

INCREASING TRADE TARIFFS AND THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECTS ON GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



**TRADE
TARIFFS**



COP

COP15 IN ZIMBABWE

- VICTORIA FALLS DECLARATION
- WETLAND RESTORATIONS RESOLUTIONS



GLOBAL WETLAND OUTLOOK 2025



**30% OF WETLANDS
LOST SINCE 1970**

**ONGOING
DEGRADATION**



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dr. Arvind Kumar
President
India Water Foundation

Dear Readers,

August 2025 presents us with a stark paradox: at the very moment when humanity most urgently needs to recognize and price the invaluable services our planet provides, we witness the resurgence of economic nationalism that threatens to fragment the collaborative frameworks essential for this recognition. The recent announcement of 25% tariffs on Indian imports followed by an additional 25% penalty, raising duties on many goods to 50%, by the Trump administration justified as a response to India's energy security arrangements with Russia illuminates a troubling disconnect between short-term political calculations and long-term sustainability imperatives.

Let me be unequivocal: these tariffs are not merely about trade balances or geopolitical posturing. They represent a fundamental assault on the interconnected systems that enable sustainable development. When we impose barriers on renewable energy components, green technology transfers, and environmental services, we effectively increase the cost of planetary preservation while decreasing the incentives for innovation in sustainability solutions. India's measured response, calling these measures "unjustified and unreasonable," reflects not diplomatic courtesy but economic reality: protectionism in the 21st century is an assault on the planet itself.

This trade turbulence emerges against a backdrop of two landmark developments that should inform every policy decision: the outcomes of biodiversity conservation initiatives and the release of the Global Wetlands Outlook 2025. The Ramsar COP15, held at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in July 2025, successfully concluded with the adoption of 13 resolutions focused on wetland restoration, protection of migratory birds, and equitable wetland governance. The conference established the Victoria Falls Declaration, emphasizing political commitment and resource mobilization for wetland management, while committing \$200 billion annually toward biodiversity financing by 2030. Yet even as we celebrate these multilateral achievements, unilateral trade actions threaten to undermine the very international cooperation that environmental challenges demand.

The Global Wetlands Outlook 2025, released by the Ramsar Convention Secretariat in July, delivers sobering clarity: 22% of the world's wetlands have vanished since 1970, with these ecosystems worth up to \$39 trillion annually in services disappearing faster than any other natural system on Earth. To put this in perspective: we are losing ecosystem services valued at more than twice the annual GDP of the United States, yet our economic accounting systems register this as progress when wetland destruction enables short-term development gains.

As these global forces collide where some seek to build walls while others strive to build wetlands this edition of our newsletter highlights the urgent need to stay focused on the path of sustainability, inclusion, and resilience.

In this spirit, we bring you rich insights from the Second Edition of the Meghna Knowledge Forum, held in Bangkok, which convened over 120 participants from more than 80 organizations. This vibrant regional exchange addressed pressing concerns across the Barak-Meghna River Basin, championing nature-based, community-led climate solutions. I emphasized the power of convergence-based models in transforming local livelihoods an approach we believe must be replicated across all climate-vulnerable geographies.

Our Media Spotlight captures IWF's participation in All India Radio's 'Public Speak' program, where he advocated for Rainwater Harvesting as a Household Revolution. His call for grassroots action serves as a timely reminder that national water security begins at home with every drop saved and every effort shared.

This edition also covers our strategic planning for the Water Transversality Global Awards & Conclave 2026, which recently commenced with the First Advisory Council Meeting. With participation from esteemed experts, UNESCAP leaders, and stakeholders across the climate and water spectrum, this meeting has laid the foundation for a powerful convergence of ideas, partnerships, and actionable themes on ESG, water-energy-health and environment nexus, and inclusive sustainability.

Further, our Knowledge Hub section features landmark releases the Sustainable Development Report 2025 and the Global Wetland Outlook 2025 offering critical data and recommendations that must shape both policy and practice in the months ahead. The convergence of these findings with our work provides a powerful policy compass for national and global stakeholders.

In Success Stories, we take you to the heart of local innovation in Odisha and Jharkhand where climate panchayats and solar-powered tech are not just buzzwords but daily instruments of resilience, livelihood security, and environmental stewardship. These stories reaffirm our conviction that solutions rooted in local knowledge are scalable for global impact.

We're also honoured to share the news of India Water Foundation's recent international recognition, with features in the World Water Council's July 2025 Newsletter and ICID's June 2025 Newsletter. These accolades highlight our leadership in sustainability dialogues from Bonn to Nice and affirm the value of water as a transversal catalyst for change.

Finally, the Upcoming Events section is brimming with opportunities from World Water Week 2025 to the Students Climate Action Conference inviting all of us to stay engaged, informed, and inspired.

In these pages, you will find stories of challenge and hope, science and activism, policy and grassroots movements each reinforcing the same message: collaborative water diplomacy and ecosystem-based solutions are our most powerful tools in building a just, secure, and sustainable future.

Let us keep working together, urgently, and unwaveringly toward that vision.

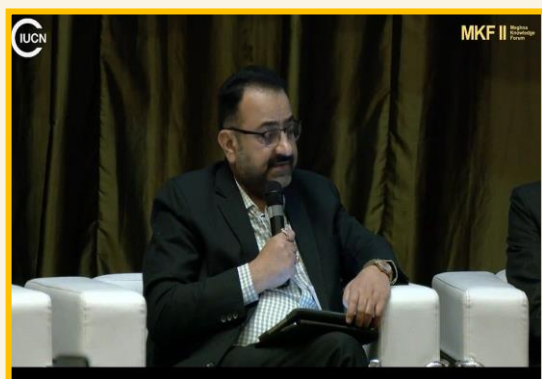


MEGHNA KNOWLEDGE FORUM II

The second edition of the Meghna Knowledge Forum (MKF II), held from 23–25 July 2025 at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, brought together more than 120 on-site participants representing over 80 organizations. This regional learning exchange served as a dynamic platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing focused on climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and poverty reduction in the Barak-Meghna River Basin. Jointly organised by IUCN, AIT, and South Asian University, MKF II was anchored on the theme **“Building Community and Ecosystem Resilience to Climate Change.”**

Over three days, the forum featured more than 60 speakers from diverse sectors—including government agencies, indigenous peoples’ organisations, research institutions, and youth and women leaders—who shared insights and solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing the 50 million people living in the Barak-Meghna Basin. Many of these communities are deeply dependent on forestry, fisheries, and agriculture—sectors increasingly impacted by climate change. The degradation of forests and wetlands is further weakening the ecological buffers that once protected these communities from floods, droughts, and other climate-induced disruptions.

The forum opened with impactful addresses by regional leaders. Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advisor to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Water Resources, Bangladesh, underscored the indivisible link between the wellbeing of river-dependent communities and the ecological health of the river system itself.



She called for greater recognition of the “rights of the river” as a foundational step towards securing the rights of the people.

Echoing the need for collective regional action, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, emphasized the forum’s importance in promoting cross-border cooperation on climate adaptation and sustainable development across the Bay of Bengal region.

A highlight of the forum was the thematic plenary on “Strengthening Community Livelihood Resilience,” where **Dr. Arvind Kumar, President of India Water Foundation (IWF)**, delivered a compelling address. Applauding the unique positioning of IWF in bridging policy frameworks with ground-level action, Dr. Kumar emphasized the Foundation’s contributions to institutional strengthening, capacity building, and policy drafting that have led to more inclusive and need-responsive development models.

Drawing from IWF’s extensive work across India, particularly in the northeastern region, Dr. Kumar shared the success of a convergence-based model that integrates water management, agriculture, and climate resilience—significantly enhancing local livelihoods and doubling economic returns. He stressed the model’s relevance for the Barak-Meghna River Basin and underscored the vital role of civil society organizations as connectors of science, policy, and community action.

Calling for transformative policy reforms, Dr. Kumar advocated for decentralized governance systems, integration of traditional and indigenous knowledge, flexible and sustained funding mechanisms, and long-term capacity building to scale nature-based, community-led climate solutions.

MKF II served not only as a knowledge-sharing platform but also as a call to action—bringing attention to the urgent need for integrated, inclusive, and regional approaches to build resilience in one of South Asia’s most climate-vulnerable yet ecologically rich river basins.

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ECOECHO: CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER



We are delighted to spotlight a recent milestone in our shared journey towards water sustainability. Our esteemed President, Dr. Arvind Kumar, represented the India Water Foundation on All India Radio's 'Public Speak' program to discuss a topic of urgent relevance: The Importance of Rainwater Harvesting and its Role in Water Conservation (वर्षा जल संचयन और जल संरक्षण में इसकी भूमिका).

In a thoughtful conversation, joined by Sh. G. Ashok Kumar, Former Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Dr. Kumar conveyed a powerful message: Water conservation is a responsibility shared by every individual, not just by governments. He urged listeners to recognize the impact of even the smallest efforts at the household and community level. According to Dr. Kumar, capturing and storing rainwater in our own homes and fields is both practical and transformative—it is an actionable step each of us can take today to ensure water security for generations to come.

Key Points from Dr. Arvind Kumar's Feature:

Collective Responsibility: Water conservation cannot be fulfilled by policy alone; it flourishes when every citizen contributes, no matter how modest their effort.

Power of Local Action: Dr. Kumar emphasized that small-scale rainwater harvesting in homes, residential communities, schools, and farmlands cumulatively makes a significant impact in mitigating water scarcity.

A Call for Innovation: The integration of innovative, cost-effective technologies is essential to make rainwater harvesting accessible, efficient, and sustainable. From rooftop systems to recharge pits, scalable solutions are readily available.

A Habit and a Movement: Dr. Kumar advocated for transforming rainwater harvesting from a sporadic activity into a daily habit and a nationwide movement—empowering communities to become water-independent.

[WATCH NOW](#)

He concluded with a clarion call: Let us work together, harness the monsoon bounty, and make rainwater harvesting a way of life. By embracing these practices today, we safeguard the future of water for our children and the generations that follow.

As we celebrate Dr. Arvind Kumar's passionate advocacy, let us reaffirm our own commitment to water conservation. May his vision inspire us all to act—one drop, one household, and one community at a time.

STRATEGIC PLANNING BEGINS FOR THE WATER TRANSVERSALITY GLOBAL AWARDS AND CONCLAVE 2026



We are pleased to announce the successful convening of the First Advisory Council Meeting for the Second Edition of the Water Transversality Global Awards and Conclave 2026, held in hybrid mode on 4th July 2025 at the India Water Foundation's corporate office.

The meeting marked the official launch of strategic planning for the upcoming conclave, setting the tone for an ambitious and collaborative event. Discussions centered on several key themes, including institutional partnerships, thematic sessions, stakeholder engagement, ESG integration, and international collaboration. Participants shared valuable insights that will guide the next phases of preparation and execution.

The following esteemed members were present in person:

Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation (IWF); Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Director and Head, UNESCAP-SSWA; Dr. Ajeet Tyagi, Patron and Chairman, Committee on Climate Change, IWF; Mr. M. P. Singh, Chief Advisor, IWF; Mr. Sunny Pandya, Chief Advisor, National Strategy & State Leadership, IWF; Ms. Shweta Tyagi, Chief Functionary, IWF

Joining virtually were: Sh. Ranjit Kumar Pachnanda, Honorary Patron & Chairman, Committee on Water-Energy-Food Nexus, IWF; Prof. Ashok K. Keshari, Department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi; Mr. Ruchir Mishra, Legal Advisor, IWF

The meeting reaffirmed the collective commitment of the Advisory Council to shape a more inclusive, impactful, and globally relevant second edition of the Conclave. We express our sincere gratitude to all members for their meaningful participation and look forward to continued collaboration as we move forward in our mission to promote water transversality for sustainability and resilience.

KNOWLEDGE HUB



The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025 presents a sobering midpoint review: while progress since 2015 has improved lives, advancing education, health, energy access, and disease prevention the pace remains too slow to meet all 2030 targets. Deep inequalities, climate crises, and rising debts persist. Yet success stories, such as universal electricity in 45 countries and disease elimination in 54, show progress is possible. The report urges urgent action across six areas—food, energy, digital access, education, jobs, and climate and calls for stronger global cooperation and investment.

[CLICK HERE](#)



Sustainable Development Report 2025

The Sustainable Development Report (SDR) reviews progress made each year on the Sustainable Development Goals since their adoption by the 193 UN Member States in 2015. Ahead of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (Ff4D) in Seville, Spain, the 10th edition of the SDR outlines urgent reforms to the Global Financial Architecture (GFA). This edition also includes for the first time an assessment of which countries have most progressed on the SDGs using a headline SDG Index (SDGi).

[CLICK HERE](#)



Global Wetland Outlook 2025

The Global Wetland Outlook 2025 offers the most current global evaluation of the condition, trends, value and policy responses concerning wetlands. Produced by the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) of the Convention on Wetlands, it synthesises recent scientific and economic evidence to examine the extent of wetland loss and degradation, the ecosystem services that wetlands provide, and the actions required to achieve international restoration and conservation targets.

[CLICK HERE](#)

EVENT ALERT!



Join us for the **2nd Water Transversality Global Awards & Conclave 2026**, a two-day conference on “*ESG Transversality for Sustainable Water, Energy, Health and Environment Nexus*.” This landmark event will explore ESG integration, the Water-Energy-Health & Environment Nexus, global collaboration, and innovations driving carbon neutrality. Don’t miss this convergence of policy, industry, and sustainability leadership.

[Please click here for more information.](#)

SUCCESS STORIES



How 10000 People in Odisha Are Using Local Wisdom To Protect Farms, Forests, & the Future

Can conversations save coasts? In Odisha's villages, Socratus Foundation's Climate Panchayats bring 10,000 villagers and experts together to tackle cyclones, mangrove loss, and fragile livelihoods.

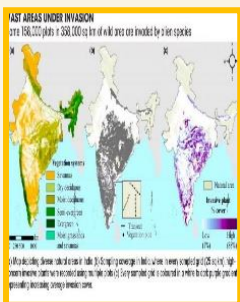
[Read more](#)

This Jharkhand Village Cut Crop Losses with Solar Tech – Now It's a Model for 12 Districts

In Jharkhand's mining districts, solar dryers, irrigation pumps, and cold storage units are helping smallholder farmers reduce waste and increase income. Through the JH-RESET project, supported by Swaniti Initiative,

[Read more](#)

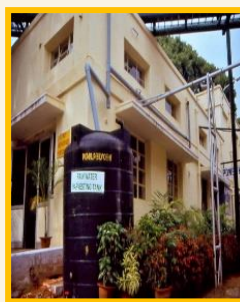
FRIDAY BLOGS



Rewilding the Narrative to Restore What Matters!



Valuing Wetlands for Resilience



Reweighting Rainwater Harvesting to Unlock this Potential?



India's Pivotal Moment in Changing South Asian Geopolitical Paradigms

INVITATION TO JOIN MEMBERSHIP

At the India Water Foundation (IWF), we're more than just a network—we're a movement. By becoming a member, you join hands with individuals, organizations, and institutions passionate about sustainability, environmental conservation, and driving meaningful change.

Why Join Us?

We're committed to creating opportunities for every member to make a real impact. Here's what we offer:

- **Shape Policies with Us:** Be part of advocacy efforts that influence sustainable development strategies.
- **Learn and Grow Together:** Attend our exclusive workshops and training programs, designed to keep you at the forefront of innovation.
- **Connect with Change-makers:** Collaborate with a global network of experts, innovators, and leaders.
- **Make a Grassroots Impact:** Help us drive community-led projects that promote resource efficiency and environmental resilience.
- **Be Recognized for Your Efforts:** Let us celebrate your contributions through awards, features, and event opportunities.

Who Can Join?

We welcome everyone who shares our vision, including: Companies, institutions, and organizations of all sizes, NGOs, government bodies, and Intergovernmental organizations
Individuals—from young professionals to retirees, who want to create positive change

Whether you're a policymaker, innovator, or community advocate, there's a place for you here!

Our Special JalMitra Social Outreach Membership

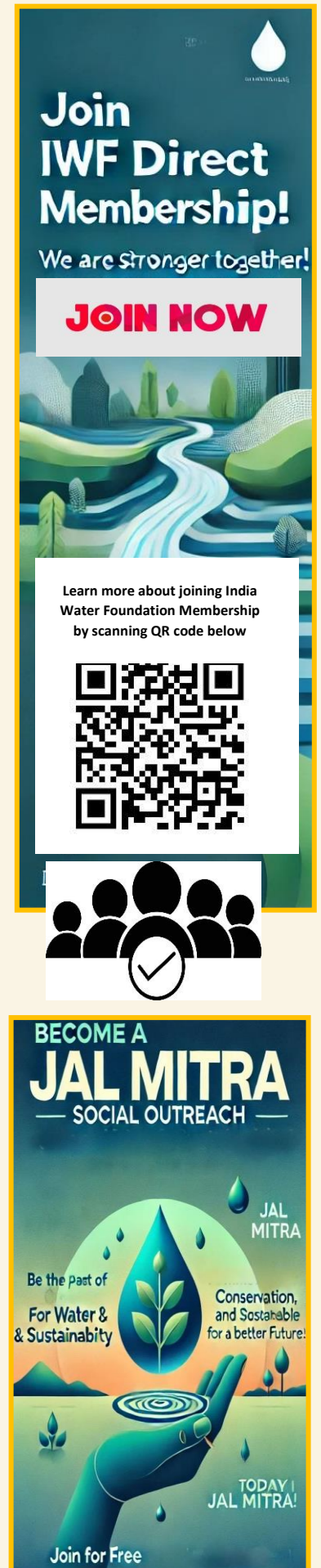
The JalMitra outreach program and encourages sustainable living practices by promoting sustainable conservation and restoration projects. The campaign fosters awareness and behavioural change at the grassroots level, enabling communities to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles that reduce ecological footprints and contribute to national and global sustainability goals.

Anyone can join this collective effort and become a Jal Mitra free of cost.

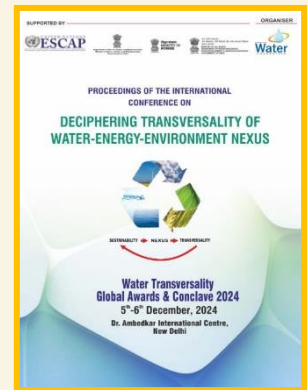
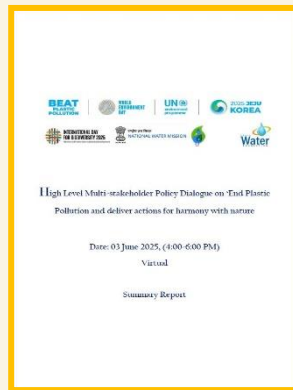
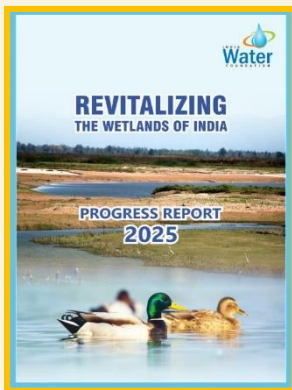
How to Join?

Take the first step today! Visit [Become an IWF Member](https://indiawaterfoundation.org/jal-mitra/) to apply and join this transformative movement. Together, let's shape a sustainable future!

<https://indiawaterfoundation.org/jal-mitra/>



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

We are proud to share a moment of collective achievement — India Water Foundation (IWF) has recently been featured in two globally respected newsletters, recognizing our pivotal role in championing sustainable development through water-centric dialogues and action.

World Water Council's July 2025 Newsletter

The World Water Council spotlighted IWF for its leadership in global sustainability conversations throughout June 2025. From co-hosting the World Environment Day dialogue on “End Plastic Pollution and Deliver Actions for Harmony with Nature” with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, to leading a high-level session on marine and coastal ecosystem conservation at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, and pushing the agenda for mainstreaming water into NDCs and NAPs at the Bonn Climate Change Conference — IWF continues to serve as a catalyst for advancing water-related global action.

ICID's June 2025 Newsletter

The International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage featured IWF's work in an insightful article titled “When Climate Reality Demands a New Narrative” by our Chief Functionary, Ms. Shweta Tyagi. The article outlines IWF's strategic efforts to combat climate change and plastic pollution through high-level dialogues, cross-sectoral collaboration, and impactful contributions to international policy discussions on water and biodiversity.

These recognitions are not just a milestone but a motivation to intensify our work in building resilient ecosystems, climate-smart water strategies, and inclusive sustainability dialogues — both in India and across the Global South.

We thank all our partners and stakeholders who continue to believe in and strengthen our journey.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **05-14 Aug: Plastic Pollution INC-5.2.** The second part of the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5.2) will take place in Geneva, Switzerland.
<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/plastic-pollution-inc-52/>
- **05–08 Aug: Third UN Conference on LLDCs.** The Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) will explore innovative solutions to challenges faced by LLDCs and build meaningful, strategic partnerships to unlock the potential of LLDCs.
<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/third-un-conference-on-lldc/>
- **18-29 Aug: BBNJ PrepCom II.** The second substantive meeting of the Preparatory Commission (PrepCom II) for the Entry into Force of the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and the Convening of the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement will continue work on the cluster of issues agreed by the organizational session and initially discussed at PrepCom I.
<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/bbnj-prepcom-ii/>
- **24-28 Aug: World Water Week 2025.** World Water Week 2025 will focus on the theme, 'Water for Climate Action'. The theme recognizes the pivotal role of water in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to build resilience safeguarding ecosystems and communities. World Water Week 2025 will focus on addressing the linked emergencies of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation, emphasizing climate mitigation and climate adaptation and resilience.
<https://worldwaterweek.org/>
- **26-29 Aug: Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.** The Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific will discuss and prioritize environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The Forum will provide an opportunity to contribute to the outcome of the seventh session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), which is taking place under the theme, 'Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet'.
<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/sixth-forum-of-ministers-and-environment-authorities-of-asia-pacific/>
- **28-30 Aug: 20th Everything About Water Expo 2025.** The South Asia's largest water expo, featuring international pavilions, technical seminars, and policy dialogues on water treatment and resource management.
<https://eawaterexpo.com/>
- **29 Aug-01 Sep: 12th IWA Symposium on Tastes, Odors, and Algal Toxins in Drinking Water Sources and Aquaculture.** The 12th International Water Association (IWA) Symposium on Tastes, Odors, and Algal Toxins in Drinking Water Sources and Aquaculture will primarily address issues related to tastes, odors, and algal toxins in water sources and aquaculture environments, including those caused by the abnormal growth of cyanobacteria and other factors affecting water quality and sensory properties.
<https://sdg.iisd.org/events/12th-iwa-symposium-on-tastes-odors-and-algal-toxins-in-drinking-water-sources-and-aquaculture/>

IWF e- newsletter is a monthly compilation of news items on IWF-related issues in the domain of Water, Agriculture, Climate Change, SDGs, inclusive development and Water Resources Management that might be of interest to the IWF fraternity. The information contained in the NEWSLETTER does not purport to be exhaustive and is taken "as it is" from external sources and is freely available on the internet. No evaluation on the part of the IWF Office is being made in terms of the authenticity of the information that it may contain. IWF Office makes no guarantee, either express or implied, as to the accuracy of the information published. Your valuable feedback on the usefulness of the bulletin is solicited at contact@indiawaterfoundation.org.

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