

GWP Appoints New Chair – Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) Sponsoring Partners have announced the appointment of Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren as the new Chair of GWP, effective July 1, 2016. Dr. Oyun is a Member of Parliament of Mongolia, former Minister of Environment and Green Development, and former Minister of Foreign Affairs. She currently serves as President of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP.



With an academic background as a geochemist, Dr. Oyun entered politics in 1998, following her professional career as a geologist with Mongolia-Czech exploration JV and as a project geologist with Rio Tinto, UK. Serving five consecutive terms in the parliament, she has led a number of governance reforms of the country, including green development and in the water sector.

“Her hands-on experiences in the water field will help her to galvanize, in concrete ways, the actions of GWP’s 3,000 partners that are working to improve water in diverse settings in 172 countries,” said Kenzo Hiroki, Chair of the GWP Nomination Committee, as he announced the unanimous decision of the search committee. “Dr. Oyun’s leadership style is characterized by her deep listening, logical understanding, thoughtful deliberation, and sympathy for the poor and deprived. She demonstrates passion, purposeful dedication, and determination.”

Dr. Oyun – who will leave Parliament in June 2016 – will keep some of her domestic portfolios when she assumes the position of GWP Chair. Dr. Oyun is Founder and Head of the Zorig Foundation, a leading Mongolian NGO dedicated to the advancement of democracy and supports youth and education. She is also Chair of the Special Olympics Mongolia and Chair of the Mongolia Chapter of Women Corporate Directors, the largest global community of women corporate directors.

In accepting the position, Dr. Oyun said, “The world today is facing a number of challenges that are complex in nature and require a concerted effort of all of us. Ever-increasing population growth and demand for food, energy, and water will need solutions. If we continue the same path, we will need multiple planets by the end of the century! Water is both at the centre of the challenge and the potential solution. I am honored and humbled to accept the role of the Chair of GWP and will do my best to contribute to its progress.”

GWP Interim Chair, Drs. Alice Bouman-Dentener, said on behalf of the global Steering Committee, “I am happy to leave GWP in such capable hands and am confident that under her inspiring leadership GWP will prosper and live up to its full potential. Given Dr. Oyun’s background, GWP’s multi-stakeholder network of diverse partners will be well-supported to contribute to water security and the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.”

Dr. Oyun holds a Ph.D. in Earth Sciences from Cambridge University, and a B.A. and M.Sc. in Geochemistry from Charles University, Prague. She is fluent in English, Russian, Czech, and Mongolian.