



UN
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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Where there is water, there is life

Rainwater Harvesting: A Sustainable Solution To Global Water Shortages

March 23, 2020, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM EDT

Organized by:

Sri Swami Madhavananda World Peace Council

in collaboration with Yoga in Daily Life USA and the International Day of Yoga
Committee at the United Nations

Background on the event

Shortage of water gravely endangers the health of the environment, humans, and all life on our planet. To address this impending threat exacerbated by climate change, the need for adaptation strategies, mitigation policies, and innovative and sustainable water management solutions is paramount. The event brought together experts from diverse fields, including spiritual leaders, to share their experiences and lessons learned that would promote sustainable living in harmony with nature. The event showcased the Rainwater Harvesting Initiative launched by the International Sri Deep Madhavananda Fellowship which provides a proven, sustainable, community-based solution to problems of water scarcity in arid and semi-arid regions. This grassroots project is led by Vishwaguruji Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda, Founder of Yoga in Daily Life, and the Om Vishwa Deep Gurukul Swami Maheshwarananda Ashram Education & Research Centre, India.

Water Action Agenda

The rainwater harvesting project in Rajasthan, India has demonstrated the impact of such an initiative on the rural communities in the arid and semi-arid regions. Scaling up and replicating such projects could help address the water scarcity in such areas for drinking and household

consumption, boost agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods, and provide numerous co-benefits for the communities, wildlife, and the ecosystem. The initiative has helped conserve water, replenish the groundwater, and provide services to the communities for transporting water to the villages and firefighting in the dry seasons. International Sri Deep Madhavananda Fellowship intends to expand the initiative and undertake several such projects in India by building water conservation and harvesting systems, engaging the local communities, and promoting traditional knowledge and sustainable lifestyle for water conservation.

Key Issues discussed

- Our severed relationship with nature is gravely impacting the health and well-being of humans and the environment across the globe. Water is a critical element that sustains all life forms and needs to be conserved and protected to restore balance in nature.
- Holistic water conservation initiatives could help address water scarcity in many areas and generate tremendous co-benefits.
- Traditional knowledge and spiritual teachings all guide us to move toward a sustainable future by learning from nature and using the healing power of nature.
- Community engagement for action and advocacy on local and international platforms could help create awareness regarding water-related issues around the globe and the solutions to address those.
- International collaborations and financing would be critical in realizing the goals for sustainable development.

Key recommendations for action

- Scale up and replicate successful projects for water conservation and rainwater harvesting with a holistic approach that supports local communities and ecosystems.
- Promote traditional practices and indigenous knowledge for solutions at local level and at scale for a sustainable development.
- Individual action through behavioral change that promote practicing a sustainable lifestyle is crucial to achieving the goals.
- Education, awareness raising, and community engagement are critical for implementing effective water conservation strategies.
- Knowledge sharing, implementation support and flow of adequate finance is required to address the water-related issues, particularly for the most impacted and vulnerable communities.