



भारत सरकार /  
जल शक्ति मंत्रालय  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI



*High level policy dialogue*  
on



## *Accelerating SDG -6 through Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*

*Jointly organized by*

*India Water Foundation and United Nations Environment Programme*

*Date: 2nd November 2022, Time: 2.30 PM-7.00 PM,*

*Venue: India Water Week, 1-5 November 2022, India Expo Centre, Greater Noida*

*Supported by*



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DEPARTMENT OF  
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



UNITED NATIONS  
**ESCAP**  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific



## High Level Policy Dialogue On Accelerating SDG 6 through Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

India Water Foundation organized a High level Policy Dialogue on ‘Accelerating SDG6 through Multi-stakeholder partnerships’ in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme and supported by UNESCAP, World Water Council and Department of Science and Technology, Government of India on 2<sup>nd</sup> November the second day of 7<sup>th</sup> India Water Week, 2022. The main objective of the session was to identify and find solutions on several bottlenecks impeding greater progress on SDG 6 acceleration.

### Ministerial Plenary

The Policy dialogue was initiated by a Ministerial plenary which was chaired by **Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon’ble Union Minister, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India**, and had special addresses by **Shri Kailash Choudhary, Hon’ble Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, Government of India**, **Mr. Atul Bagai, Head, UNEP India office**, **Mr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP, SSWA Office** and **Dr Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation**. The dignitaries on the stage launched two books i.e. ‘Ecosystem based Adaptation

approaches to sustainable management of aquatic resources’ and ‘India at 75 and beyond’ by Dr. Arvind Kumar. A report on ‘Information on water supply and sanitation in urban slums of Delhi’ by India Water Foundation in collaboration with NJS Engineers India private Ltd. for Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was also released.

This publication ‘India at 75 and beyond’ has perspectives from policymakers, Ministers, bureaucrats, influencers and experts to analyze the achievements of India in the last 75 years especially in the last decade while looking forward to the goals we must now achieve in the coming decade and in Amrit Kaal. To get your copy please go to <https://www.amazon.in/dp/B09R24JNKZ>



This book '**Ecosystem based Adaptation approaches to sustainable management of aquatic resources**' presents a close examination of the role of ecosystem-based adaptation in managing river basins, aquifers, flood plains and their vegetation to provide water storage and flood regulation.



To get your copy please go to

<https://www.elsevier.com/books/ecosystem-based-adaptation/kumar/978-0-12-815025-2>)



This report on '**Information collection of water supply and sanitation in urban slums of Delhi**' is a result of a one year long project in which India Water Foundation and NJS undertook a survey on the water supply and sanitation in urban slum areas in Delhi. This publication is an exhaustive study on centre and state policies and recommendations for providing equitable water and sanitation services to all. To

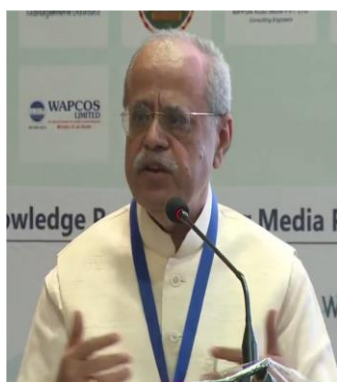
read the complete report please go to <https://www.indiawaterfoundation.org/final-report/>

The event was hosted by Ms. Shweta Tyagi, Chief Functionary; India Water Foundation. She welcomed the dignitaries and gave a short brief of the session. She then invited **Sh. Kailash Choudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India** for his special address. Sh. Chaudhary in his crucial message mentioned that water is very crucial for humankind and gave a brief on the interlinkages between agriculture and water, complementing his statement with data from various public schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sichayee Yojana (PMKSY) wherein he told that 70 lakh sq. hectare coverage was increased under sprinkler and drip irrigation systems at the national level to increase water efficiency in agriculture. He also said that such advance technologies in agriculture saves about 30-50% of water and produces more and better yield.





**Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation** in his opening remarks mentioned the primary objective behind organizing this policy dialogue and said’ “We have gathered here organizations like UNEP, UNESCAP, World Water Council, FAO, Convention on wetlands, World Bank, UN Global Compact Network of India International Water management institute to come together and deliberate on this crucial subject. We have tried to bring multi agencies on this platform to understand best practices, policy recommendations, success stories, and implementation updates.” He further stated that water is a driving force and gateway to all SDGs and how fast it is becoming a pressing societal and geopolitical issue. We need increasing awareness regarding freshwater resources and the need to protect them both in terms of quantity and quality. Therefore, we have to engage partner organizations for tangible results and sensitize, incentivize, and galvanize stakeholders towards an overall circular and transversal approach to systematically integrate water in climate action and go beyond the vertical approach limitations of IWRM (Integrated Water Resource Management).



looming over our heads that needs to be addressed urgently which otherwise could become the cause of future world wars in a resource-deficit world.

**Mr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, Deputy Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer, UNESCAP, SSWA Office** highlighted few facts and figures about South and Southwest Asia in comparison to Pacific. He stated that Goal 6 of the SDGs is been taken seriously and collectively in the world only after a long negotiation at the 2015 Paris Agreement. He categorically made a statement that if India and South Asia do not achieve SDGs; the world wouldn’t be able to as well due to South Asia’s sheer size.



**Our Chief Guest, Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Union Minister, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India** shared his thoughts and anecdotes in a very balanced and



captivating manner as always. He talked about multi-sectoral approach while giving and example from his very own ministry and its two visionary programmes of Hon'ble Prime minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji i.e. Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission. He confidently said that if all the stakeholders work in sync and the same direction, India would certainly lead and steer the world

towards achieving sustainable development goals. Further adding to it, he also shared his first experience as a representative of India at UN where to his utter dismay India was targeted and seen as culprit to every problem in the world due to its demography and size. But after 2014, under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi the tables have turned and now India is seen as a torchbearer and inspiration due to its inevitable presence and contributions to the world in achieving autobahn of sustainable world. He also appreciated Dr. Arvind Kumar and India Water Foundation for coming up with such a platform concerning judicious water consumption and multi-stakeholder partnerships addressing the same.

**Mr. Loic Fauchon, President World Water Council** greeted India and its representatives with a Namaste and asserted that water is gradually becoming an expensive commodity due to scarcity and excessive hunger of resources by humans. Therefore, unity and joint efforts are the key and way-forward. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a new paradigm shift towards an efficient, technologically advanced, integrated and extensive water management through cooperation, coordination, convergence. He also invited the Indian water lovers to the 10<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum which shall be organized in Indonesia in March 2024.



## Technical Presentations

The Ministerial Plenary was followed by two technical presentations.

### 1. Overview of status and changes to freshwater ecosystems based on Earth observation and



SDG monitoring and reporting - **Mr. Stuart Crane, Program Coordinator SDG 6, Freshwater Ecosystems Unit, Ecosystems Division, UNEP.** The presentation focused on how to leverage the best available science to track, monitor, and improve the health of freshwater ecosystems. He shared the data platform by UNEP which is also known as Freshwater Ecosystem Explorer, which converts satellite imagery into statistics and facilitates

free access to information on freshwater ecosystems to track surface water changes and also observe different aspects of ecosystems. He presented 20 year data from all over the world through illustrative maps, indicating river basins that experienced high levels of change far above the standard deviation. In addition to it, he mentioned that in India over 20 years, permanent water has increased by 20% and a substantial increase in seasonal water i.e. 50%; thus, strengthening water security of the nation. As a recommendation he laid emphasis towards the importance of local level at identifying changes in river basin and gave a way out on how to leverage the best available science to track, monitor, and improve the health of freshwater ecosystems with the help of latest and accessible data.

### 2. SDG 6 Progress in SSWA countries- **Mr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna, UNESCAP SSWA office.**

He highlighted the statistics regarding South and Southwest Asia towards achieving SDGs. focused on the performance of SDG6 not only for India but also on other sub regions like Asia Pacific and South & Southwest Asia. He highlighted some statistics at glance regarding implementation in achieving SDGs, especially Goal6. He stated along with data that target Goal 6 of Pacific is slightly better than of South & Southwest Asia because of the unavailability of appropriate data with the latter. But in case of India, it has already achieved or crossed the same target way back in 2019; thus appreciating the different stakeholders in achieving the same. As recommendations he talked about few monad-nocks in SSWA i.e. major economic sectors





dependent on natural resources such as water, water stress, negative change in the extent of water related ecosystem, erroneous and unavailability of data, and non-cooperation among different sectors.

### High Level Panel Discussion

The session then proceeded towards a **High Level Panel Discussion** which was **moderated by Dr. Divya Datt, Program Manager, and UNEP India**. She highlighted that building national capacity to monitor freshwater ecosystems health and water management is the need of the hour and for the same multi-stakeholder partnerships are the only way to address the different dimensions of water issues. She also mentioned five critical issues enveloping water in the achievement of SDGs i.e. inefficiency of water use, tackling water pollution at source and wastewater management, impact of climate change on hydrometeorology in India, health of ecosystems including wetlands, and inequity in availability and accessibility of water.



Among our eminent guest panelists, the first was **Mr. Satya Tripathi, Former Secretary General of UN and currently Secretary General, Global Alliance for Sustainable Planet**. He focused on cross-system thinking and regenerative agriculture and also gave an example of



Andhra Pradesh, a state in India that is running quite successful programmes for the same. While water health is vital to the nutraceutical industry, but accessing high quality water is increasingly challenging. “Polluted water in the ground actually washes the essential nutrients plants need out of the soil, making the nutraceutical industry’s work harder,” he added. “This water pollution makes the soil acidic and affects the solubility of nutrient ions like

magnesium, potassium, iron, and calcium.” Therefore, as a way forward he talked on cross-system thinking and regenerative agriculture as a Low-Emission Development Pathway for Improved Resilience, Soil Health, Livelihoods, rehabilitate water services and catalyze the transition to sustainable food systems in India and regarding the same gave an example of Andhra Pradesh, a state in India that is running quite successful regenerative agriculture programmes. He also requested all the stakeholders to think beyond boundaries and work in silos and collaboration regarding sustainable development goals.



**Mr. Jerker Tamelander, Director, Science and Policy, Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands** congratulated the Government of India for adding 26 more wetlands under the Ramsar



Convention of international importance and taking it to a total of 75 wetlands in India and appreciated India's efforts on implementing Ramsar Convention successfully. He stressed on integrated wetland policy as wetlands play an important role in functioning of the water cycle. As water moves through the surface or underground, it passes through wetlands, which in turn regulate the quantity, quality and reliability of water which is crucial to achieve

SDG agenda by 2030 and also talked about limited availability of data and limited exchange among sectors, lackadaisical monitoring and tracking of global targets. To conclude, he added that governments need to be more prudent at multi-sectoral collaborations in charting a roadmap to sustainable development.

The next panelist **Mr. Mark Smith, Director General, International water management Institute** highlighted that water resources management decisions are made by a multitude of actors working across various sectors and scales. Partnership and cooperation platforms are thus essential to ensure that these actors take coordinated decisions and work towards the same direction. Multi-stakeholder partnerships or such mechanisms unite stakeholders in a process to collaboratively solve problems and explore opportunities, as they play a role of catalyser and manager to deal with changes in complex situations across societies. He



also laid emphasis towards joint action and consensus building in achieving SDGs while bringing together local institutions to work collectively towards set targets.



**Mr. Rajan Sudesh Ratna** shared his inputs and put forward a question towards other panelists that how significant is strengthening linkages among environment and other socio-economic sectors? He also talked about three pillars of

sustainability i.e. Environment, Social and Economic factors. He called on all the stakeholders to see SDGs through a multi-farious approach to make it more holistic and inclusive. In the end he

concluded by stressing on efficient use of water through behavioral change and technological advancements in the sector.

**Dr. Satya Priya, Senior Water Resources Management, Specialist, World Bank** stated that water is a connector and crucial for mankind. No one policy, department and institutions can resolve the issue of water unavailability singlehandedly. Therefore, we need to focus on the source rather than the destination of water and concentrate on its forward and backward linkages. We should focus on how to make the source of water retainable and sustainable. He also talked about the role of communities that needs to be garnered when it comes to the



implementation at the ground level and towards the end he also asserted quote by former Prime Minister of Singapore Harry Lee Kuan Yew that ‘Every other policy has to bend on knees for our water survival.

**Mr. Ratnesh Jha, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network India** firmly said that if we are to have any chance of success, some of the world’s oldest needs—moving clean water to communities and removing dirty water—must be met with the best that modern technology has to offer. Smart water technologies across sectors can detect anomalies and can provide capacity building capacity. He also mentioned about the most successful initiatives on multi-stakeholder partnerships by UN Global Compact Network i.e. *UN Global Compact CEO Water Mandate* and the *Water Resistance Coalition* explaining that both these actions are industry-driven, co-led, which elevate global water stress to the top of the agenda and catalyze innovations and digitization for Safe, Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Water Management.

**Ms. Patricia Meijas, Specialist Land and Water division, FAO** brought the perspective of agriculture in relation to water and its different dynamics such as inefficiency, over-consumption and pollution of an indispensable resource i.e. water. She mentions that even if agriculture may be biggest water-related challenge of all.

Already today, 70 per cent of all freshwater withdrawals go to farming but that share needs to be significantly reduced. If we are to feed the 10 billion people estimated to live on our planet by



2050, agriculture must shift to much more water efficient crops and practices. She also requested all the stakeholders for their concerted efforts through willingness of different sectors, segregated data and evidence based informed decisions for multi-stakeholder collaboration.



**Mr. MP Singh, Chief of Development Operations, Japan International Cooperation Agency** gave a very different and unusual donor's perspective to the session wherein he laid importance towards neoteric knowledge exchange and relevant technology assistance towards achieving SDGs. He also readout few of the Japan's support to India through ODA loan in water and sanitation sector which accounts for more than 50,000 crores, through 38 ODA Loans, 4 Grant Aids and 12 Technical Cooperation Projects. A special mention of JICA's projects in

water sector wherein water supply has reached to approximately 30 million people and 15 million people have received access to sanitation. He also quite assertively mentioned that JICA's assistance for the development of water and sanitation sector in India is noted as one of the largest amongst all the bilateral and multilateral development partners in India.

**Ms. Veena Khanduri**, Executive Secretary-cum-Country Coordinator, India Water Partnership as a guest speaker stressed on the need for an open and transparent dialogue on evidence based knowledge in the water sector. She also laid emphasis on SDG 6.5.1 for data collection and exchange among multiple sectors for better multi-stakeholder partnerships at local and global levels respectively. Therefore, embarking towards a more responsible and inclusive sustainable development of the world and specifically India.



Ms. Divya Datt gave the concluding remarks to close the discussion.

Before concluding the High Level Policy Dialogue there was signing of two Memorandums of Understanding. One was signed between India Water Foundation and Mahatma Gandhi Institute to combat Climate Change an autonomous institute under Government of NCT of Delhi. The second MOU was signed between India Water Foundation and NCCF which engaged in the development of India specific and globally benchmarked sustainability standards as its core working area, apart from working for policy advocacy, training and capacity building through multi-stakeholder engagement.



MOU with Mahatama Gandhi  
Institute to combat Climate Change



MOU with NCCF

## Recommendations

1. Plan, execution, and success need the participation of all key stakeholders.
2. River basin planning works best when an appropriate institutional framework is in place.
3. Because of the extended healing period following stress in lakes, prevention and preparation are far more beneficial than restoration.
4. Effective water management must address the entire hydrological cycle: surface and subsurface waters cannot be managed independently of the ecosystems on which they rely.
5. Good water management necessitates maintaining a balance between groundwater pumping and aquifer recharge.
6. The potential benefits of collaborative water resource management can act as accelerators for larger regional collaboration, economic integration and development, and even conflict avoidance.
7. Economic analysis can help make the case for international river cooperation by identifying and measuring the potential incremental benefits of cooperation, determining the distribution of benefits among riparians, and assessing the feasibility and fairness of alternative management and investment scenarios.



8. The participation of government officials is important for galvanizing local political support for advocacy efforts and increasing trust in research findings. Trust is earned via sharing of decision-making authority and the willingness of bureaucratic administrations to negotiate.
9. Way to address resource management and resource allocation needs to move from sectoral silo approach to systems approach thereby taking integrating all the affected sectors and stakeholders and also being cognizant of cross sectoral synergies and tradeoffs.
10. There should be exchange of inter regional data and knowledge for proper monitoring and tracking of global targets.
11. India's requirement of funds for various needs including the infrastructure development and capacity building are huge, which cannot be met by external funds. However, various international funding agencies not only brings concessional funds but also knowledge assistance and successful models based on their various global experiences which can be tailored to the Indian conditions.
12. Cooperation, collaboration and convergence of resources is must to act as seeding of the best practices including the transparency in decisions making and realization of project benefits to ensure inclusive development.

