



# **MALE CHAMPIONS FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

Standing up for the empowerment of  
women in transboundary waters in Africa



**MALE CHAMPIONS  
FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**





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# What is the Male Champions for Women's Empowerment (MCWE) initiative?

In 2023, the Cooperation in International Waters in Africa (CIWA) launched the Male Champions for Women's Empowerment (previously the Male Champion Forum) to work with a cadre of men who pledge to take steps to support the active participation of women within the transboundary water context.

CIWA believes that the Male Champions are uniquely placed to engage with other men to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment within transboundary water organizations at the local, national, regional, and continental level.

## Mission of the MCWE initiative

- Operating in a context that is male-dominated and heavily influenced by patriarchal cultural and social norms, the transboundary water sector tends to stereotype women as being water users rather than recognizing them as people who should have autonomy to make decisions about water use and management.
- CIWA has therefore designed a program to foster a cadre of men to spur changes and to stand up for women's empowerment.
- CIWA believes that engaging men is key to transformative change and that working directly with pioneering men can help overcome male resistance to women having equal roles.

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## CIWA's Male Champions for Women's Empowerment has the following aims:

- Increase awareness about the critical role that men can play in championing gender equality in the transboundary water context.
- Identify actions and initiatives that Male Champions can take to advance gender equality in transboundary water institutions.
- Facilitate opportunities for Male Champions to take individual and collective action to promote opportunities for women to play a greater role in decision making in transboundary water institutions.
- Improve representation of women in decision making.

## What are the characteristics of a Male Champion?



Visible commitment to promoting gender equality in the water sector.



Active in facilitating women's equal participation in transboundary water programs and institutions.



Working within the transboundary water domain at the local, national, or regional level in Africa.



Role models for behaviors that demonstrate respect for gender equality and empowerment of women.



Available to commit time and energy on a voluntary basis to undertake actions that will change mindsets about gender norms and inequalities.





# CIWA MALE CHAMPIONS

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**Tefera Arega**

Program Officer,  
Ethiopian Natural History Society



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**Daniel Asrat**

Consultant,  
Ministry of Water & Energy, Ethiopia in  
water and energy related tasks.



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**Hycinth Banseka**

Technical Director,  
Lake Chad Basin Commission



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**Temesgen Wondifraw Baynes**

Regional Manager,  
Agri Service Ethiopia



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**Dr Stephen Donkor**

Senior Consultant & Researcher,  
Holland Africa Research & Development Ltd



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**Anton Earle**

Global Coordinator,  
Water Systems



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**Dereje Gebremichael**

NGO operating in Ethiopia



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**Hirpo Gudeta**

Senior Water Resource Engineer,  
Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia



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**Assefa Gudina**

Gender Focial Point  
Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office



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**Chris Juma**

TAC, Kenya



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**Donald Kasongi**

Former Secretary General,  
Nile Basin Discourse



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**Enock S. Kiminta**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Kenya National Association of Water Resources  
Users Associations (KeNAWRUA),



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**Thato Konstabile**

Malibatso Youth Initiative from  
Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP)  
within the Orange River Basin



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**Mokhothu Moerane**

Water treatment plant operator  
Water and Sewage Company, Lesotho



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**Andrew Mukuti**

District water development officer,  
Ministry of water development and Sanitation, Zambia



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**Dhesigen Naidoo**

Head of climate adaptation,  
South African Presidential Climate Commission



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**Lawrence Ndere**

Hydrogeologist  
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries,  
Water and Rural Development, Zimbabwe



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**Addo-Obeng Opoku-Agyeman**

Founder / Team Lead  
Forensic Forum



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**Michael Ramaano**

Environment and Water Quality Manager,  
Orange-Senqu River Commission Secretariat



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**Davison Saruchera**

Since  
2024



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Regional Programme Manager  
IWRM IUCN Southern Africa

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**Abel Sibanda**

Since  
2026



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Program Officer  
Global Platform & Movement Building, ActionAid Zimbabwe

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**Dr. Pinimidzai Sithole**

Since  
2024



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Program Officer  
Global Water Partnership Southern Africa

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**Albain Tchangou**

Since  
2024



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AIP Youth Coordinator and Communications Officer,  
Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO)

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**Gedewon Teka Abegaz**

Since  
2026

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Climate-Resilient WASH Program Manager,  
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA),

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**Tabor Tekle**

Since  
2023



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Auditor  
Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO)

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**Dr. Callist Tindimugaya**

Since  
2023



**26**

Former TAC Member  
Uganda

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**Francis Keny**

Since  
2023



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PHD on transboundary water  
resources in the Nile

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# TEFERA AREGA

Tefera is a program officer in the Ethiopian Natural History Society. As part of the projects he develops, he takes steps to ensure the participation of women and girls. He previously worked for the Ministry of Water and Energy on the environment and climate change and on environmental and social impact assessments in Ethiopia.

He has been an ongoing advocate of GESI. As a gender focal point at the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO), Tefera worked to encourage the participation of women. He believes it is important as men to work toward the improvement of policies that favor the equal participation of women.



*I will strive again and again to uplift the women in the water sector.*

A black and white portrait of Tefera Arega, a man with a mustache wearing a checkered shirt, positioned on the left side of the page. The background features a green abstract shape.

**Program officer**  
Ethiopian Natural  
History Society

# DANIEL ASRAT

Daniel Asrat has many years of professional experience in the areas of rural community development, environment, water resource management, and energy. He is currently working in the Ministry of Water and Energy as a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) consultant on the Ethiopian Electrification Program (ELEAP).

His work at ELEAP has included a focus on Gender Improvement and Citizen Engagement, including design of Disbursement Linked Indicators to minimize the gap between men and women employees. He has played a role in monitoring gender improvement, which has included ensuring that the indicators are gender sensitive. He has worked to ensure there is sex-disaggregated data in the database system, a gender-responsive M&E system, and gender-responsive capacity building. Daniel is committed to gender equality and has been working with the Women's Affairs section of the Ministry responsible for facilitating gender mainstreaming into sectors and projects.



*As a Male Champion, I strive to advocate for gender equality in the water and energy sectors. I believe in the power of diversity and inclusion to drive positive change. My goal is to inspire others to join me in creating a more equitable and inclusive environment. Together, we can make a difference and build a better future for all.*

**Consultant**  
Ministry of Water & Energy,  
Ethiopia in water and energy  
related tasks.




# HYCINTH BANSEKA

Hycinth is a Cameroonian who has worked for more than 20 years in mechanical and agricultural engineering, water resources engineering and management as well as climate change in Africa. He has worked on topics ranging from the environment; water resources strategic planning; transboundary water resources management; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). He has also been a lecturer at two universities in Cameroon, a field supervisor, and executive secretary of Global Water Partnership Central Africa (GWPCA). He has been the technical director of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) since 2021.

Hycinth integrates gender and social inclusion considerations into his work, including by taking steps to recruit women in the workplace. During his work with GWPCA, he and his team conceived and implemented a project on gender-differentiated impacts of dental fluorosis and prepared gender-sensitive messages and material about the condition. He and his team also mobilized resources to train women in fluorosis-affected communities on climate information use and adaptation to climate change.



*Investing in gender-disaggregated data generation is critical for tracking progress on gender in the water sector. Moreover, deliberately educating girls is a MUST if we are to make progress on water sector indicators in Africa.*

A black and white portrait of Hycinth Banseka, a man with short hair and glasses, wearing a dark, textured shirt. The portrait is partially overlaid by a green abstract shape at the bottom of the page.

**Technical Director**  
Lake Chad Basin  
Commission

# TEMESGEN WONDIFRAW BAYNES

Temesgen is an experienced practitioner in the transboundary water sector with strong technical, policy, and management credentials. He is currently serving as Regional Manager at Agri Service Ethiopia. He contributes as a Board Member to the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum (EthNDF) and as a General Assembly Member of the Nile Basin Discourse. He is actively engaged in water and hydro-diplomacy as well as being a climate change advocate.

Temesgen holds MSc degrees in Project Planning and Management and MSc in Agricultural Economics. His expertise spans climate resilient food systems, advancing sustainable water access and climate-resilient water management, women and youth empowerment, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), wetlands management, stakeholder engagement, and data management. He also leads initiatives that promote sustainable agricultural practices, agroecology, watershed management, IWRM and improved WASH services, enhancing community resilience to climate impacts.

Temesgen is committed to promoting inclusive approaches that strengthen gender equality in water-related policies and programs, ensuring women and men can benefit equally from improved services and opportunities. Through his work, he supports collaboration among stakeholders and community-centered solutions that improve water security and empower women as key partners in sustainable development. He has also promoted gender-responsive planning and policies at work, ensured women have access to training and leadership roles, and supported community initiatives that elevate women's voices.



*I'm committed to advancing gender-responsive approaches to water management to strengthen climate action.*

**Regional Manager,  
Agri Service Ethiopia**



# DR STEPHEN DONKOR

Stephen is a water resource management expert with more than 30 years of experience working in Africa. He obtained a Ph.D. from Colorado State University and an MSc in water management from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Stephen works as an independent consultant based in Accra, Ghana and is currently providing water resources management advisory services mainly in the Africa region.

During his work as the senior regional adviser at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), he provided knowledge and experience on policy formulation, dialogue, coordination, and advocacy including gender transformation and women's empowerment in the water and environment sectors. He initiated the Pretoria Water and Gender Action Plan in 2005 and continued his commitment by supporting the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) as a Board member. He is keenly interested in actions that men can take to deal with the ongoing low presence and participation of women in the transboundary water sphere.



*Sustainability of water infrastructure and management systems in Africa depends on the most frequent users, who are women. Their full participation in design, implementation, and maintenance is a prerequisite to success.*



**Senior Consultant & Researcher**  
Holland Africa Research &  
Development Ltd

# ANTON EARLE

An environment and development professional, Anton Earle leads teams in water management and development internationally, facilitating the interaction between governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders for risk-reduction for investments in climate-resilient development. He is experienced in governance and institutional formation for water management at the inter-state level in Africa, the Middle-East and East Asia. His current position is ICLEI's Global Coordinator of Water Systems.

Anton has promoted a gendered approach to the water management work. He has done so by going beyond issues of representation and focussing on the structural and systemic aspects of gender equality. This means making sure that organisational policies take into account their potentially asymmetric impacts on men and women and ensuring that the way project activities are implemented engage with women as water management professionals and not only as the custodians of water.



*You cannot solve whole problems with half the people.*

**Global Coordinator,  
Water Systems, ICLEI Africa**



# DEREJE GEBREMICHAEL

Dereje worked for Ethiopia's Ministry of Water and Energy from 2012 to 2019, where he was actively involved in the design and implementation of water-related programs and projects as well as women empowerment activities. During this time, he participated in numerous transboundary water trainings and regional and international events, strengthening his expertise in water resource management and cooperation. He also served as a volunteer and committee member of the Ministry's women and youth affairs Directorate. Currently he is working as a senior Partnership, grant acquisition and planning officer for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) and a member of the Ethiopian Nile Discourse Forum. In this role, he helps develop gender-sensitive corporate partnerships, planning, and M&E strategies for various Humanitarian and Development programs. Applying a transformative masculinity approach, Dereje actively collaborates with the organization's Gender Program to promote women's empowerment and gender justice. He has consistently integrated gender perspectives into his professional work and has made meaningful contributions to advancing gender awareness and inclusive development practices.



*The Male Champions for Women's Empowerment provides an enabling environment for more women as engineers and experts in the water sector and to get a better balance of perspectives.*

NGO operating in Ethiopia



# HIRPO GUDETA

Hirpo is a water resource engineer who has been working with the Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia, for more than 10 years. He obtained a Ph.D. from Africa Center of Excellence for Water Management, Addis Ababa University, and an MSc in Water Resource Engineering and Management from Hawassa University, Ethiopia. He serves as a senior water resource engineer in the boundary and transboundary river lead executive office, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia, currently providing hydrology and water resources management plan, design, and advisory services mainly in the Nile River Basin with overall responsibility for ensuring sustainability, efficient and equitable use, and protection of both at the national and regional level of transboundary river basins. He has gained multiple experiences in river training and flood protection, developing strategic river basin plans, specifically flood and drought strategic plans. He also served at the Basin High Council Secretariat office as a senior water resource manager.

As part of all those mandates discharged to him, he provided his knowledge and experience on river engineering and flood protection, strategic river basin planning, coordination, and advocacy, including gender transformation and women's empowerment in the water resource engineering and management. He is committed to playing a crucial role in transforming the transboundary water sector into a more inclusive and equitable space for women.



*Women's full engagement and beyond that ensures the sustainability, equity, and efficient use of transboundary water resources, and as male champion, I will devotedly work on that.*

**Senior water  
resource engineer**  
Ministry of Water and  
Energy, Ethiopia



# ASSEFA GUDINA

Assefa has many years of experience working in the areas of water resources management, agriculture, and the environment. He is currently regional social and environment officer at the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO). He is also serving as the gender focal point, where he contributes to awareness raising about gender policy and strategy related to the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) for ENTRO staff and on ENTRO-organized events.

He has participated in the preparation of ENTRO's Gender Action Plan as well as ensuring follow-up implementation of gender mainstreaming for the plan by different thematic areas. Assefa is highly committed to ensuring gender equality in the Eastern Nile countries through his ongoing engagement in the areas where he works and through mainstreaming gender equality during implementation of ENTRO activities.



*There is an issue with equal representation in the transboundary water sector.*

*We are often missing important perspectives from women.*



**Gender Focal Point**  
Eastern Nile Technical  
Regional Office

# CHRIS JUMA

Chris is a consultant on water resources development and previously worked as director, water resources and as acting chief executive officer of the Lake Victoria South Water Works Development Agency (LVSWWDA). Chris has been engaged since November 2025 as a Senior Groundwater Training and Capacity Building Advisor at the Regional Centre for Groundwater Resources Education, Training and Capacity Building within the Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience Project (HoAGW4RP) and served on the steering committee of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Hydrological Cycle Observing System and as a senior official on the Kenya team at the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

Chris has worked to empower the female staff at the Water Ministry including by recruiting a female staff member to be his deputy and colleague at UNESCO and IAEA. At the Ministry, at LVSWWDA, and when working on rural domestic water supply and sanitation programs, he advocated for gender balance and inclusion of women in decision-making positions.



*As long as gender equality and inclusion of women are not given the priority they deserve, then the realization of the SDGs and especially those goals touching on water and the environment will not be achieved.*

**Senior Groundwater Training  
& Capacity Building Advisor**  
Regional Centre for Groundwater  
Resources Education, Training and  
Capacity Building, Kenya



# DONALD KASONGI

Donald is a researcher and policy analyst who has worked for more than 15 years on a range of intersectional issues in Africa. Based in Tanzania, he holds an MA in governance and social policy and a Bachelor's of Science in Forestry. He has studied natural resource governance, water diplomacy, and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI). He has worked on transboundary water resources management, extractive industries, value chains, and trade and investments policies. He served as secretary general at the Nile Basin Discourse until 2020. He is currently consulting in design and M&E of complex humanitarian and development programs in the Great Lakes Region.

Donald has a broad range of experience in gender mainstreaming in natural resource management in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes conducting a baseline study on gender dynamics and designing gender-responsive programs in the Great Lakes Region. In 2022, he contributed to a publication, "Gender and Transboundary Water Governance," in collaboration with CIWA, for the IHE Delft Institute. Donald is highly empathetic about the importance of integrating gender equity considerations in water resources management.



*The Male Champions for Women's Empowerment initiative provides an opportunity to work together as a community and to identify some innovative ways to tackle challenges of gender inequality in the transboundary water sphere.*

A black and white portrait of Donald Kasongi, a middle-aged man with short hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background behind him is a solid green color.

**Former Secretary General**  
Nile Basin Discourse

# ENOCK S. KIMINTA

Enock S. Kiminta is a seasoned Hydrologist with more than 14 years of experience in Kenya's water sector. He specializes in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), policy development, stakeholder engagement, and partnership building. A recognized expert in organizational change management and with extensive experience in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), he has led numerous initiatives advancing sustainable water governance nationally and regionally. Currently serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya National Association of Water Resources Users Associations (KeNAWRUA), the national umbrella body representing 779 WRUAs across Kenya's six basin areas, he champions collaboration, innovation, inclusion, and policy influence to ensure the sustainable management and development of Kenya's water resources. . Through his work advancing gender inclusion in Kenya's water sector, he has championed the empowerment of women leaders within Water Resources Users Associations and other governance spaces, ensuring they move from participation to real influence.



*Water governance is not just about managing a resource, it's about nurturing relationships, restoring trust, and ensuring that every voice, especially women's, flows into the decisions shaping our shared future. My vision is clear: women must not only be part of the conversation, but also part of the decision-making organs where policies are shaped, resources allocated, and the future of water determined*

**Hydrologist and Chief  
Executive Officer**  
KeNAWRUA



# THATO KONSTABOLE

Thato is a community development professional. He currently works for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), a transboundary water and hydropower project between Kingdom of Lesotho and Republic of South Africa) in the Resettlement and Development unit. His main focus is on facilitating the communal compensation and livelihoods restoration of the affected populations linked to the projects. Previously he served in the civil society space in Lesotho gaining a lot of experience doing policy advocacy on climate change, environment and natural resource conservation.

He is the founder of a voluntary youth-focused organisation (Highlands Youth Initiative) that aims to empower and engage young women and men in the highlands of Lesotho who are affected by large dam projects by fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainable practices. Through this initiative, Thato aims to promote and build an inclusive and sustainable future of shared water courses where young people especially women in Lesotho play an active role.



*The Male Champions for Women's Empowerment initiative provides an opportunity to work together as a community and to identify some innovative ways to tackle challenges of gender inequality in the transboundary water sphere.*



**Community Participation Officer,**  
Lesotho Highlands Development  
Authority (LHDA)

# MOKHOTHU MOERANE

Mokhotu is a treatment and sustainable energy specialist with a diverse background in soil conservation and natural resources management. He currently works for the Water and Sewage Company as a water treatment plant operator focusing on class 1 water treatment and environmental compensation releases to sustain life downstream of Metolong dam. He also occupies a Senior Project Coordinator position at 24+ Supportive Brothers' Cooperative Society which his main role is applying for grants and spearheading them. The current apiculture project sponsored by US Embassy Maseru has proven to have a positive impact on group members and the community at large as it has capacitated group members with agricultural skills and apiculture.

Mokhotu has also managed to raise awareness to 24+ Supportive Brothers' group members on Gender-Based Violence facilitated by Lesotho Mounted Police Services. He has also worked for Arbitrage Consultants as a volunteer for a project on women's empowerment focusing on women entrepreneurs that aimed to improve their skills on sustainable energy by building solar kiosks and registering them for cell phone charging and small grants handling using Vodacom m-pesa. The women were also able to participate in a capacity-building workshop on bread making/cooking using concentrated solar collectors.



*"Wathint' a bafazi, wathint't imbokodo" –  
"Now you have touched the women, you  
have struck a rock"*

**Water treatment plant operator**  
Water and Sewage Company, Lesotho



# ANDREW MUKUTI

Andrew is Young African Leader (YALI) Mandela Washington Fellow 2019 in Civic Engagement in Water and Sanitation. He has eight years of experience in water resources management, Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and Transboundary Water Management. This includes development of strategies and project coordination to ensure rural communities have access to clean drinking water and good sanitation services, water sector governance, policy reform, and water infrastructure development.

As the Chirundu District Water Development Officer, Andrew played a pivotal role in managing shared water resources along the Zambezi River. His responsibilities included cross-border coordination, facilitating cooperation between Zambia and Zimbabwe on Zambezi River governance and ensuring alignment with regional frameworks. During the Kariba Dam Rehabilitation Project, Andrew served as a liaison between governments, international financiers and local stakeholders where he focused on sustainable dam operations, conflict mitigation, and balancing competing water needs while fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement.

A strong advocate for gender equality in water governance, Andrew implemented reforms to ensure 50% women's representation in Village WASH committees, transforming traditionally male-dominated community water-point management structures. He prioritized gender-balanced trainings in borehole maintenance and hygiene promotion, closing skill gaps and empowering women in leadership roles. Recognizing that water scarcity disproportionately affects women, he championed menstrual health advocacy by improving gender-sensitive sanitation in rural schools reducing girls' absenteeism through better water access, privacy, and reusable pad initiatives.

Andrew also established women-led reporting systems for water infrastructure issues, resulting in faster repairs and more sustainable management. By partnering with NGOs, he advanced projects centered on women's needs, such as strategically locating water points to reduce girls' burden of water collection and training communities in building safer, sustainable toilets. His work demonstrates that inclusive water governance leads to more effective and lasting solutions.



*Empower a woman in transboundary waters and you secure a sustainable water future for all.*

**Senior Water Engineer,  
Ministry of water development  
and Sanitation, Zambia**



# DHESIGEN NAIDOO

Dhesigen is head of climate adaptation at the South African Presidential Climate Commission. He is also head of the African Climate Risk and Human Security Program at the Institute for Security Studies. He is president of Human Right 2 Water and a founding member of the Water Policy Group, a member of the Board of the International Water Management Institute, a member of the food security organization CGIAR, and vice chair of the Technical Advisory Group on Water to the UAE. He was previously the CEO of the Water Research Commission and served in senior positions in the South African national government and South African universities.

Dhesigen is a leader, a scientist, and activist for positive social change. He has been involved with various gender strategies and has written about gender equality.



*A failure to achieve the empowerment of women and the girl-child in the water sector is not only a gender injustice but a monumental risk to water security, which is why this has to have the support of all men in the sector.*

**Head of climate adaptation**  
South African Presidential  
Climate Commission



# LAWRENCE NDERE

Lawrence Ndere is a Geologist with over six years of professional experience specializing in Hydrogeology and Exploration. He currently serves as a Hydrogeologist in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, where he plays a vital role in tackling water sustainability and utilization challenges. Before his current position, Lawrence worked at Bravura, where he focused on mineral exploration for valuable resources. Lawrence is a certified Project Management Professional. As a mid-career professional, he is increasingly focused on Strategic Management, particularly within the nexus of water governance. His expertise in this area is further strengthened by his post-graduate degree in Strategic Management.

A passionate advocate for social equity, Lawrence believes in promoting gender equality through initiatives like the Green Promise Initiative, emphasizing the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable water resource management. He actively supports community participation in preserving water resources through his volunteer work with the Manyame Conservation Trust.



*I would embrace listening actively, learning from women and other marginalized groups, and amplifying their voices in Transboundary Water Resources. I believe that true advocacy involves not only speaking out but also listening and supporting those directly affected by inequality.*



**Hydrogeologist**  
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture,  
Fisheries, Water and Rural  
Development, Zimbabwe

# ADDO-OBENG OPOKU-AGYEMAN

Addo-Obeng is a recent law graduate, public international law researcher and speech and debate coach whose work explores the intersection of law, sustainable development and youth empowerment. His recent research focuses on the legal and institutional responses to environmental degradation in Ghana, such as illegal artisanal mining, and the implications for regional water security, equity and cross-border legal cooperation. He is especially interested in the role of legal personhood of nature, customary law and constitutional environmental rights in enhancing accountability for transboundary water governance. He has been a champion and award-winning speaker in a number of prestigious moot and debate tournaments such as the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, the Accra Open Debate, the Kumasi Debate Open, Sofia Online Open and the Pan-African Universities Debate Championship. In these contexts, he has explored questions of transboundary governance, sovereignty and the role of women in legal and policy frameworks. He has gone on to coach the KNUST Faculty of Law Moot Court Team and has trained the KNUST Debate Society on multiple occasions, where he has placed particular emphasis on the inclusion, visibility and excellence of female debaters and mooters. He currently serves as the Team Lead at Forensic Forum, where he not only champions transboundary water causes, but actively recruits and empowers women in both leadership and operational roles.



*Women are not only victims of environmental harm but also vital agents of change in conservation, advocacy and community resilience. Ignoring their voices weakens the impact and legitimacy of any intervention.*

Founder / Team Lead  
Forensic Forum



# MICHAEL RAMAANO

Michael works for the Orange–Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) Secretariat as environment and water quality manager. Previously he worked for the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa and coordinated the development of RSAP IV, the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Strategic Action Plan (RSAP) on Water Resources Management.

Through his work, Michael has always strived for inclusion of women, youth, and disadvantaged groups in water resources management and community-based natural resources management. Michael is in charge of implementing projects in ORASECOM member states that target women's inclusion to ensure they benefit from interventions. This also requires the implementation of the ORASECOM Gender Strategy, which promotes women's participation at various levels. He is currently playing a key role to support the establishment of the ORASECOM Women in Water Diplomacy Network.



*For Southern Africa to prosper and sustainably manage their water resources, it is imperative for gender equality to be at the forefront of the movement to ensure all stakeholders play a key role. The environment has to be enabling for both men and women to be counted as equal contributors and participants in water management.*



**Environment and  
Water Quality Manager**  
Orange–Senqu River  
Commission Secretariat

# DAVISON SARUCHERA



Davison (Tariro) Saruchera is a versatile water professional with 20 years' experience, focused on transboundary water management, rural livelihoods, and climate resilience. He is an experienced water diplomat who has worked for many years at the intersection of gender and social inclusion within water cooperation interventions. In the last seven years, Tariro has been leading the implementation in southern Africa, of the BRIDGE (Building River Dialogue for Governance), a flagship water governance programme in IUCN, working with all levels of government and with communities to achieve equitable freshwater governance. Driven by inclusive dialogue and demonstration of evidence, BRIDGE works at the interface of hydro-diplomacy and local governance to promote new approaches to water management, including a strong emphasis on gender and youth participation. Passionate about people and development, Tariro is a knowledge enthusiast and a strong advocate for inclusivity in water management. He has worked in various, people-centred roles that promoted gender inclusivity, with different organisations, including the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe, The School of Agriculture and Rural Development, University of Pretoria, South Africa; and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).



*In any water agenda, never miss an opportunity to talk gender.*

**Regional Programme Manager**  
IUCN (International Union for  
Conservation of Nature)



# ABEL SIBANDA

Abel Sibanda, Ph.D., is a social justice campaigner, youth development specialist, and movement-building enthusiast with over nine years of professional experience in managing, scaling, and evaluating high-impact programs. He currently serves as a Program Officer for Global Platform (a youth capacity development program) and Movement Building at ActionAid International Zimbabwe, where he oversees youth-focused portfolios designed to strengthen youth civic engagement and enhance community resilience. With a core focus on transformative leadership, Dr. Sibanda has managed programs that created a tangible pipeline of young leaders. With a background in Development Studies and holding a Ph.D. in Management Sciences specializing in Public Administration, he combines academic rigor with practical expertise to provide executive coaching and strategic mentorship to over 12 youth-led organisations and social movements.

A committed supporter of women's rights and gender equality, he has actively supported grassroots movements such as the #Women4Water movement in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, addressing decades-long water access challenges through community-led advocacy. His work continues to amplify youth voices, ensuring that development interventions deliver sustainable, community-centred outcomes.



*Sustainable management of our shared water resources is only possible when women are at the heart of decision-making. True progress requires ensuring that every voice is heard and every perspective is valued. I commit to using my platform as a Male Champion to dismantle barriers and create inclusive spaces where women's leadership is both expected and respected.*



**Social Justice Campaigner**  
ActionAid Zimbabwe

# DR. PINIMIDZAI SITHOLE (PINNIE)

Pinimidzai is a program officer with Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA). He is a strategy, governance, and gender development professional with more than 20 years of experience delivering advisory services in energy, water, and resilience to the public and private sectors with a focus on equality, women's economic empowerment, social development, and inclusive innovation in Africa. He has experience in policy and strategy development, fundraising, partnerships, and policy dialogue between diverse stakeholders including governments, development partners, civil society, and communities.

Pinimidzai was on the gender specialist team that drafted the revised Gender Policy for Namibia. He is currently one of the focal gender specialists at GWPSA, ensuring that gender equality and social inclusion are integrated within the GEF-funded Buzi-Pungwe-Save (BUPUSA) basins and the GEF Limpopo project. He has led gender analysis assessments for international organizations such as the International Network on Bamboo and Ratan (INBAR).



*Achieving equality in the transboundary water sector and downstream water-dependent sectors requires men to actively unlearn deep-seated norms and power dynamics that sideline women. As a Male Champion, I am here to help break the norms and create safe spaces for equality and empowerment.*

**Program Officer**  
Global Water Partnership  
Southern Africa



# ALBAIN TCHANGOU

Albain Tchangou is an experienced youth development professional program lead with a demonstrated history of working in the youth advocacy space while supporting and empowering Africa's next generation of water leaders. Albain holds a degree in Political science from the University of Johannesburg. Albain currently works as the AIP Youth Coordinator and Communication Officer with Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWPSA). Albain has been supporting the work of the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) and working with the AIP secretariat to enhance mutual accountability, transparency and efficiency of water finance and investments in Africa. Since January 2022, Albain has been supporting the work of the AIP secretariat in the implementation of the AIP Water, Climate, Development – Gender (AIP WACDEP-G) Programme. The programme is seeking to transform gender inequalities at scale by promoting gender-transformative planning, decision-making and institutional development for climate resilient water investments in Africa.

Albain believes that the experience, knowledge, and desire of a single person with an active social position to impact lives positively can change the lives of other people, communities, and countries. Albain believes he can use the knowledge acquired as a Male Champion to empower other disadvantaged young Africans, women and men, and influence key decision makers while working with the development community to achieve the vision of the CIWA project.



*I want to use what I have learned as a Male Champion to empower other disadvantaged young Africans, women and men, and influence key decision makers within Southern Africa and more broadly.*

A black and white portrait of Albain Tchangou, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a suit and tie, smiling. The portrait is partially obscured by a green abstract shape at the bottom of the page.

**AIP Youth Coordinator and  
Communications Officer,  
Global Water Partnership  
Southern Africa (GWPSA)**

# GEDEWON TEKA ABEGAZ

Gedewon serves as Climate-Resilient WASH Program Manager at Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), an international NGO. With more than 20 years of experience in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector, he leads projects across Ethiopia to ensure sustainable access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services while promoting integrated water resources management.

His projects place emphasis on the needs of women and girls, who are often most affected by lack of access to clean water in the Ethiopian context. By bringing safe water closer to communities, his programs help reduce the burden on women and girls, enabling women to pursue economic activities and allowing girls to attend school regularly instead of spending hours collecting water. Moreover, Gedewon works to empower women and helps them assume leadership in water supply management.

Gedewon has also championed school WASH initiatives which have improved water supply, sanitation facilities, and menstrual hygiene awareness creating a conducive environment for girls' education.

As a husband, father, and elder in his family, he strives to lead by example by sharing household responsibilities and actively promoting the empowerment of female family members.



*I believe the world belongs equally to both male and female, and I stand for fairness and equal opportunity.*

**Climate-Resilient WASH  
Program Manager,  
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA),**



# TABOR TEKLE

Tabor has more than 20 years working in auditing and finance in different organizations. He is currently working for Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) as an Internal Auditor who provides consulting and advisory services. He has an MSc in Accounting and Auditing, BA Degree in Accounting and is a Certified Forensic Investigation Professional who also has capacity to identify environmental and social risks.

Tabor is highly committed to promoting gender balance in his organization as well in the Eastern Nile countries. He believes women pay a heavy price as mothers, sisters and wives and that steps need to be taken to empower them as decisionmakers. He therefore wants to take steps to create awareness about gender balance. As a Male Champion, he plans to work with ENTRO's management to find effective ways to involve women in the decision-making process. As an auditor, he is promoting gender balance and women's empowerment by conducting gender assessments in his organization and within Eastern Nile countries.



*As an Auditor, I am highly committed to gender balance and women's empowerment by conducting gender assessments or audits in my organization and then in the Eastern Nile countries level.*



**Auditor**  
Eastern Nile Technical  
Regional Office (ENTRO)

# DR. CALLIST TINDIMUGAYA

Callist is a water resources specialist who has been working with the Ministry of Water and Environment in Uganda for more than 33 years. He is the commissioner for water resources planning and regulation with overall responsibility for ensuring sustainable and equitable use and protection of Uganda's water resources. He has represented Uganda for more than 20 years in international and transboundary water resources programs and organizations such as the NBI, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. He spearheaded the establishment of the Water Resources Institute in Uganda in 2018 and has been at the heart of its operationalization.

As part of efforts to promote gender equality, Callist established a mentorship program within the Institute for young and mid-career women, which has enabled 90 women to receive mentorship and professional and leadership development. He is committed to gender equality and seeks to consistently give equal opportunities to both men and women within his workforce.



*The dialogue on transboundary water has been very limited due to the absence of women. The Male Champion program offers an opportunity to ensure women are active participants.*

Former Technical Advisory  
Committee member  
Nile Basin Initiative



# FRANCIS KENY

Francis is currently working on his PhD at the Institute of Peace, Security and Development at the University of Juba focusing on transboundary water resources management of the Nile Basin for peace and security. He previously was director of policy, sector coordination and regulation in the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, a focal point for the UNECE Convention for Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and founder and executive director of the Community Initiative for the Sustainable Peace Organization.

He has supported the promotion of gender equality through the delivery of a capacity-building program that dealt with gender including training men and women on conflict resolution and peace building that considered how conflict affects women differently. Gender equality is at the core of the community-based initiative, which includes working to mobilize women and men on social programs and implementing core values of inclusivity and participation.



*If I want to be an excellent speaker on water issues, I work alone or with men. But if I want to be an effective and efficient water manager, I work with women.'*

A black and white portrait of Francis Keny, a middle-aged man with short hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background behind him is a solid green color.

PHD on transboundary  
water resources in the Nile



# LEARN MORE ABOUT CIWA'S MCWE INITIATIVE



If you would like to learn more about the the CIWA Male Champions for Woman's Empowerment, please **scan the QR code** or **click the link** below



<https://www.ciwaprogram.org/male-champion-forum-a-ciwa-initiative/>



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