UNITAR Global Water Academy

SIDE EVENT

at the High-Level Political Forum 2024

Pathways to Resilience: Advancing Solutions for Global Freshwater Quality

16 July

2.00 - 3.00 p.m. (EST)

The Westin New York Grand Central
Madison Ballroom: Ground Floor

Aim

This High-level Political Forum (HLPF) side event will explore the multilateral and environmental drivers that exacerbate the deterioration of the quality of global freshwaters. Inequitable access to clean freshwater is a major contributor to poverty. Here, we offer innovative scientific, technological, natural, and governance solutions to improve the resilience of freshwater systems.

Background

This side event will explore the multilateral and environmental drivers that exacerbate the deterioration of the quality of global freshwaters. Inequitable access to clean freshwater is a major contributor to poverty. Here, we present innovative solutions encompassing science, technology, nature, and governance to bolster freshwater resilience.

Vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls, bear the brunt of water insecurity. Environmental crises such as climate change, industrial pollution, and extreme climatic events compound the challenge of degrading water quality worldwide. Effective management demands not only an understanding of these drivers but also actionable solutions, including enhanced monitoring, refined management of our freshwater resources, transboundary governance, and policy refinement aligning with SDG 6 targets.

In this HLPF side event, UNITAR's Global Water Academy (UGWA) offers scientific, technological, natural, and governance solutions to improve the resilience of freshwater systems, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence to maintain water quality, empowering women and providing education for children to safeguard water supplies, and develop policies around water cooperation across stakeholders and sectors. We further identify sustainable alternative solutions, including the use of ultraviolet radiation, advanced oxidation processes, and nanotechnology applied to water purification and water treatment, desalination, and recycling. Furthermore, we highlight the importance of building international networks to improve water quality education, capacity building, and fostering resource-sharing across disciplines and political boundaries to respond to the freshwater crisis.

Join us!

Programme

14.00 — **Opening Remarks**

Mr. Nikhil Seth
UN Assistant Secretary-General, and Executive Director
UNITAR

Dr. Rhonda Lenton
President and Vice-Chancellor
York University

14.10 — **Speakers**

Ms. Diana Kopensky
Head, Freshwater Ecosystems Unit, Marine and Freshwater Branch
UNEP

Dr. Kaveh Madani
Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water,
Environment and Health

Prof. Sapna Sharma
Academic Director, UNITAR Global Water Academy;
Professor, York University

Prof. Stephanie Gora
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Civil Engineering
York University

Mr. Federico Properzi
Chief Technical Advisor
UN-Water

14.50 — **Q&A**

14.55-15.00 — **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Alex Mejia
Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion
UNITAR