



**Identify + Recruit + Collaborate + Implement → Result**

 <b>GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</b> <b>Healthy Body &amp; Mind</b> We are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform</li> <li>• Educate</li> <li>• Promote well being</li> </ul>	 <b>QUALITY EDUCATION</b> <b>Today's Youth Tomorrows Leaders</b> We are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Language Education</li> <li>• STEM Programs</li> <li>• Scholarship</li> </ul>	 <b>GENDER EQUALITY</b> <b>Embrace Gender Equality</b> We are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal Rights</li> <li>• Equal Education</li> <li>• Workplace diversity</li> <li>Youth Forum</li> <li>Mentorship Program</li> </ul>	 <b>CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</b> <b>Turks in Action Now for Water in Future</b> We are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate</li> <li>• Create Awareness</li> <li>• Get Actionable Commitments</li> <li>• Track Performance</li> </ul>	 <b>RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</b> <b>Responsible Purchasing, Waste Reduction, Recycling</b> We are committed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce plastic use</li> <li>• Reduce harmful chemical use</li> <li>• Recycle</li> </ul>
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ATAA UN Related Announcement# 21

**ATAA UN Sustainable Development Goals Commitments**

**May 10, 2023 – December 10, 2023**

In support of the #UN2023WaterConference and in connection with the **INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE THEME 5 – Water Action Decade (2018 – 2028)**: Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade, including through the UN Secretary-General’s Action Plan.

Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), 501.c. Organization, Associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications Special Accredited Organization to the #UN2023WaterConference; presenting “ Official UN Outside Side Event During Conference -OS261”.

In support of the #WaterAction ideas toward contributing in #WaterQuality and #WaterSustainability and UN’s Sustainable Development Goal(s) and corresponding target(s), ATAA is working towards following commitments we submitted:

**Goal 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

## **Goal 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

## **Goal 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

## **Goal 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

## **Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

We believe as over 50 Turkish North American Communities in the US and Canada along with the organizations we work with in Türkiye and globally where Turks live around the globe, we have so many people and issues we are trying to help with.

Especially in the aftermath of the earthquake, funds are depleted, people exhausted but work at hand got bigger. All of these challenges pose danger to economic, humanitarian, educational, and environmental programs we are trying to support.

Following will be our focus areas and we cannot do this alone; we need global support of UN, Companies, and other NGO to join our efforts to make a difference.

We believe that unless everyone embarrasses and starts addressing underlying issues of Education, Gender Equality, selection of ingredients, materials, processes of manufactured products and foods by companies, it will be difficult truly deliver Environmental and Health Related Goals.

## **#3Good Health & Wellbeing – Healthy Body & Mind**

Turkish women and girls are at risk with no economic and family support as they lost everything at the earthquake. Especially the amputees survived the disaster of earthquake will need medical, educational, and economic support for their survival and quality of life.

We started fundraising to help thousands of amputee children of the earthquake that will require medical help as well as provide educational help and protection.

## **#4Quality Education - Today's Youth Tomorrows Leaders**

We are committed to implement programs aiding quality education and literacy especially programs for girls and women. Illiteracy is the common base that impacts quality of life, economics, and conflict in the world. Encouraging our young people to be comparative in the technology and STEM Programs

## **#5Gender Equality - Embrace Gender Equality**

We see gender equality is already big concern and already becoming a bigger problem after the earthquake. We must ensure our young girls are protected, given equal opportunity to education and to reach their full potentials. We must all “STOP CHILD MARRIAGES!

- Today, discrimination against women and girls is still a big problem event in developed countries.
- Violence against women and girls are increased, especially during Covid
- Girls are not getting the same opportunities for education as boys
- Even today, women having difficulty to keep their rights to control even their own bodies, their rights are being taken away one by one.
- Women are getting discriminated
  - Higher Education & Research
  - In hiring
  - Workplace
  - Job advancements
  - Equal pay

### **#6Clean Water & Sanitation - Turks in Action Now, for Water in Future**

We believe we do have a good plan to get our component organizations to get involved to make a difference within our means.

#### **1. We will seek for commitments from our members for the following actions:**

1. Start Plastics Reduction Program within each organization
2. Start Tree Planting Program locally where members live and in Turkey
3. Adopt local park(s)
4. Obtain commitment to stop using harmful fertilizers and pesticides by the members
5. Educate members to install small water recovery system at home for gardening use wherever possible.

#### **1. We will write letters to our local government to impact policy change:**

2. Increase % recycled amounts in each category
3. Built clean emission plants that converts energy from MSW
4. Change packaging regulations to minimize plastics, paperboard instead use biodegradable materials.
5. Stop the use of harmful fertilizers and pesticides
6. Change regulations about agricultural practices to improve methods and produce with less water
7. Change construction regulations to include water collection cistern to be used for water needs that doesn't require sanitation such as toilet flushing, lawn sprinklers, etc.

### **#12Responsible Consumption & Sustainable – Adopt Responsible Behavior**

- Reduce single use plastic
- Reduce harmful chemical use
- Responsible purchasing
- Recycle

IMPORTANT NOTE: Our commitments also address ID 1: Water for Health, ID 2: Water for Sustainable Development, ID 3: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment.

## Our Partners

ATAA, partnering with The Light Millennium, Charitable Global Human Advancement Org ([LMGlobal.Org](http://LMGlobal.Org), NY) and Empowering the Turkish American Community ([etacusa.org](http://etacusa.org), CA) and Turkish Women's League of America Inc ([atkb.org](http://atkb.org), NY).

### *Subject Matter Experts:*

#### *Keynote Speaker*



**Prof. Dr. Olcay Ünver**, is currently Professor of Practice at Environmental and Resource Management Program at Arizona State University, member of Water Policy Group and Industry Fellow at Australian Rivers Institute. He serves as a senior advisor to Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme. In his public service career spanning over three decades, Dr. Ünver led FAO's water programs and activities, UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme and UNESCO's Program Office on Global Water Assessment. He served as Vice-Chair of UN-Water from 2018 to 2020. Prior to joining the United Nations, Dr. Ünver was a distinguished professor of water resources at Kent State University, Ohio and President of the Southeastern

Anatolia Project (GAP) in Turkey, where he transformed a large infrastructure project into a sustainable socioeconomic development program. Time Magazine listed him among the 19 "European Visionaries" in 1999 and New York Times featured him for his efforts towards sustainable, human-centered development in his country. He holds awards and recognitions that include World Water Council Medal of Service and International Water Resources Association's (IWRA) Millennium Award. Dr. Ünver served on boards and committees involving water and land resources, sustainable development, sustainable food and agriculture systems, water cooperation and policy. He was Secretary General and Vice President of IWRA, and Governor and Treasurer of World Water Council. He is a NATO Science Fellow, TÜBİTAK Honor Fellow and IWRA Fellow. He is chairs the UNESCO-Water Future Task Force "Science-Policy Interlinkages: A pathway to accelerate the implementation of SDGs", and is Specialty Chief Editor for Water-Smart Food Production of Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, among his roles in the international academic and professional community.



#### ***Municipal Solid Waste Dumping polluting waters, impacting health, and endangering wildlife***

**Dr. Kartik Chandran**. is a Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Engineering at Columbia University in NY. He primarily works on the interface between environmental molecular and microbiology, environmental biotechnology and environmental engineering. The focus of his research is on elucidating the molecular microbial ecology and metabolic pathways of the microbial nitrogen cycle.

Applications of his work have ranged from energy and resource efficient treatment of nitrogen containing wastewater streams, development and implementation of sustainable approaches to sanitation to novel models for [resource recovery](#). Under his stewardship, the directions of biological wastewater treatment and biological nutrient removal were established for the first ever time in the history of Columbia University. In 2015, he received the MacArthur Fellowship for his innovative work on "integrating microbial ecology, molecular biology, and engineering to transform wastewater from a troublesome pollutant to a valuable resource". Chandran graduated with a B.S.(Honors) in Chemical Engineering from the University of Roorkee, now the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee. He obtained a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering at the University of Connecticut in 1999 and worked there as a post-doctoral fellow until 2001. From 2001-2004, he worked as a senior technical specialist with the engineering firm, Metcalf and Eddy

(now part of AECOM). From 2004-2005, he was a research associate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Chandran joined Columbia University in 2005 as Assistant Professor of Environmental Engineering.

***Increase Urban Tree Canopy(UTC) Coverage and Protect Forested Land for Ground Water***



**Dr. Mesude Özyüreköglü** (Meh-soo-day Oh-zuh-wreck-oh-loo) is the current Assistant Director of Louisville Metro Parks and Recreation and the city’s leader in Sustainable Urban Forestry, having worked in Parks and Rec since she moved to Kentucky in 2000. She was born and raised in Turkey, and graduated from Istanbul University School of Forestry Engineering. She earned her PhD degree in Forestry Law. She also holds a BA in Public Administration. Her main interest is urban forestry and how it affects the climate and health. She is a mother to two girls, Elif and Melis (Mel-is), and a wife to Dr. Tuna Özyüreköglü. In her free time, she loves to garden, cook, and read.



**Alev Wieland ATAA Southwest VP and ATAA UN Committee Co-Chair, Project Lead** Ms. Wieland has Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from University of Cincinnati, OH. Worked for Belcan Engineering at Proctor of Gamble as Project Engineer for 7 years. She retired from PepsiCo, Inc-AMEA Capability Director in 2012. She is currently CEO of Manufacturing Excellence Technical Services and Alev Cosmetics Companies. Alev has extensive experience in Lean Manufacturing, Lean Product Life Cycle Management, and Processes Development, Project Management, Construction Management in Food Manufacturing, Paper Converting and Laundry Soap Industry, and Personal Care Products. She has solid understanding of

Engineering, Manufacturing and Operations Processes. She is an expert in ISO 9001 and GMP Certifications and Standards. She has been involved in implementation of Environmental Sustainable Programs over two decades. She Serves as Secretary General for Contemporary Education Foundation (COEDFO) since 2013. Ms. Wieland has been serving as ATAA Southwest Region VP since 2020 and co-leads ATAA UN Committee. She served as President of Cincinnati Turkish American Association (CTAA) from 1994 to 1996. An active member of the Turkish American Association of Northern Texas (TURANT), serving as Trustee since 2021.

***Sustainable Farming Practices Relate to Water -Stop using harmful fertilizers and pesticides polluting waters and endangering wildlife and develop methods to improve farming practices to produce more with less water***



**Claire Deshaies** is currently pursuing her master’s in Animal Studies through the Environmental Studies department at New York University. As a Factory Farming Awareness Coalition (FFAC) educator in NYC, Claire coordinates and gives presentations to city-based High Schools and Colleges about the many impacts of factory farming. Before living in NYC, she earned a BS in Psychology at Oneonta State and an Animal Behavior and Conservation Certificate through Hunter College. Outside of school and work, she enjoys spending time (and sharing a vegan diet) with her rabbit, and running local 5K races.

## *Use Alternative Energy Sources at Coastal Area- Musilage Buildup in the Oceans*



**Ela Gökçığdem** is a passionate social entrepreneur and climate activist currently studying Economics and Sustainability at Babson College in Boston, MA. After witnessing the impacts of urbanization on her family's home island in Avsa, Turkey, she became dedicated to youth empowerment in order to create change.

Serving on numerous leadership positions within the climate movement, she strives to use her positions to advocate for marginalized communities, like the residents of her home island, and other communities whose rich ecological intelligence goes overlooked. After founding numerous ventures, such as The Avsa Project that provides environmental curriculum to coastal Turkish communities and Bloom, a clean-tech startup that is converting algal blooms to renewable energy sources, she aims to devote her career in business to serve her home ecosystem in Turkey

### **Meet Our Project Team:**



**Yücel Burdurlu – Tavolara Midwest VP and ATAA UN Committee Co-Chair** was born and raised in Istanbul Turkey. After receiving her Bachelor's degree in chemistry from Hacettepe University Ankara Turkey, she continued her graduate studies at California State University Long Beach. After graduating, she started a career in private industry working on applied and theoretical research on coatings and coating raw materials. Yucel worked for Imperial Chemical Industries formerly known as ICI Paints North America in their Strongsville Research Center most of her career in the international innovation team where she was involved variety of interesting projects in collaboration with their Slough Laboratory in Slough, England, ICI France in Rouge,

France and ICI South America Research Center in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Next, Yucel worked for BUNGE Oils North America where, she worked with inorganic synthesis of anticorrosive pigments and tested them in collaboration with Batelle Laboratories in Columbus Ohio, University of Southern Mississippi and Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas. Presently, Yucel is with True Value Manufacturing in Cary Illinois as a Research Chemist. Yucel lives in the suburbs of Chicago. She joined TACA's Board of Directors in 2013-2015 and she was the Director of the Ataturk School and the Adult Turkish School 2014-2015. Yucel also has been a member of the Chicago Turkish Festival Planning Committee and a volunteer in the festival since 2013 and has served as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Chicago Turkish festivals in 2016 and 2018. Yucel is planning to continue working on bringing Turkish and American groups together using her organization skills, people skills, education skills and her passion for harmony and peace.



**Hülya Koç** began her career as entrepreneur in Silicon Valley. The three companies, Hülya developed and formed successfully functioning today. She also co-founded nonprofit organizations such as Empowering Turkish American Community (ETAC). Her most recent work, an employment agency catering to the childcare vertical ([www.childcarecareers.net](http://www.childcarecareers.net)), grew to become an industry leader with 25 offices across the US and was sold to a consortium of US-based private equity firms. In Sept.2012, Hülya co-founded the Istanbul/Turkey Chapter of Keiretsu Forum – the world's largest angel investors platform. She has received numerous awards one of which was 'The Small Business of the Year' from the Honorable Congresswoman Jackie Speier's

Office. Hülya has been recognized for her outstanding leadership and mentorship of entrepreneurs by the US Small Business Administration. She continues to be a mentor for SCORE, the mentoring/counseling arm of SBA. She advises and mentors international start-ups in a variety of fields such as high tech, retail and business services at Founders Space – an incubator in Silicon Valley ranked in the top ten in the US by

Forbes Magazine and UC Berkeley in their Technology Entrepreneurship class. Hülya also routinely presents seminars worldwide on angel investing and science of networking for several organizations. Dedicated to improving the lives of children and entrepreneurs, Hülya globally volunteers extensively for several organizations. She has served on numerous non-profit Boards. As a philanthropist and an active community organizer, Hülya has been granted the Lifetime Service Award by her community. Currently, she is the Co-Founder, Co-President of ETAC – Empowering the Turkish-American Community USA. Hülya holds a graduate degree in business administration and education.



**Bircan Ünver** is the Founder-President of The Light Millennium, a Charitable Global Human Advancement Organization (LMGlobal.Org); Executive Producer of the LMTV Programs; Multi-Media and Event Producer; Host, Author, Publisher, Public Speaker; [Head] NGO Representative of The Light Millennium to the United Nations Department of Global Communications since **2005**; and Chair, Outreach and Partnerships Subcommittee at Global NGO Executive Committee and director for the 2021-2023 term. She is also the Content Provider at QPTV since 1992; and editor and co-founder of the U.S. Turkish Library & Museum Project. She has undertaken the

Organization's e-publications, public programs since its inception in August 1999, and LMTV Series and Specials in all aspects of it since January 2000; along with, it's all its UN-related activity and programs since 2005.

Bircan served as a mentor to the GPODS for three consecutive terms in Winter'22, Summer'22, and Fall'22 Fellowship Programs; and delivered lectures on "How to associate with the UN-NGO", Public Access TVs in the U.S., and the latest one was on the #WaterActionDecade and the #2023UNWater Conference.

he served as the chair of the ATAA Committee on UN Relations, guided its association to the UNDGC in 2000, and also served as the New York Regional Vice-President of ATAA (Assembly of Turkish American Associations) from October 2019 to January 2022. Furthermore, she served on several Planning Committees of the UN-Civil Society Conferences (formerly UN-DPI-NGO), and the Planning Committee of the High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace (HLF-CoP). She has been a strong advocate of the UN Vision, Programs & Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) along with the relevant UN Days, which are in line with the LMGlobal.Org's Mission since LM's association with the UNDGC (formerly, UN.DPI/NGO) in December 2005. In this line, she encourages guides and gives speeches to interested civil society organizations and members of academia towards their associations with the UN, along with engaging them with the UN Programs that are within her networks and beyond. Further, she is an Ambassador of Peace and Goodwill for Anuvrat (Anuvibha) Global Organization (Jaipur, India, since 2014); and a Member of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP, since 2012).

Moreover, she is also on the Executive Board of the World Intellectual Forum (since Jan. 2020) Author of the following four book titles in print (Turkish): "*En Kutsalı Yaratmak*" (The Most Sacred is to Create) (1995, 2022), "*Sanatın Labirentlerinde*" (The Labyrinths of Arts) (2016), and "*Işık Yollarında*" ("The Ways of the Light") (poetry, 2017), and "*Bin Yıl Daha...*" (2020, A Thousands Years More...)

Bircan initially received her local and studio television productions certificates at QPTV.Org in 1992. Based on this capacity, she produced and broadcasted over 170 television programs through local channels in New York City, which are also available online through #LightMillenniumTV.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree from the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (Istanbul, 1988) and a Master's Degree (M.A.) from Media Studies of the New School University (New York City 1999).



**Sermin Özçilingir** was born in Kayseri. She has been living in the USA since 1993. She has been serving for many years in TWLA which is committed to the successful integration of women into the economic and social life in the United States.

She serves as the President of TWLA since 2009. During her term as a president, she brought women together by organizing various panels and symposiums by Turkish and American experts in their fields related to the issues women encounter and their solutions. Sermin Özçilingir is the mother of four children.



**Fatma Aldaş** is a retired Financial Consultant, stockbroker and international private banker. She served as Vice President and Customer Relations Manager at JP Morgan Chase Bank. She retired after 35 years of service in the financial sector.

She is married and has two children. She has two wonderful grand kids that she loves endlessly. Her youngest daughter is a graduate of New York Atatürk School. Fatma Aldaş has been serving on the Board of Directors of TWLA since 2006.



**Berna Gürdal** graduated from Hacettepe University Faculty of Nutrition and Dietetics in 1997 and worked as a corporate dietitian at Panorama Food Company between 1997-1999. Between 1998-2005, she worked as a clinical dietitian at Internal Medicine Department of Uludağ University and made presentations at various congresses.

Her work on the treatment of diabetes was published in the book Diabetes Mellitus in 2006 Berna Gürdal who has been living in New York since 2005, received the Child Nutrition and Cooking Program Certificate from Stanford University.

She is married and has two children. Her son graduated from New York Atatürk School since 2017. She has been serving on the Board of Directors of TWLA since 2017.



**Burcin Rutherford** was born in Istanbul, Turkiye. Graduated from Karadeniz Technical University as a Social Studies Teacher. Worked in several pre-schools and Elementary Schools in London where she lived 8 years before moving to NYC. Burcin have been an active member of Turkish American Women's League since 2021. After joining the board, she has been volunteering at Ataturk School to teach Turkish language and culture. She enjoys spending time with her 2 sons, traveing, and discovering new places.





**Mine Yenigün** joined the Turkish National Police under the Ministry of Interior in 1992 as Civilian Staff Assistant for human resource management of the Turkish National Police constituted 200,00 police personnel in 81 provinces within Turkey. She is a first degree graduate from Eskişehir Açıköğretim İktisat Fakültesi.

In 1995, she was posted as Staff Assistant, within the Department of Police Personnel for management health records and welfare provision of the Turkish National Police deployed around the country. In addition, she had the responsibilities to manage duty shift record for personnel to manage safety and security of the National Police Headquarter. She has obtained excellent performance during her service is currently retired from the Ministry of Interior. Mrs. Yenigün is married for 25 years and has two children whom of which are both graduates of Atatürk School.



**ack Wieland** has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from Kent State University in Ohio. Jack enjoys working with both print and digital media. He is experienced in logo and package design, creating brand identities, and marketing/advertising design.

He enjoys sports, outdoors, and nature. He played football and was on the track team in high school. One of Jack's passions is Nature Conservation and Water Sustainability.

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Website: [www.ataa.org](http://www.ataa.org) | [www.ataa.org/u-n](http://www.ataa.org/u-n)

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