Water – Empowering Emerging Leaders for Resilience and Impact”, the Forum will spotlight the essential role of emerging leaders in driving long-term, structural transformation in water and sanitation. It will provide a platform for scenario planning, cross-sector collaboration, and intergenerational learning, equipping participants with the practical skills and strategic vision to lead under uncertainty.

Objectives of the Forum

The theme of the 7th Emerging Water Leaders Forum will be **Future-Proofing Water – Empowering Emerging Leaders for Resilience and Impact**.

The objectives of the Forum are to empower young professionals to take ownership of climate and governance challenges in the water sector; strengthen leadership capacity through scenario planning, policy engagement, and institutional resilience-building; promote equity and inclusion in water governance, design, and access, particularly for underserved populations; foster intergenerational dialogue, mentorship, and collaboration between young water professionals and established sector leaders; and bridge global and local perspectives to inform long-term transformation strategies for institutions and communities.

Key Themes of the Forum

- **Youth Leadership in Climate and Water Resilience:** Empowering young water professionals to take proactive leadership in addressing climate-induced challenges through adaptive management, data-driven decision-making, and collaborative action.
- **Scenario Planning, Foresight, and Governance:** Enhancing the capacity of emerging leaders to anticipate and prepare for multiple future scenarios in water governance.
- **Capacity-Building and Intergenerational Collaboration:** Strengthening technical, managerial, and leadership competencies of young professionals through mentorship and partnerships with experienced practitioners.
- **Equity in Access, Participation, and Design:** Promoting inclusive governance that ensures fair access to water resources, technology, and decision-making processes for all, particularly underserved and vulnerable populations.
- **Long-Term Transformation of Water Institutions:** Encouraging structural and cultural changes within water institutions to make them more adaptive, transparent, and accountable.

How to attend the Forum?

The 2025 edition will be held during the [IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition](#) in Bangkok, Thailand on Thursday, 11 December 2025. The Forum is open to all YWPs registered and attending the [IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition](#).

No pre-registration is required, but you will be asked to check in through a QR code during the day of the Forum.



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THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2025

Format of the Forum

The event will consist of a mix of formats, including:

1. **Panel Discussions:** In-depth exchanges with thought leaders from policy, science, and practice
2. **Leadership Workshops:** Hands-on sessions to build strategic foresight, negotiation, and systems thinking skills
3. **Youth Innovation Showcase:** Spotlighting inspiring YWP-led projects from around the world
4. **Roundtable Dialogues:** Small-group discussions to explore lived experiences and region-specific challenges
5. **Networking Activities:** Structured opportunities to connect across regions, disciplines, and generations

Expected Outcomes of the Forum

- **Future-Ready Skill Development:** Participants will strengthen their capacity for strategic, adaptive, and inclusive leadership, gaining practical skills in scenario planning, policy engagement, and resilience-building within the water and climate sectors
- **Cross-Regional Collaboration:** The Forum will cultivate an active international network of emerging leaders, fostering cross-regional learning and collaboration.
- **New Policy and Practice Ideas:** Participants will generate innovative, youth-informed policy insights and practical approaches to strengthen water governance systems.
- **Mentorship & Exposure:** The Forum will provide direct engagement with global mentors, development organisations, and leading platforms in the water and climate sectors.
- **Inspiration & Confidence:** By the end of the Forum, participants will gain renewed motivation and confidence to lead transformative change within their local contexts while contributing to global resilience efforts



Programme Committee

Chelsea Hayward, IWA YWP Steering Committee Chair/IWA YWP Australia Chapter

Chotiwat Jantarakasem, IWA YWP Thailand Chapter/ IWA LeaP

Dylan Clarke-Herbert, Barbados Water Authority

Hayat Raza, IWA YWP Steering Committee Member/IWA YWP Canada Chapter

Evelyn Mukajusi, IWA YWP Uganda Chapter

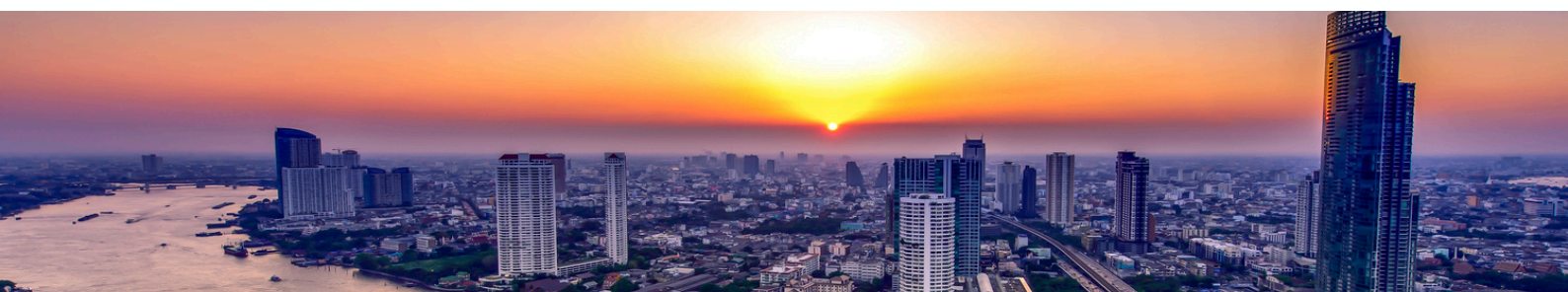
Iftita Rahmatika, Universitas Indonesia

Merceline Olala, University of Leeds

Nicole Nawrot, IWA YWP Poland Chapter

Omi Kumari, IWA Strategic Council YWP Representative/IWA YWP India Chapter

Yumeng Zhao, IWA LeaP/IWA YWP China Chapter



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AGENDA

THURSDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2025

09:45 - 10:30 Registration, Informal Networking

10:30 - 10:50 Opening and Welcome Remarks

Chelsea Hayward, IWA YWP Steering Committee Chair
Chotiwat Jantarakasem, IWA YWP Thailand Chapter Chair
Hamanth Kasan, IWA President
Xiaochang Wang, IWA Board Member

10:50 - 11:05 Updates from the IWA YWP Chapters

Isabela Espindola, IWA Secretariat

11:05 - 11:25 Chapter of the Year Initiative

Isabela Espindola, IWA Secretariat
Chelsea Hayward, IWA YWP Steering Committee Chair

11:25 - 11:50 Keynote Plenary followed by a Q&A

Juliet Willetts, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

12:00 - 13:00 Lunch Break

13:00 - 15:00 World Café: “The Future is Now – Youth at the Forefront of Water Resilience”

Abishek Narayan, ETH Zurich
Federick Pinongcos, Engineer at Trussell Technologies, IWA LeaP
Linda Li, Dillon Consulting, IWA LeaP

15:00 - 15:30 Break

15:30 - 16:50 Debate “Investing in AI for water management & governance is more effective than investing in traditional infrastructure solutions”

Hayat Raza, IWA YWP Steering Committee Member/IWA YWP Canada Chapter

16:50 - 17:00 Final Remarks

Chelsea Hayward, IWA YWP Steering Committee Chair, Australia
Elisabeta Poci, IWA Board Member



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