



SIDE EVENT

The Hidden Wealth of Nations: Groundwater in Times of Climate Change

Side Event Room 6

17:00 – 18:15, Wednesday, 22 March 2023

UN HQ New York

This event will offer new perspectives on the importance of groundwater for sustainable, and equitable growth and climate adaptation in countries that underuse it and those that overuse it.

Outcomes sought: 1. Raising the profile of groundwater as underpinning resilient growth and development; 2. mobilizing non-water audiences and high-level policymakers around the needed cross-sectoral reforms to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of the groundwater resource.

The World Bank, the Danish Water Forum, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development invite UN 2023 Water Conference delegates to attend the discussions on **The Hidden Wealth of Nations: Groundwater in Times of Climate Change**, aiming at raising the profile of groundwater as underpinning resilient growth and development and mobilizing non-water audiences and high-level policymakers around the needed cross-sectoral reforms to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of the groundwater resource.

Groundwater is a crucial component of the water cycle. It is available (almost) everywhere on Earth in sufficient quantity and adequate quality to sustain groundwater-based rural drinking water supply. Using the right tools, the invisible groundwater gets visible and can be utilized. While resource estimates may vary, the importance of groundwater for water supply, irrigation, and environmental balance is widely recognized. Groundwater accounts for half of the drinking water and over 40 percent of irrigation water use globally. Groundwater shows the main unrealized potential for the development of safe and affordable rural drinking water supply and community-managed self-supply as a potential game-changer to accelerate the achievement of SDGs beyond government capacity. Some regions depend on this resource for most of their water needs. However, its invisible nature has further heightened the common pool resource issues of mismanagement and overexploitation typically faced by water. Groundwater data quality and interpretation are also often a concern and can lead to political manipulation of facts and maladaptation. Yet, groundwater is used and relied upon in many parts of the world, especially arid and semi-arid, often leading to resource depletion. The event will bring a forward-looking platform on the needed cross-sectoral actions, big items reforms, and groundwater investments to play a critical role in supporting and protecting sustainable socio-economic development and growth under climate change.

The side event will set the stage by presenting for the first time the main results of a forthcoming World Bank global flagship on the economics of groundwater, "The Hidden Wealth of Nations: The Economics of



Groundwater in Times of Climate Change.” This flagship is based on novel data and analyses to provide economic estimates of the key services provided by groundwater, from food security to poverty reduction, from cities to farms and ecosystems, as well as estimates of the far-reaching economic impacts in case of groundwater mismanagement and overexploitation and the drivers of those situations. In addition, the side event will also take into consideration the requirements for securing a safe and reliable water supply, including having well-maintained distribution systems, which are constantly pressurized to avoid the intrusion of harmful substances into the supply system. The losses through the distribution systems are often 40-70%. It is not just a loss of water, energy, and precious drinking water resources, which could have fulfilled the drinking water requirements for thousands of people.

The side event will also feature interventions from representatives of the OECD and the Global Commission on the Economics of Water and two member states: the Kingdom of Jordan and the Republic of Ghana. These interventions will reflect on country experiences, the importance of high-level prioritization of groundwater and well-maintained supply systems, and the importance of improved knowledge from the scientific to the political level.

70'	PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME
5'	Opening Statement by Chair
	Mr. Saroj Jha, Global Director, World Bank Group's Water Global Practice
10'	Presentation The Hidden Wealth of Nations: Groundwater in Times of Climate Change
	Aude-Sophie Rodella, Senior Economist, World Bank Group's Water Global Practice Esha Zaveri, Senior Economist, World Bank Group's Water Global Practice
30'	Country and Global Perspectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Mr. Magnus Heunicke, Minister for the Environment, Denmark Hon. Ms. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resource, Ghana M. Saroj Jha, Global Director for Water, The World Bank Group TBC
15'	Questions and Answers (tbc) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Question to the Minister from Denmark: Much has been said about groundwater being invisible, but the awareness of its importance is growing. How does Denmark see the way forward in protecting the resource and ensuring that those who could benefit from its sustainable management do? What might be the role of technology? Question on Ghana: Around 44 percent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa relies on groundwater for drinking. And on average, a quarter of the urban population in the region relies on groundwater. Groundwater's contribution to drinking water supply and community-managed self-supply is a potential game-changer to accelerate the achievement of SDGs beyond government capacity. What lessons can we learn from



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

	<p>Ghana for harnessing and managing groundwater for assured access to safe and affordable water supply?</p> <p>3. Question to the World Bank: How can a global organization such as the WBG support cross-sectoral integrated approaches to sustainable groundwater management? What are some of the steps that can be taken by financing partners to account better and monitor future financing relying on this precious resource?</p>
	Moderated by representatives from the Danish Water Forum
10'	Closing Remarks
	Mr. Aromar Revi, Commissioner and Lead Expert, Global Commission on the Economics of Water and Director, Indian Institute for Human Settlements