Addressing Water for Peace: Water Governance in Conflict and Humanitarian Settings

22 March 2024, 15:00-16:30 (CET)
Building A, Room V, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland
Water is intrinsically linked to conflict. Inequitable access to safe drinking water is further exacerbated within a rapidly changing climate as potable water sources become scarcer. Global environmental change, including climate change and alterations in land use, is driving water insecurity across rural, agricultural, and urban settings. Disruptions to food production and urban development arising from water scarcity can be a source of great tension and potential conflict when access to essential resources is limited. Further, water insecurity may intensify political and social tension, particularly during times of crisis. Working together across borders and disciplines to safeguard our freshwater supply during conflict and disasters, provides opportunities to not only enhance water security, but also foster climate action, food security, environmental sustainability, and ultimately, peace.

In this panel, we discuss multilateral and environmental drivers that amplify water insecurity, in addition to offering capacity-building solutions that improve water governance, particularly for those individuals who are most marginalized. Transdisciplinary collaboration is critical to ‘future-proof’ water governance by developing policies that improve water diplomacy, climate resilience, and transboundary cooperation.

UNITAR World Water Day Event

In its first annual celebration of the inauguration of UNITAR’s Global Water Academy, York University, and partners convene for World Water Day. This event will serve to engage wider stakeholders through the role of capacity building by creating a collaborative dialogue on the year’s thematic area of ‘Leveraging Water for Peace’ in relationship to training and education as a key solution. In promotion of the ethos of World Water Day, UNITAR will host the ceremony of the UNITAR Global Water Academy platform, and invite participants to engage directly with the shared United Nations, and academic resources that are providing training to upskill and change the blue economy we live in today.
Key messages for World Water Day 2024

Water for Peace

Water can create peace or spark conflict

When water is scarce or polluted, or when people struggle for access, tensions can rise. By cooperating on water, we can balance everyone’s water needs and help stabilize the world.

Prosperity and peace rely on water

As nations manage climate change, mass migration, and political unrest, they must put water cooperation at the heart of their plans.

Water can lead us out of crisis

We can foster harmony between communities and countries by uniting around the fair and sustainable use of water – from United Nations conventions at the international level, to actions at the local level.

“Without effective management of our water resources, we risk intensified disputes between communities and sectors and even increased tensions among nations. So far, water has historically proven to be a catalyst for cooperation not for conflict”.

Antonio Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
**Agenda**

15:00 - **Opening Remarks**

- **Mr. Alex Mejia**
  Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion
  UNITAR

- **Dr. Rhonda Lenton**
  President and Vice-Chancellor
  York University

15:15 - **Panel Discussion: Peace and Prosperity in Water Management**

- **H.E. Amb. Sabri Bachtobji**
  Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations Office at Geneva

- **H.E. Amb. Walid Khalid Obeidat**
  Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations Office at Geneva

- **Mr. Federico Properzi**
  Chief Technical Advisor, UN-Water

- **Dr. Sangam Shrestha**
  Dean of the School of Engineering and Technology, Global Water Sanitation Center, Asian Institute of Technology

- **Dr. Tamas Palvolgyi**
  Associate Professor, Ludovika University of Public Service

- **Mr. Alan AtKisson**
  Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership

- **Dr. Rumina Dhalla**
  Director, Institute for Sustainable Commerce
  Associate Professor, Organization Studies and Sustainable Commerce
  University of Guelph
  Special Advisor, UNITAR

16:15 - **Questions & Answers Period**

16:30 - **Closing Remarks**

- **Dr. Amir Asif**
  Vice President, Research & Innovation, York University