



## *2<sup>nd</sup> High-Level Panel on*

# **“Youth Viewing the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) Through a Water Lens”**

**22 March 2024, 10.30 – 13.00 (USA-EST)  
Virtual Format**

**Twitter: @RASITHQ**

**#YouthLeadership #SDG6 #HLPF #WaterUnitesUs #WaterForPeace**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

### **Background:**

For more than 55 years, the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) has been committed to empowering Youth and ensuring their participation actively in shaping the societies in which they live through education, building and developing capacity, networking, recognition, and ensuring their participation in policy and decision making.

The [RASIT Youth Sustainable Development Studies](#) Center, founded in 1986, strives to empower Youth and enhance their participation in the scholarly exchange of knowledge on sustainable development and promotes joint research and studies across sciences on sustainable development issues. The Center is comprised of an inter-disciplinary group of youth and junior professionals, whose work focuses on contemporary issues and challenges, inter alia, education, health, water, food and agriculture, energy, environment, multilateralism, and beyond.

The Potential of Youth leadership as partners for sustainable development has been one of the main objectives of RASIT.

In its second edition, the [Royal Academy of Science International Trust](#) and [Cansu Global](#) are presenting to the International Community the Youth assessments, observations, analyses, and vision of the Member States' Voluntary National Reports presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum meetings.

## Our Water, Our Future: Introductory Remarks

As part of their commitment to Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN Member States conduct Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) documenting their progress in achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind. These VNRs are not only an accountability mechanism; they provide – through documenting successes and lessons learned on shared implementation challenges – a rich source of knowledge on how to accelerate progress.

Water security is one of the most critical challenges of our time. We all need water every day, for personal consumption and hygiene, for domestic uses and economic activities; and for the ecosystems that surround and sustain us. With the world’s rapidly growing human population and expanding economic activities, freshwater becomes increasingly scarce and polluted; in addition, the effects of climate change on the water cycle affect the availability of the resource and cause water-related disasters to become more frequent and disruptive.

How we deal with water today will determine our future.

The multilevel and multidirectional relationships between the natural and human systems with respect to water resources mean that water challenges cannot be addressed from within the water sector alone. If water is not featured adequately in national development strategies and the planning of different segments of society, the risks presented by water scarcity, water pollution, and the disruption of the water cycle will increasingly manifest themselves through declining economic prosperity and upsetting the social order.

### Rationale

Cansu Global, originally a program of the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) and presently transitioning to an Intergovernmental Organization, zooms in on the critical importance of water for inclusive socio-economic development. As an interdisciplinary partnership, it supports the development and implementation of comprehensive solutions for water-related development challenges in different communities across the globe.

Cansu Global strives to remove institutional and socio-cultural barriers for concerted action by furthering “... *the responsible use of science, technology, and innovation as drivers of sustainable development and to build the capacities necessary for sustainable transformations.*” (Political Declaration of the HLPF 2023 paragraph 38q).

In this context, RASIT’s young scientists under the supervision of Cansu Global, have conducted an inductive thematic analysis of **188 Member States’ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted from 2016 to 2023**, to gain insight into how Member States are incorporating water in their sustainable development approach and actions. The young researchers thoroughly analyzed the **VNRs of Seventy-Four (74) Member States submitted in 2018 and 2023 when SDG 6 was reviewed in depth.**

Observing **World Water Day 2024**, the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) and Cansu Global are presenting to the International Community the **Second Edition of the Youth assessments, observations, analyses, and vision of the Member States’ Voluntary National Reports** presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum

meetings, **namely:** Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, France, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Zambia.

## AGENDA

### 10.30 – 11.00 OPENING SEGMENT

Moderator:

**Ms. Josefina Maestu Unturbe**, *Economic Advisor, Cansu Global, former Water Advisor of the Government of Spain; former Executive Director UN Water for Life Decade Office*

Welcoming Remarks:

**HRH Prince Zain El-Hashemite**, *World Youth League, Royal Academy of Science International Trust*

**Drs. Alice Bouman-Dentener**, *Co-founder Cansu Global*

Opening Statement:

**H.E. Mrs. Paula Narváez Ojeda**, *President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations (tbc)*

**H.E. Ms. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko**, *Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, African Union (tbc)*

### 11.00 – 11.15: SETTING THE SCENE

#### **Bridging Policy to Practice**

**Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace**, *Chair, Cansu SITE ED Global Institute for Water Security, Canada*

### 11.15 – 11.45:

## VNRS THROUGH A WATER LENS

### Context, Purpose, and Methodology:

**Mr. Max Jongeneel**, *Strategy and Research Youth Associate, Cansu Global, the Netherlands*

### Water in the VNRs:

**Ms. Marilyne El Haddad**, *Junior Researcher, RASIT Youth Sustainable Development Studies Center, Lebanon*

### Recommendations:

**Ms. Marilyne El Haddad and Mr. Max Jongeneel**

## 11.45 – 12.15: RESPONSES

### Responses:

**Ms. Rachana Mattur**, *Water Youth Network, Coordinator of Water Governance Group*

**Ms. Izgin Ozdas**, *Imtec Cryogenics, RASIT World Youth League, Girls in Science Peer Mentor and Advocate Representative, Türkiye*

**Mr. Alejandro Conza Salas**, *Aqualimpia, Peru*

**Ms. Farangis Ukamatsho**, *Fellow Kazakh-German University (DKU), Tajikistan*

**Ms. Suray Charyyeva**, *Junior Researcher, Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies, Turkmenistan*

### Remarks and Statements by Member States:

### Thoughts on integrating water across the SDGs:

**Mr. Diogo Faria de Oliveira**, *Secretary-General, WISE PPP UNECE International Specialist Centre of Excellence in PPP for Water & Sanitation, Portugal*

## 12.15 – 12.50: DISCUSSION

## 12.50 – 13.00 SUMMARY AND CLOSING

**Ms. Josefina Maestu Unturbe**, *Economic Advisor, Cansu Global*