

World Water Day 2021: Valuing Water

More than 2 billion people live in countries experiencing water stress while around 4 billion live in areas that suffer from severe water scarcity for at least one month per year, according to the UN. Water is a vital human need. Everybody needs a minimum of 20 to 50 liters of unpolluted, safe water daily for drinking, food preparation and keeping themselves clean. However, inadequacy of safe drinking water is increasing day by day around the world.

Message by António Guterres, Secretary-General of United Nations on the World Water Day

The value of water is profound and complex. There is no aspect of sustainable development that does not fundamentally rely upon it. For me, water means protection. A well-managed water cycle encompassing drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, wastewater,



transboundary governance, the environment and more; means a defence against ill-health and indignity and a response to challenges from a changing climate and increasing global demand.

This World Water Day, we want to record and understand as many views as possible, so decision-makers are better informed and equipped to safeguard this human right for every person and every purpose. Today, we are not on track to ensure everyone has access to water and sanitation by 2030, as set out in Sustainable Development Goal 6. While advances being made, current progress needs to quadruple to achieve universal access. Chronic under-investment in water and sanitation disadvantages and harms vast numbers of people. This is unacceptable. I am encouraged by the joint statement signed by some 160 countries during the UN High-Level meeting on water on 18 March.

This shows a strong commitment to advancing all water-related aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals. On this World Water Day, let us commit to intensifying efforts to truly valuing water so all may have equitable access to this most precious resource.

World Water Day is observed annually across the globe on March 22 with the purpose of highlighting the importance of water and raising awareness about the water crisis that the world faces. According to the United Nations (UN) website, the main focus of the day is to "support the achievement of sustainable development goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030." The resolution to observe World Water Day was first adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 22, 1992, after which March 22 was declared as World Water Day and is celebrated around the world since 1993.

World Water Day 2021 focused on the theme, 'Valuing Water'. The value of water is about much more than its price; water has enormous and complex value for our households, food, culture, health, education, economics and the integrity of our natural environment. If we overlook any of these values, we risk mismanaging this finite, irreplaceable resource. SDG 6 is to ensure water and sanitation for all. Without a comprehensive understanding of water's true, multidimensional value, we will be unable to safeguard this critical resource for the benefit of everyone.

Webinar on World Water Day: Role of Integrity in Valuing Water

Bangladesh Water Integrity Network (BAWIN), Change Initiative, NGO Forum for Public Health and Water Integrity Network (WIN) jointly hosted a webinar in observance of the World Water Day, 2021.



Renowned water expert Prof Aisun Nishat addressed the virtual meeting as chief guest, while Prof Saiful Islam from Institute of Water and Flood Management (IWFM) in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) presented a keynote paper with BAWIN President Engineer Shahidul Hassan in the chair. Khulna Water and Sewerage Authority Managing Director Engineer Md. Abdullah, Environmental Economist Professor Enamul Haque,

NGO Forum for Public Health Executive Director S.M.A. Rashid, Adjunct Fellow of University of Sydney Dr Reba Paul and WIN Programme Coordinator Binayak Das were the panel discussants. In his remarks, Prof Ainun Nishat mentioned water demand has increased significantly. So, proper uses of water, availability and mitigating the uncertainty to get water should be given priority. Besides, navigation needs to be a top priority and ranking must be done in terms of drinking water, food security. The experts came up with the observations while participating in a webinar titled 'Role of Integrity in Valuing Water' discussing and devising ways and means on how to ensure integrity, transparency, accountability and good governance in the water sector.

Glimpses from the Discussions

M Zakir Hossain Khan, Executive Director (Honorary) of Change Initiative started the webinar by welcoming everyone and highlighted the reason behind hosting the webinar on World Water Day 2021. In his introductory speech, he highlighted the importance of considering integrity in the valuation of water resources.

In his key note speech, **Professor Saiful Islam** from IWFM highlighted the challenges Bangladesh faced in water scarcity, according to his study. Bangladesh is a country with more than 165 million people where 2 million have lack access to safe water, and 48% have lack access to improved sanitation. He said this year the theme of World Water day is "Value water beyond its price". He stated that water is interlinked with many sectors or stakeholders like households, culture, health, education, economics, and integrity with our natural environment and if these values get overlooked then these finite resources will be at risk. He mentioned that currently, water is under great threat from a growing population, increasing demand of agriculture and industry, and worsening impact of Climate Change. He highlighted that water is being used for three purposes such as drinking water, WASH, and health services. It is being observed that different industrial activities are jeopardizing or polluting water largely also these activities are damaging the ecosystem.



Dr. Reba Paul, Adjunct Fellow, University of Sydney, mentioned that water is a fundamental resource for development. She explains what integrity actually means, which has three attributes that sometimes we do not use appropriately. Among three attributes one is transparency, which means one should practice and encourage open communication, second is accountability which means one should be responsible for its actions and the third one is honesty that one should be trustworthy and reliable.

Professor A K Enamul Haque Ph.D., Environmental Economist and Executive Director of Asian Center for Development, in his speech mentioned that someone is getting water someone is not getting water at all or someone is getting water which is polluted, in this case, what plan needs to be taken and how to make the plan; that's why need to think and understand how the valuation process is work behind this.

Binayak Das, Program Coordinator, Water Integrity Network, mentioned the 8th five year plan of the government of Bangladesh would be a guiding document and said for us valuing water what is important is to strengthen integrity. So the 8th five-year plan of Bangladesh emphasizes a lot around national integrity strategy also it is now focusing largely not only for the national level but also the Upazila level. He mentioned that we need to connect with the national integrity strategy to address the challenges in the water sanitation management sector.

S.M.A. Rashid, Executive Director of NGO Forum for Public Health, spoke that water has both direct and indirect value and it is a multi-sectoral issue. He mentions that the current projects BAWIN is involved to secure water management and the role of an organization like WASA in this matter. He mentioned that to achieve the SDG goal everyone needs to work together. He suggested that to align with SDG's goal in 2030 to protect water resources with integrity management tools and inter-agency collaboration needs to be introduced.

Professor Emeritus Ainun Nishat Ph.D., the water resource expert and the Chief Guest of the Webinar, highlighted that value, valuation, and values are different words. He emphasized that for sustainable development it is necessary to identify the social, environmental, and technical cost of water for the valuation of water. The water demand is increasing rapidly for agriculture, and this is a very important sector in our country which we value a lot. He added in recent times the value of drinking water came into light as the scarcity of safe drinking water is getting into the account. Women are the key person who collects water for drinking purpose so male-dominated society hardly gives emphasize on water supply and sanitation. He emphasized ranking the priority on human rights of safe drinking water and it should be the top priority than food security or environmental security can be ranked respectively. Professor Nishat added that the need to stop the wastage of water needs to bring change in the pricing of water.

Engineer Md. Abdullah, Managing Director, KWASA, said that we all know about the current situation of water pollution due to mismanagement of the water sector, disposal of solid waste into the water in our country. He emphasized on how to combat the challenges what tools need to be adopted, what government policy needs to be considered. He added that the main challenge in water resource management is how to meet the demand for water with limited resources.

Engineer Shahidul Hassan, President, BAWIN & Former Chief Engineer, LGED, in his presidential speech mentioned that we may have plenty of water on the ground but the amount of usable water is less. He added along with the increasing water the consumptive use of water has also been increased and on the other hand amount of clean water is being depilated. Industrial pollution has been increased. Water is a very valuable commodity and if we are unable to protect it can cause a serious social collision.

World Water Day Celebration at Field Level

NGO Forum for Public Health has celebrated the World Water Day 2021 highlighting the crucial theme of the day 'Valuing Water' at the community level and in different camp areas. At Camp 6, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar. A general discussion on World Water Day 2021 has been held at Camp-6 CiC Conference Room. The discussion program was chaired by Mr. Sayed Mahbulul Hoque – honorable Camp in Charge of Camp 6. Representatives from different sectors like education, site management have shared their opinions in Water Day 2021 event. Project Coordinator of NGOF Md. Mosarraf Hossain has requested everyone to stop water wastage & also requested to practice water safety plan to avoid water borne diseases like diarrhea. Mr. Sayed Mahbulul Hoque – honorable Camp in Charge of Camp 6 has shared his feedback on the accountability & responsibility of community people & community leaders to ensure more responsible use of water & water infrastructures at camps provided by WASH Agencies. The



day was also observed at Camp 7, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar. The discussion program was chaired by Mr. Jepy Dewan – honorable Camp in Charge of Camp 7.

In this regard, NGOF-UNHCR Project has also observed the World Water Day 2021 in Camp 5, 17, 26, KTP RC & NYP RC. The

theme of World Water Day 2021 is valuing water. In line with the theme, water has enormous and complex value for our households, food, culture, health, education, economics and the integrity of our natural environment. Different types of sessions like discussion, art competition, popular theater, street song, WSP message dissemination, Aqua-tab distribution; Jerry can cleaning etc. was demonstrated.

NGO Forum-NCA project has also celebrated the World Water Day with another WASH agency at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar. Mr. Nurul Alam, Honorable Upazila Chairman Mr. Parvej Chowdhury, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Teknaf was present at the program as a Chairperson and the Chief Guest respectively. In the discussion sessions, the speakers highly admired the pioneering role of NGO Forum in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and fulfill the local water needs.

Project Filed Visits by the Distinguish Persons

On 18 March 2021 the Country Representative of UNHCR Mr. Johannes van der Klaauw, The Principal Situation Coordinator (Cox's Bazar) Ms. ItaSchuette, the Senior Protection Coordinator Ms. Haruno Nakashiba, Assistant WASH Officer Mr. Md. Sahidul Islam, WASH Associate Mr. Mahfuzur Rahman, Senior Field Assistant Mr. Iftekhhar Hossain, Protection Associate Mr. Tanvir Anam Chowdhury have visited the Shalbagan Water Treatment Plant of Camp 26. The Deputy Project Coordinator of NGOF-UNHCR WASH project Mr. S.M. Rafiqul Islam accompanied the distinguish guests..

The delegates expressed their satisfaction on NGO Forum's work and particularly, the systematic water supply system.

On 16 March 2021 the Country Representative of UNHCR Mr. Johannes van der Klaauw, The Principal Situation Coordinator (Cox's Bazar) Ms. ItaSchuette, the Senior Protection Coordinator Ms. HarunoNakashiba, The Livelihoods Officer Mr. Subrata Kumar Chakrabarty and The Assistant Livelihoods Officer Mr. Md. Nahid Hasan Raju have visited the Jute bag production center. The Deputy Project

Coordinator, Mr. Abu Rafat Siddique accompanied the guests. The delegates expressed their satisfaction on Project achievements. .



Celebration of Open Defecation Free (ODF) Union

NGO Forum for Public Health achieved total number of 5 Open Defecation Free (ODF) Union under GoB-Unicef ASWA-II Project. The areas are Char Manair Union, Char Nasirpur Union of Sadarpur Upazila under Faridpur Districts and Saina Raghunathpur Union, Shialkathi Union and Chirapara Union of Kawkhali Upazila under Pirojpur District.



The entire Union ODF Celebration program was held at Union Parishad with Upazila administration, in collaboration with DPHE, Union WATSAN Committee, Upazila WATSAN Committee and others project stakeholders. Upazila Nirbahi Officer was present as a Special guest in this programme. Unicef representative, Upazila Chairman, Union Parishad Chairman, NGOF Project staffs, CDC Committee & Community peoples, Print & Media representatives, and others were also present in this ODF celebration. After discussion and Speech out, Upazila Chairman was given ODF Certificate to Union Chairman.



International Women's Day 2021

International Women's Day 2021 has been observed at Camp 25 WFS, Alikhali, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar on 8 March 2021 under the NGO Forum - AAR Japan WaSH and protection Project. Mr. S.M. Shahidullah, Project Focal, NGO Forum; Ms. Sangjucta Dewan, Protection Specialist from AAR Japan and project colleagues were present in the event.



National Disaster Preparedness Day 2021

On 24 March 2021, NGO Forum for Public Health, Mymensingh has celebrated the National Disaster Preparedness Day 2021 under RIICB-II project at Horijon Palli-10 no ward in Mymensingh City Corporation.



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