



PRESS RELEASE

America and UK sign MOU to accelerate gender parity in water

British Water will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WaterRising Institute of the USA at its upcoming International Reception on Monday 19 February in London.

The MOU is an agreement to partner on the WaterWoman Project, which aims to accelerate gender parity in water management, addressing the urgent need for a gender-inclusive, water-positive approach to solving the water crisis.

Gender diversity in the water sector is crucial for improved business performance, representation of the customer base, and a greater combination of skills across the workforce. However, according to a recent report from global consultancy McKinsey, in the UK just 17% of the energy and utilities workforce are women – around two thirds less than in the overall UK workforce.

The Water Woman project is a call to action for the adoption of Women's Empowerment Principles along with a transparency and accountability framework for monitoring progress on gender equality indicators to advance gender equality in global water utilities.

"We are thrilled that British Water is engaging its members in this initiative and contributing to the urgent acceleration of gendered water workforce development," said Alicia Douglas, founder & chief executive officer of WaterRising Institute, who will be signing the MOU at the event on behalf of the WaterWomen Project.

In the lead up to this partnership, British Water was actively involved in the WaterWoman Project's Youth and Gender Hub at the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York.

"At British Water, we firmly believe in the power of collaboration and advocacy to drive positive change. Our Women on Water campaign, for example, stands as a testament to our commitment to advancing gender parity in the UK's water industry," said Lila Thompson, chief executive of British Water.

Robbie Moore MP is the keynote speaker at the International Reception. Moore was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 13 November 2023.

"Since 2013, the International Reception has been held with three objectives - to help grow UK exports; to raise the international profile of the UK Water Industry and its ecosystem, which British Water represents; and to encourage the sharing of best practices," added Thompson.

The reception will provide a platform for those involved in the global water market to meet international operators, consultants, contractors, technology suppliers, research institutions, government departments and funding agencies.

The event is supported by World Water Tech Innovation Summit.