



UN
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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

[Water for Sustainable Development: The Saudi Experience]

[24 March 2023, 11:00 AM-12:15 PM, Trusteeship Council Chamber UN Headquarters, New York, USA]

Organized by: [Saudi Arabia, The world bank, UNDP, FAO]

Background on the event

The Water Sector of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been restructured and an IWRM framework has been put in place to deal with the many problems caused by a lack of water, flood risk management, and climate change. Saudi Arabia has adopted a national water strategy (NWS 2030) with well-defined targets. The strategy is aligned with transformational programs to modernize the economy, as elaborated in the Saudi Vision 2030. The NWS 2030 comprises ten national programs that guide water resources management, policy and legal reform processes, institutional setup development, and investment in the water sector.

It focuses on sustainable environmental services and biodiversity management under scarce water resources and climate change conditions. The collaborative public policy process in partnership with the main stakeholders and the private sector is an effective and efficient process to enhance the contribution of the water sector to the social and economic development plan as specified in the Saudi Vision 2030. Saudi Arabia considers global cooperation a key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 6. The Kingdom is promoting water research and knowledge sharing globally through multidirectional efforts. Saudi Arabia's 2020 G20 Presidency encouraged sustainable and resilient water management in the G20 agenda due to its importance for food security and industrial, social, and economic development. Accordingly, the G20 launched an annual water dialogue conducted since 2020. The outcomes of the G20 Water Dialogues are regularly published and shared with the global community through the G20 Water Platform, launched in 2020. Since 2002, the Kingdom has been sponsoring an annual award, "the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water," to recognize world-class

researchers and innovators in high development impact topics. Furthermore, the Kingdom contributes to developing countries globally through various funding and donor organizations, including the Saudi Fund for Development and the Islamic Development Bank. The two agencies have provided billions of dollars to support water and sanitation investments that improve the delivery of sustainable services in urban and rural areas of low- and medium-income countries.

Key Issues discussed:

- Shared Saudi knowledge and experience in managing water under scarce water resources to effectively contribute to sustainable social and economic development.
- Discussed methodologies for water valuation in Saudi Arabia to guide and inform the efficient integration of water resources to sustain the country's development agenda.
- Reviewed vital governance issues to enhance synergies and balance responsibilities, including the role of the private sector.
- Highlighted the Kingdom's role in achieving sustainable development goals, including SDG 6.
- Shed light on the Kingdom's contribution to mitigating global water challenges.

Key recommendations for action:

- Encourage further discussion with other countries to exchange experiences.
- Documenting best practices to be shared with other interested groups.
- Raise awareness of the importance of integrated water resources management, especially in arid regions
- A comprehensive national water strategy plan is crucial, and considering consulting all water stakeholders during its development.