



Launch of the Global Knowledge Platform on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions in support of a Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19

Virtual Webinar | 21 October 2020

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Mr. Alex Trepelkov, Officer-In-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, **UN DESA**, acted as **Moderator** for the high-level segment of the event.

Welcoming Remarks: *Mr. Liu Zhenmin*, Under-Secretary-General, **UN DESA**, recognized the important role that water and energy play in achieving sustainable development. He asserted that the Global Knowledge Platform represents a hub for knowledge exchange on sustainable water and energy solutions. He pointed out that, while COVID-19 is our most urgent obstacle to overcome, climate change remains the biggest threat. Mr. Zhenmin stressed that in this unprecedented time, we need to stand in solidarity together and not forget our collective responsibility to present and future generations. This is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Keynote Remarks: *Mr. Miguel Gomez*, Coordination Director, **Itaipu Binacional, Paraguay**, acknowledged the support and collective efforts of all members of the network leading to the launch of the Global Knowledge Platform. He emphasized the Platform's role as a dynamic tool where experiences and information can be brought together by different stakeholders. *Mr. Luiz Felipe Carobonell*, Coordination Director, **Itaipu Binacional, Brazil**, emphasized the Platform's importance, as water and energy resources are essential, considering also their economic and social impact. He concluded by highlighting the Global Knowledge Platform as a forum for information exchange where people can learn how to use natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Special Remarks: *H.E Mr. Julio Cesar Arriola*, Permanent Representative of **Paraguay** to the United Nations, commended the progress the partnership has made since its inception in 2018, and welcomed the launch of the Global Knowledge Platform. He indicated that the Platform represents a key mechanism that will keep the partnership thriving and help pave the way forward in the recovery from COVID-19. *H.E Mr. Ronaldo Costa Filho*, Permanent Representative of **Brazil** to the United Nations, also commended the progress made by the partnership and its unique features. He emphasized that developing crosscutting perspectives on SDG interlinkages through multilateral processes and domestic policy making is not easy. He also conveyed that the Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions Network is a welcomed initiative, as billions of people still lack clean water, sanitation and basic hygiene, which are key features in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

TECHNICAL SEGMENT

Ms. Radia Sedaoui, Chief Energy Section, **UN ESCWA**, acted as **Moderator** for the technical segment of the event.

Mr. Ivan Vera, Senior Expert Advisor, **UN DESA**, presented the “Global Knowledge Platform on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions,” affirming the important role that sustainable water and energy solutions play in dealing with the COVID-19 world health crisis. Mr. Vera explained how the scoping paper on “Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions: Addressing Critical Services during the COVID-19 World Crisis and Beyond” helped identify the eight priority areas of the Global Knowledge Platform and provided information for the development of the website. He concluded by highlighting the purpose of the Platform, which is to have a comprehensive, user-friendly interface that is not just data and statistics, but also a mechanism for communication among different stakeholders.

Mr. Ariel Scheffer da Silva, Head of Environmental Management of **Itaipu Binacional, Brazil** discussed the stepping up actions on sanitation and tourism for a healthy COVID-19 recovery by Itaipu. He stated that Itaipu is committed to providing the necessary support for a more sustainable recovery from the pandemic in the region. Mr. Daniel Ramirez Brizuela, Social Responsibility Assessor of **Itaipu Binacional, Paraguay**, described the importance of water and energy in the response to COVID-19 from a territorial perspective. He emphasized Itaipu’s support on health services during this pandemic. *Ms. Isabel Cordon*, International Affairs Manager, **ASAZGUA**, focused on the Guatemalan Sugar Agroindustry’s active response to the COVID-19 emergency. She focused on actions and results by ASAZGUA aligned with the objectives of SDG 6 and SDG 7. Mr. Sohel Ahmed, Managing Director, **Grameen Shakti**, representing SOLShare and Grameen Shakti, spoke about integrated water and energy solutions in Bangladesh. He described the innovative approach of intervention through “Peer-to-Peer” solar energy trading and its role as a major mechanism for the creation of small businesses and entrepreneurship. Mr. Bas Berends, Chief Partnership Officer of the **OffGridBox**, described the integrated solution for clean water, solar energy and connectivity in remote areas based on their concept and product of a practical and self-contained water and energy box. He emphasized the connectivity and positive impact that the installations have generated, including job generation, fighting poverty, and technical training and gender equity as women are employed to manage the installations. Mr. Moez Jomâa, Research Scientist of, **SINTEF**, presented details about a project being conducted in Tunisia on solar electric maritime mobility for urban waterways. He stressed the positive environmental impacts of this project. Fernando Arlandis, Strategic Planning Deputy Director of the **Region of Madrid Water Company** (Canal de Isabel II), discussed the organization’s programme on promoting sustainable growth and self-production of energy through the water sector, as key elements for the recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. He emphasized four major work areas: communication and awareness, maximum efficiency levels, a tariff structure that encourage waters savings and water reuse.

CLOSING

Mr. Minoru Takada, Team Leader, Sustainable Energy, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, **UN DESA**, provided details about the way forward. He commended the series of projects presented, which provide excellent examples of the synergistic approaches needed among various sectors and at different levels in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in support of achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement. He concluded by asserting that the Network will continue developing and expanding the Global Knowledge Platform towards the final objective of providing a worldwide interactive forum for finding solutions and sharing experiences and knowledge.