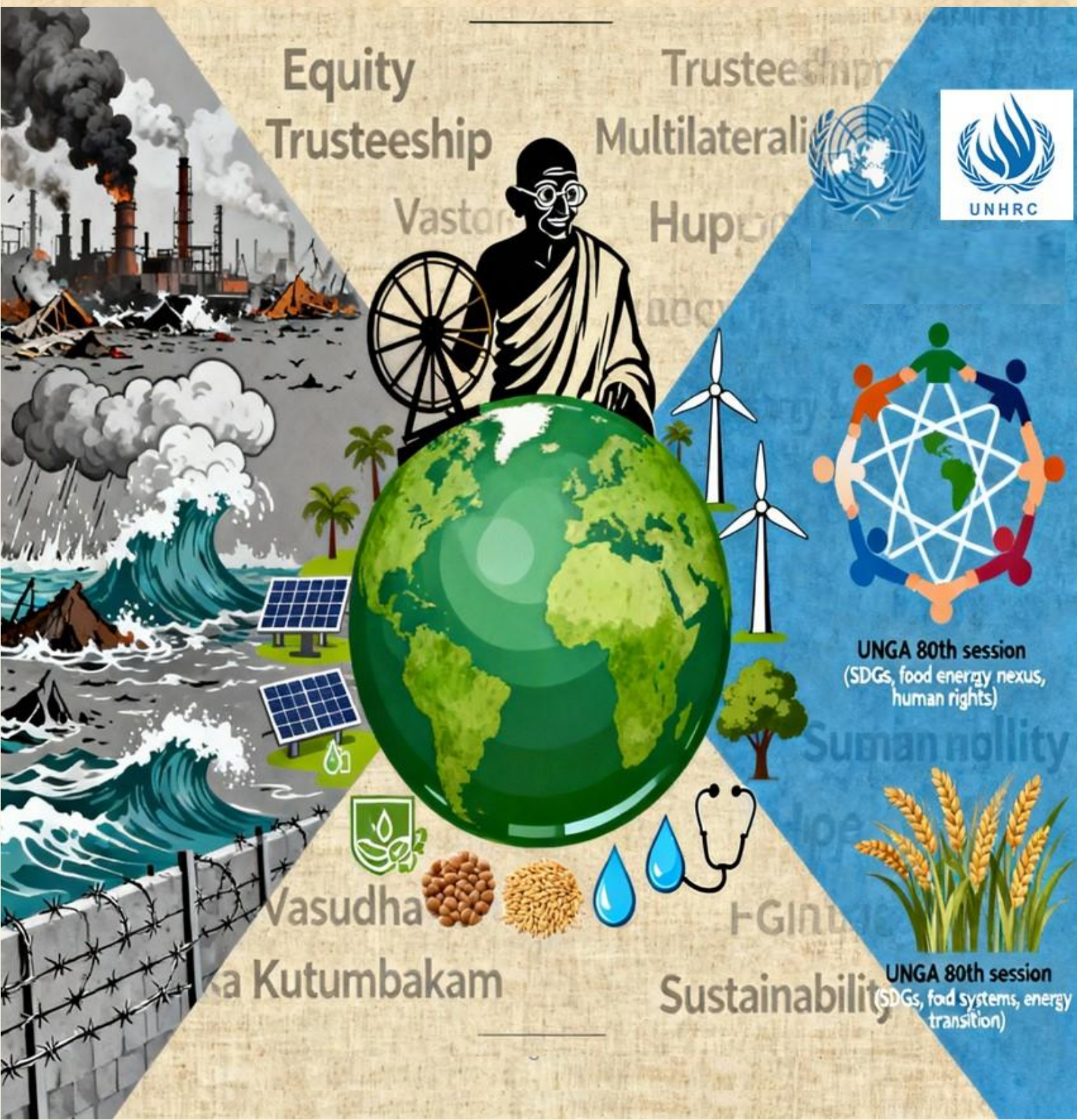


# TOWARDS A GANDHIAN PRINCIPLE FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY



### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



**Dr. Arvind Kumar**  
President  
India Water Foundation

**Dear Readers,**

September has been a month of both progress and paradox on the global stage. The 60th Session of the UN Human Rights Council and the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly reaffirmed what India has long stood for: that human rights, environmental justice, and sustainable development are inseparable. Yet, they also exposed how far the world remains from living up to its promises.

At the Human Rights Council, the Water and Energy Nexus report rightly highlighted how market-driven energy systems exploit and contaminate water, calling instead for community-led, decentralized transitions an idea Gandhiji would have recognized as Swaraj and trusteeship. Equally historic was the resolution on sea-level rise, affirming the sovereignty and rights of small island nations and future generations. These are reminders that water, sanitation, and a healthy environment are not privileges, but fundamental human rights.

At the General Assembly, nearly 100 countries pledged new climate targets. China, for the first time, announced economy-wide commitments, and India showcased its leadership through initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and Mission LiFE. And yet, the numbers speak louder than speeches: current commitments reduce emissions by only 2.6% by 2030, when science demands a 43% cut. Meanwhile, nearly half of all SDG targets lag or regress, hunger scars over 750 million people, and developing nations face an annual \$4 trillion financing gap.



Adding to this crisis of credibility, the world also heard unilateral voices of denial. U.S. President Donald Trump dismissed climate change as a “con job” and even threatened tariffs on green transitions; a move that would hit developing economies hardest, those already suffering cloudbursts, floods, and climate extremes they did not cause. The question arises: is sustainability to be a privilege of the powerful, or a shared right of humanity?

This widening divide between Global North and South of emissions, finance, technology, and responsibility challenges the very spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the ancient Indian belief that the world is one family. Gandhiji warned us: “The Earth has enough for our needs, but not for our greed.” Our Constitution echoes this wisdom in its commitment to justice, equality, dignity, and environmental stewardship. And yet, greed today disguises itself as complacency and incrementalism, while inequities deepen.

But no nation can secure its future alone. Climate change is borderless, and so must be our response. The coming months from the Second World Summit on Social Development in Doha to COP30 in Brazil will test whether the global community can act holistically, not unilaterally; cooperatively, not competitively. Will leaders rise above narrow interests to embrace the ethic of development for all, with everyone’s participation and translate it into a global ethic? Or will the world drift further into an order where survival is the privilege of the few?

This is not merely a question of sustainability. It is a question of morality, of justice, of humanity itself. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution is not a challenge of technology alone, but of values. Gandhiji’s philosophy of truth, nonviolence, and trusteeship offers a timeless guide. If we have the courage to practice it, sustainability can be more than rhetoric it can be reality.





# 60th session

## HIGH LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE ON "FROM PERIPHERY TO MAINSTREAM: NORTH EAST INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS"

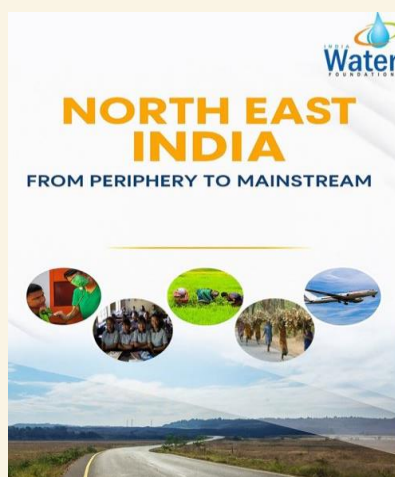
During the 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the India Water Foundation convened a high-level policy dialogue on "From Periphery to Mainstream: North East India's Development Pathways". Dr. Arvind Kumar highlighted the region's decade-long transformation through strategic investments, community participation, and sustainable practices, citing milestones like Assam's cancer care network, Mizoram's full literacy, and Sikkim's organic farming. Dr. Pema Gyamtsho emphasized ecosystem-based solutions, including forest conservation, water security, and cross-border learning initiatives. Prof. Eddy Moors focused on water management as a driver for cooperation and biodiversity-linked human rights. Ms. Mikiko Tanaka highlighted opportunities in regional trade and connectivity, while Mr. Vinod Mishra shared progress on SDGs, health, and sanitation. Mr. Satheesh Kumar Damodaran underscored cooperative federalism and knowledge-sharing models, and Ms. Shweta Tyagi showcased infrastructure, social reforms, and youth empowerment initiatives. The dialogue concluded that Northeast India's development success stems from community-driven, sustainable, and inclusive approaches, offering replicable models for other regions while emphasizing the need to address climate risks, unemployment, and infrastructure gaps.

### Key Takeaways

- Community-driven development is essential for long-term sustainability.
- Infrastructure investments should prioritize both connectivity and resilience.
- Water cooperation can serve as a platform for peace, health, and economic growth.
- Indigenous knowledge must be integrated into planning processes for context-specific solutions.
- Trade partnerships with neighbouring countries offer vast potential but require addressing systemic bottlenecks.



**A digital booklet on “Periphery to Mainstream: North East India’s Development Pathways” will also be launched during the event. For your digital copy scan QR below.**



**The session received media coverage from outlets including:**

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/india/from-periphery-to-mainstream-high-level-policy-dialogue-at-un-showcases-northeast-indias-potential/articleshow/123867159.cms>

<https://m.thewire.in/article/ptiprnews/is-indias-northeast-setting-precedent-of-integrated-development-for-global-south/amp?utm=relatedarticles>

<https://www.ptinews.com/editor-detail/is-india%E2%80%99s-northeast-setting-precedent-of-integrated-development-for-global-south-/2918840>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFWSByqUehY&list=PLpUdvFcUi8XtAj5k\\_2QCq6nwTivtSZK8q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFWSByqUehY&list=PLpUdvFcUi8XtAj5k_2QCq6nwTivtSZK8q)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/business/is-indias-northeast-setting-precedent-of-integrated-development-for-global-south/>





# 60th session

## INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

India Water Foundation (IWF) also played a proactive role in amplifying the voices of communities, advancing climate justice, and spotlighting sustainable development pathways. During the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, IWF, delivered a powerful intervention titled “From Polluters to Payback: A Call for Climate Equity.” He held the Global North accountable as historical polluters and stressed that climate justice must be gender-responsive, adequately funded, and anchored in international solidarity to ensure an equitable sharing of both burdens and benefits. He highlighted how India’s policies integrate gender considerations, enabling women’s leadership in water management, renewable energy, and climate-resilient agriculture. Initiatives such as the National Adaptation Fund on Climate Change and targeted financing for women farmers and entrepreneurs were cited as strong examples. Calling for scaled-up climate finance beyond the USD 100 billion commitment, Dr. Kumar emphasized South-South cooperation through affordable renewable technologies, disaster risk reduction expertise, and nature-based solutions, while urging that climate justice must move from being an abstract aspiration to a funded, inclusive, and practical reality that safeguards the planet while advancing the right to development for all





# 60th session

## GENERAL DEBATE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5 ON HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES AND MECHANISMS

In the General Debate under Agenda Item 5 on human rights bodies and mechanisms, Ms. Shweta Tyagi, Chief Functionary, IWF, underscored the indispensable role of civil society in advancing human dignity and accountability. She welcomed the Secretary-General's report on intimidation and reprisals and urged Member States to foster enabling environments where experts, defenders, and communities can engage freely with UN mechanisms. Stressing IWF's role in bringing voices from fragile ecosystems, indigenous groups, and rural populations, she highlighted how cross-learning between local realities and international frameworks enriches policy outcomes. Ms. Tyagi called for stronger synergies between the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, ensuring that civil society knowledge is not only acknowledged but also translated into tangible action aligned with the 2030 Agenda, positioning cooperation with UN mechanisms as a cornerstone of effective multilateralism.







# 60th session

## IWF'S PHOTO EXHIBITION AT UN HIGHLIGHTS NE INDIA'S TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY



Complementing these interventions, IWF also reached beyond formal deliberations by hosting a photo and poster exhibition on 16 September 2025 at Broken Chair Square, Palais des Nations, Geneva, [showcasing the remarkable transformation of India's Northeast region](#). The exhibition highlighted how the region, long challenged by isolation, fragile ecosystems, and limited resources, is embracing locally tailored, sustainable development models driving progress in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and livelihoods. With recent momentum fuelled by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visits to Mizoram, Manipur, and Assam, and over ₹36,000 crore worth of projects in connectivity, clean energy, and welfare, the Northeast is fast integrating into India's mainstream growth story. From Mizoram's first-ever rail link to Aizawl and expanded roads, to healthcare advancements in Manipur and industrial growth in Assam, these initiatives are reshaping the region's socio-economic landscape. By offering global delegates and opportunity to explore these achievements, IWF spotlighted the resilience, innovation, and determination of the Northeast, underscoring how localized, context-specific solutions can drive inclusive and sustainable progress





### North East India – From Periphery to Mainstream: Precedent for Global South



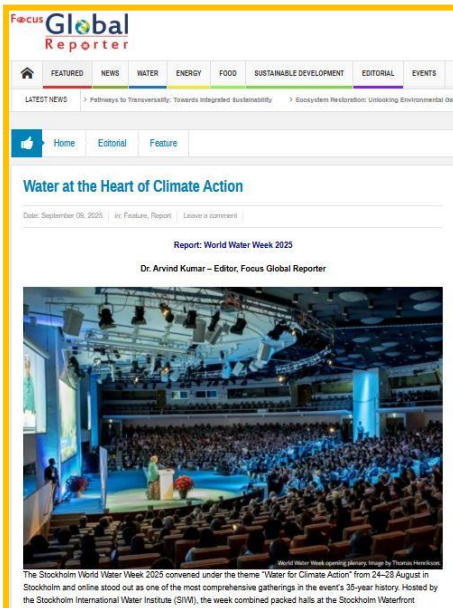
Once seen as a remote frontier, Northeast India is now emerging as a model of peace, progress, and prosperity. At the 60th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, the India Water Foundation hosted a high-level policy dialogue spotlighting the region's transformation. Eminent speakers highlighted milestones such as Sikkim's organic farming, Mizoram's full literacy, Assam's cancer care network, and growing cross-border trade opportunities underscoring sustainable development, water security, climate resilience, and inclusive growth as the cornerstones of this progress.

The article “North East India: From Periphery to Mainstream – A Precedent for the Global South” has been authored by Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation.



[>>Read the Full Article](#)

## World Water Week 2025



The most significant water event of September was actually World Water Week 2025, which took place from August 24-28, 2025, in Stockholm, Sweden, under the theme "Water for Climate Action". This premier global conference, organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), focused on addressing the linked emergencies of climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.

During the event, India's National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) was recognized as a global inspiration for river revival and community-driven efforts, participating in the session "River Cities Reimagined: Climate-Smart and Basin-Centric Urban Development".

Read full report by Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, IWF

## National Initiative on Water Security



On September 26, 2025, the Government of India launched the National Initiative on Water Security, amending Schedule I of MGNREGA to prioritize water conservation. The initiative mandates:

- Critical blocks: 65% of MGNREGA funds for water-related works
- Semi-critical blocks: 40% of funds for water conservation
- Safe blocks: 30% minimum for water activities

This represents a shift from reactive to preventive water management, targeting areas of greatest water need based on the Dynamic Ground Water Resources Assessment Report 2024.





## Essential services for quality care: water, sanitation, hygiene, health care waste and electricity services in health care facilities: global progress report

Over 100 countries have made unprecedented efforts to improve basic services in health care facilities according to the latest joint WHO/UNICEF global progress report, Essential Services for Quality Care: Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Health Care Waste and Electricity Services in Health Care Facilities. While there is progress in establishing standards, conducting baseline assessments, and developing national roadmaps, billions are still served by facilities without the basics. A significant acceleration of effort and investment is urgently needed to meet 2030 global targets.



## Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2025

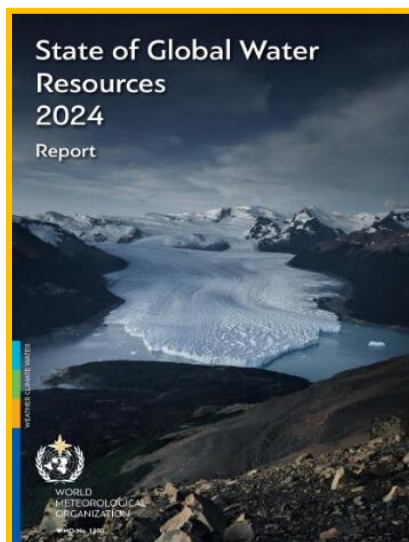
This report provides an analysis of regional and global figures and trends for the 22 SDG indicators under FAO's responsibility, thus fulfilling one of FAO's key roles as custodian agency. The world is at a moderate distance from achieving roughly half of the food and agriculture-related SDG indicators under FAO custodianship; one-quarter of the indicators are close to being achieved, whereas another quarter remains far or very far from being achieved. Meanwhile, progress since 2015 has deteriorated on over three-fifths of the indicators; one indicator has stagnated; whereas only the remaining one-third of indicators have registered an improvement or slight improvement.

## 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.](#)



## WMO State of Global Water Resources Report 2024

Released in September 2025, found that the global water cycle is becoming increasingly erratic, with dramatic swings between extreme flooding and severe drought. Only one-third of the world’s rivers experienced normal conditions in 2024, while the remainder saw either excess or deficient water levels. Alarmingly, all 19 monitored glacier regions lost mass during the year, resulting in a combined melt of approximately 450 gigatonnes of ice adding about 1.2 millimeters to global sea level. The report also highlighted a worsening water access crisis: 3.6 billion people now endure inadequate water access for at least one month annually, a figure projected to rise above 5 billion by 2050 if current trends continue.



## SUCCESS STORIES



### **Saving 400+ Crocodile, Turtle & Bird Eggs During Massive Flood Control Efforts Along Vadodara's Vishwamitri River**

During Vadodara's Vishwamitri flood mitigation, 410 eggs of crocodiles, turtles, and birds were carefully rescued and incubated to protect biodiversity. This conservation effort safeguarded 440 crocodiles and demonstrated how infrastructure projects can coexist with wildlife preservation.

**READ  
MORE**



### **Villagers United To Revive Elathur Lake, Creating a Safe Haven for 187 Bird Species in Tamil Nadu**

Once threatened by poaching and tree-cutting, Elathur Lake in Erode is now home to 187 bird species and a proud Biodiversity Heritage Site thanks to its people.

**READ  
MORE**



**UNGA 80: Is it still  
Shared Vision,  
Shared  
Prosperity?**

**Echoes from  
Geneva: Bridging  
the gap in Human  
Rights Action**



**Catapulting  
Northeast India  
from Periphery to  
Mainstream**

**Is Tianjin  
Heralding a New  
World Order?**





# INVITATION TO JOIN DIRECT 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!

**JOIN NOW**



**IWF Direct  
Membership!**  
We are stronger together



Learn more about joining  
India Water Foundation  
Membership by scanning  
QR code below



# INVITATION TO JOIN SOCIAL OUTREACH MEMBERSHIP

## Our Special JalMitra Social Outreach Membership

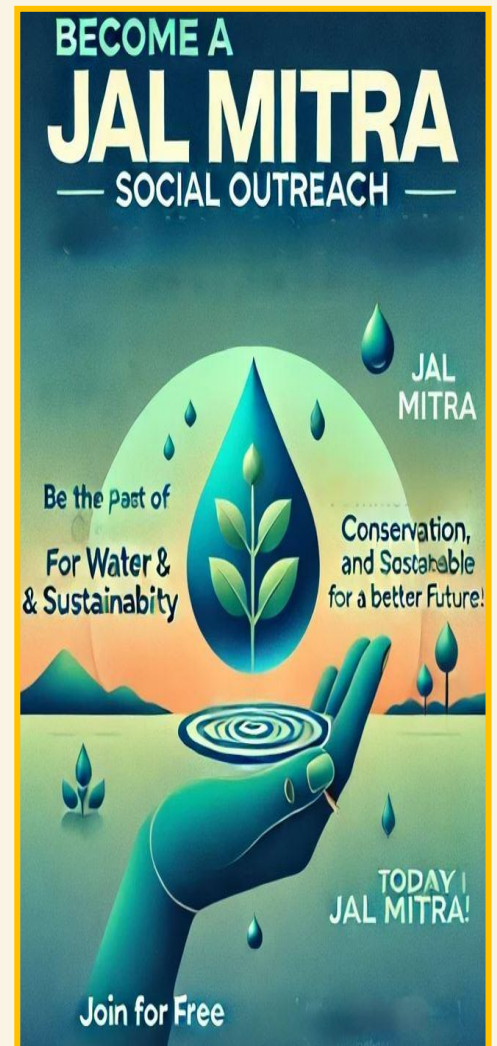
The JalMitra outreach program encourages sustainable living practices by promoting sustainable conservation and restoration projects. The campaign fosters awareness and behavioural change at the grassroots level, enabling communities to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles that reduce ecological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

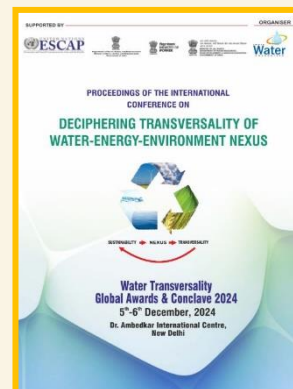
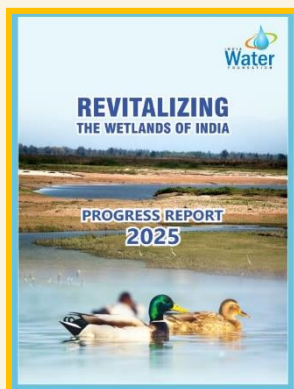
Take the first step today! Visit [Become an IWF Member](https://indiawaterfoundation.org/jal-mitra/) to apply and join this transformative movement. Together, let's shape a sustainable future!

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





## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



## LEARNCASTS

IceMing & Digit / <https://betterimagesofai.org/> / <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

OECD report

An illustration of two people sitting on a bench, talking to a bird wearing headphones. The bird is holding a small object in its beak. The background is a stylized city street.

# Digit Debates

**Generative AI:  
A solution to the SME skills challenge?**

5 November 2025  
13:30-15:00 CET

ESRC Centre for  
Digital Futures at Work

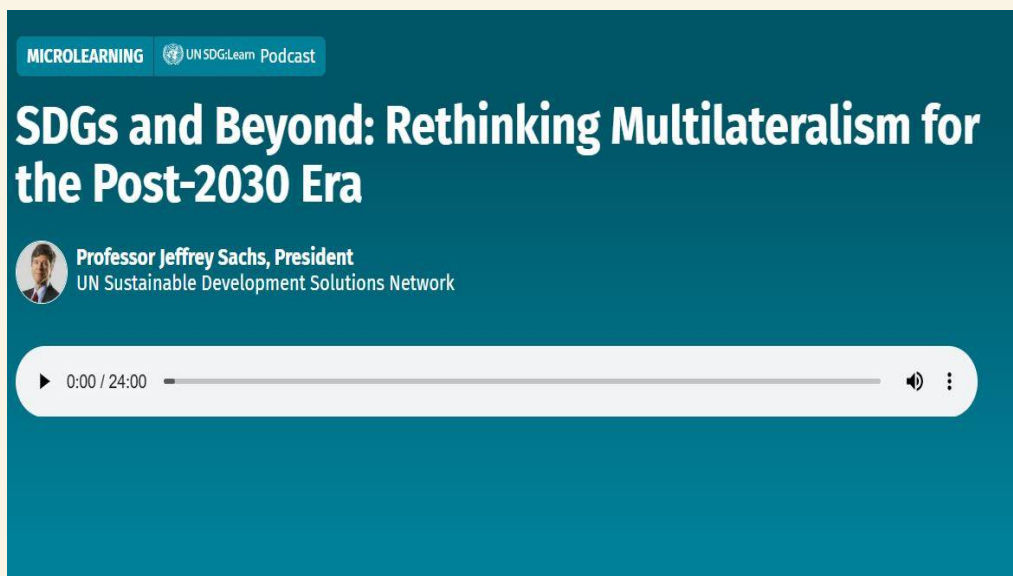
**Learn more and register**

## Generative AI: A solution to the SME skills challenge?

5 November 2025, 13:30-15:00 CET, webinar

How are SMEs using generative AI today? Can it help address labour and skill challenges? How can SMEs strike the right balance between automation and human expertise? And how should policymakers support SMEs and the SME workforce to get the best from generative AI?

Marguerita Lane (OECD) will present findings from a new OECD report based on a survey of over 5 000 SMEs across 7 countries. The presentation will be followed by an expert panel discussion chaired by Mark Stuart (ESRC Centre for Digital Futures at Work). 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.



As 2030 approaches, the Sustainable Development Goals stand at a crossroads. While some targets are within reach, others lag dangerously behind. At the same time, the global order is shifting: geopolitical rivalries are reshaping alliances, conflicts are straining the international system, and the United Nations itself is grappling with calls for reform.

What happens to sustainable development in a world where trust in multilateralism is fraying, yet the need for collective action has never been greater?

In this episode, we speak with Professor Jeffrey Sachs — President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, University Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

- **06-09 Oct: World Energy Week 2025.** It is a powerful platform that connects regional realities and priorities with the global energy agenda and serves as an important milestone between the World Energy Council's bi-annual World Energy Congress.  
<https://www.worldenergy.org/experiences-events/world-energy-week/world-energy-week-2025>
- **10-17 Oct: World Food Forum (WFF) 2025.** It is a global platform that drives action to transform agrifood systems through the power of youth, science and innovation, and investment. Bringing together all stakeholders, it serves as a dynamic space for turning ideas into actions, scaling solutions and forging synergistic partnerships.  
<https://www.world-food-forum.org/>
- **12-16 Oct: Cairo Water Week (CWW).** It has emerged as a cornerstone event for global water discourse, uniting governments, organizations, and innovators who share a common vision: safeguarding water as the lifeblood of sustainable development.  
<https://www.cairowaterweek.org/cww2025/>
- **14-16 Oct: CAMWATER 2025.** It returns on October 14-16, 2025, at the prestigious Diamond Island Convention and Exhibition Centre (DICEC) in Koh Pich. Now in its XX change to 13th edition, Cambodia's No.1 International Water & Wastewater Treatment Show continues its mission to support the Kingdom's water infrastructure development.  
<https://careforsustainability.com/india/>
- **09-15 Oct: IUCN World Conservation Congress.** A once-every-four-years gathering of nature conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers from around the world  
<https://iucncongress2025.org/>
- **27-28 Oct: International Conference on Water, Peace and Security 2025.** Brings together governments, international organizations, researchers, civil society, and key stakeholders to explore the critical role of water as a catalyst for peace and cooperation.  
<https://waterpeacesecurity.org/info/International-Conference-on-Water-Peace-and-Security-2025-Water-as-a-catalyst-for-peace-and-cooperation>
- **01 Oct: MONDIACULT 2025.** . The 2025 edition brings together thousands of participants to set the global agenda for culture in the years ahead.  
<https://www.unesco.org/en/mondiacult>

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](mailto:contact@indiawaterfoundation.org)>.

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