

Second Global Symposium on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions: Towards a Green Economy

Canal de Isabel II

Madrid, Spain
12-14 June 2024

Concept Note

Background

Energy, water and the services enabled by these factors are essential to achieve poverty eradication, global prosperity, and economic growth. Sustained, reliable, and affordable access to these critical factors represents major challenges faced by many countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. The interdependency between water and energy has significant implications at global, regional, national, and local levels. The proper integrated management of these resources is crucial to anticipating future stress points, formulating and implementing rational policies, managing risks, realizing valuable synergies, preventing conflicts, and supporting the transition towards green economies, while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Major regional and global crises threatening the livelihood of many are interlinked through the water, energy, climate and terrestrial ecosystem nexus. Worldwide, an estimated 2.2 billion people remain without access to safely managed water supply and 3.5 billion do not have access to safely managed sanitation services. Without access to safe drinking water and sanitation, people cannot enjoy good health, food security and prosperity. Almost 675 million people still lack access to electricity, and over 2.3 billion use solid polluting fuels for cooking. Among them, forcibly displaced and stateless people and their hosting communities are among the most disadvantaged, and risk to be left behind from SDGs. At the same time, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) contribute to climate change, accounting for over 75% of GHG emissions in many economies.

Ensuring universal access to modern and sustainable energy, water and sanitation services while reducing related environmental impacts lies at the heart of sustainable development. The importance of energy and water is recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes the Sustainable Development Goals on water (SDG 6) and on energy (SDG 7). The Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is conducting a number of initiatives and events designed to support the integrated implementation of SDG 6 and SDG 7. One of these initiatives is the **Global Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions Network (SWES)** created in 2018 (<https://www.un.org/en/waterenergynetwork>). The Network aims towards a world where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water and energy resources for all, in support of human prosperity, ecosystem integrity and climate change objectives. In 2022, UN DESA convened the **First Global Symposium on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions** which was hosted by Itaipu Binacional at its headquarters in the border between Paraguay and Brazil.



Continuing this effort, UN DESA is convening the **Second Global Symposium on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions: Towards a Green Economy** to be hosted by Canal de Isabel II in Madrid, Spain on 12-14 June 2022, in collaboration with the SWES Network's members as well as the UNHCR office in Madrid. Additionally, the event supports the efforts by UNHCR detailed in its Strategic Plan for Climate Action 2024-2030 in relation to its commitment to reduce and manage the effects of climate change on forcibly displaced and stateless people with new technical output indicators and guidance on sustainable water services, shelter, livelihood and related energy implications.

Objective

The main objective of this global symposium is to enhance capacities of relevant stakeholders, including governmental institutions, to effectively manage the water-energy nexus and interlinkages with other SDGs covering the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and promoting the transition towards green economies. The event will provide a global platform for all stakeholders to disseminate knowledge, exchange experiences and showcase best practices on integrated approaches that support sustainable water and energy solutions. It will also represent an opportunity for dialogue on effective policy, technical and managerial approaches to water and energy supporting sustainable development.

Participants

Participants will include representatives of Member States, experts on water, energy, terrestrial ecosystems and climate change, UN organizations and other international organizations, representatives of the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. The event will aim to attract all relevant stakeholders and is expected to be attended by around 200 - 250 participants.

Language

The event will be conducted in English and simultaneous interpretation into and from Spanish will be provided.

Timing and Duration

The event will take place on 12-14 June 2024. The event will include plenary sessions during the first two days. The third day will be dedicated to field trips.

Venue

The plenary sessions of the Global Symposium will be held in the Sala Verde, Teatros del Canal, calle Cea Bermúdez, 1, Madrid. Field trips are being organized to visit three facilities:

- Wastewater Treatment Plant in Arroyo Culebro Cuenca Media Alta
- Reservoir in El Atazar
- Sludge Plant in Loeches

Logistics

A separate circular with logistic information for participants will be issued ahead of the event.

