

# The Blue Mission



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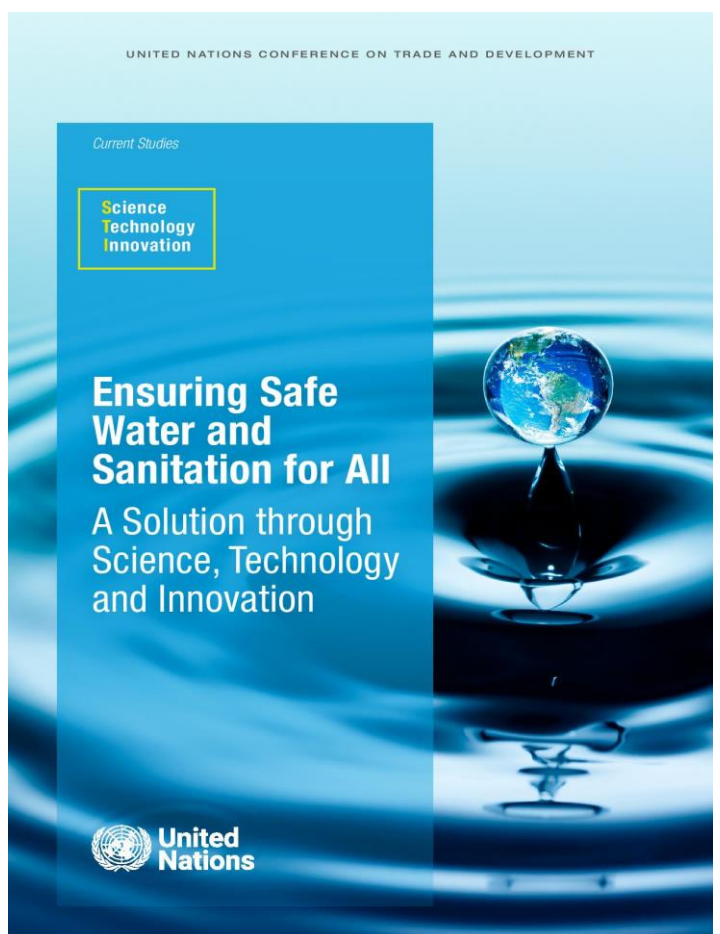
Water is one of the basic necessities of living organisms, both big and small, to carry out the important physiological and metabolic activities to sustain life. But apart from these, clean water supply for sanitation and hygiene is a basic right for humans. Although earth consists of around 71% of water; more than 96.5% of it fills the ocean, seas or is unusable due to excessive salinity. Freshwater comprises only about 3%, out of which 68% is inaccessible, trapped in the glaciers and 30% under the surface as groundwater which leaves around 0.5% water for the global population to use for drinking. This global shortage of water affects more than 40% of the global population and is propelled the effects of climate change such as draughts, famines, floods etc. The rising temperatures of water has made it suitable for the microorganisms to flourish leading to surface water as well as groundwater contamination.

Fresh water scarcity is one of the most jeopardizing issues for mankind and is taken up for action as the 6<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal(SDG). The SDGs are a set of 17 guidelines, serving as a blueprint for establishing peace and prosperity in the lives of people through socio-environmental aspects. It is an initiative undertaken by the United Nations as a conscious effort to minimize poverty, hunger, gender inequality etc. along with preserving and restoring the planet's wealth, now and into the future.

SDG 6 aims at achieving “universal, adequate and equitable access” to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (paying special attention to the needs of women and girls), for all by the year 2030. Its target includes improvement

of water quality by reduction of pollution, elimination of open defecation and dumping of untreated wastewater into waterbodies. It also promotes reuse and recycling of waste water and plans to implement integrated water resource management at all levels and most importantly protection and restoration of aquatic ecosystems.

Conservation of water and providing the above mentioned services to people is a multifaceted objective and is obstructed by certain issues. The regional disparity can be understood from the fact that the coverage of safely managed drinking water stands at a solid 96% in Europe while mere 30% in Sub- Saharan Africa. The sanitation



coverage being 62% in urban areas and 44% in rural areas signifies that lack of finance and education has quite an impact on the fulfillment of this project. Studies point out that vulnerable and marginalized classes are more exposed to the threats of poor sanitation; especially woman and girls, getting diseases and infections. In remote locations, female members of the house travel significant distances in search of fresh water which not only wears them physically but also increases the chance of sexual harassment as per report. Another group of people who suffer the consequences of poor sanitation are the disabled, often complaining that toilets are located at an inaccessible area or are not user-friendly.



Ensure access to water and sanitation for all

In spite of all the unanimous efforts of the countries under United Nations; 2 billion people lacks access to safely managed drinking water as of 2020 with 122 million people directly consuming

surface water. Although 2.4 billion people were provided with basics of safe sanitation, a whopping number of 494 million people still practice open defecation. Sadly, at this rate almost 81% (1.6 billion) and 67% (2.8 million people) of people would be left without the basic clean drinking water supply and safe sanitation services. To achieve the goals by foresaid goals2030, the planning must be concretized and the actions must be paced four times as of now with proper supervision and updates.

Lack of information and finance are two major obstacles in reaching the milestone. To enhance collection and sharing of data, the national institutions are to be brought together. SDG6 also aims at improving and developing new policies and strengthening governance and coordination through multi-stakeholder approaches; while concentrating on the implementation of Integrated Water Management Systems through various levels. Eradication of racial and gender inequalities also remain a top tier priority to move forward for the accomplishment of this project.

SDG is a humongous project that aims on solving global issues, but is made of smaller units and subunits; the tiniest unit being us. WE, as an individual can contribute our parts to help the 'distant dreams' become a reality. Little efforts from us in conserving the remaining resources, informing and cooperating with the local government officials wherever necessary can have solid impacts on a small scale.