



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Water for Healing, Justice and Action: Building Blocks of a New Resiliency Paradigm

March 24, 2023, 8:30 am - 9:30 am, Tzu Chi Center New York

March 24, 2023, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm, Baha'i International Community New York

March 25, 2023, 8:30 am - 11:45 am, Tzu Chi Center New York

Organized by: AHAM Education Inc. and the Tzu Chi Foundation

AHAM Education, in partnership with the Tzu Chi Foundation, co-sponsor Southeast Climate and Energy Network (SCEN) and the Baha'i International Community co-hosted a series of 2023 UN Water Conference Official Hybrid Side Events on March 24 and 25, 2023 to inspire cross-sector, holistic, innovative, and inclusive solutions to the Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment thematic focus area in working towards the Sustainable Development Goals 6 on Water as well as SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, 13, 14, and 17. Also represented were speakers from partnering entities Diversity in Aquatics, Seven Directions of Service, Prawanka, BlackCat Media, Brahmakumaris, fellow NGO representatives, youth advocates, and local government representatives from the United States, Honduras, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, and Cameroon. Over the two days, there were four experiential, open panel discussions reframing the current paradigm of water resiliency toward a more transformative approach that leverages traditional and indigenous knowledge, restores water healing cultures, and channels contemplative and faith-based practice to engage eco-activism in preserving water resources and ensure access to safe and clean water.

After participating in the stakeholder consultative interactive dialogues in October 2023, AHAM Education submitted a [Water Action Partnership Commitment](#) to increase BIPOC awareness, engagement and educational activities on the healing properties of waterways, the history of water relations in the US and SIDS, and the importance of restoring relationships to our natural waterways for personal and community healing as well as the need to protect for sustenance, employment and survival; increase training and employment of lifeguards and water-related experts for Women, Youth and BIPOC community who then serve within those communities where drowning rates as well as pollution are high; and to explicitly connect the water, well-being and climate justice movements to shift the paradigm of engagement and action toward a more holistic approach to water issues.

Key issues discussed:

- [*Session 1 – Water Justice - Decolonizing and Restoring Intergenerational Relationships to Water for Access, Safety and Post-Traumatic Healing*](#), ongoing efforts to restore BIPOC relationships to water culture through education on water history and historically



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black beaches, water safety, learn to swim and lifeguard training, and how blue mindfulness trauma-sensitive and restorative healing practices near pools and waterways are empowering people of color to heal, become water healers, and lead in aquatic industries.

- [*Session 2 – Elevating Indigenous Perspectives, Knowledge and Action for Water and Nature Conservation in the Americas*](#) highlighted how indigenous wisdom is being integrated into conservation efforts by tribal nations in the US, Honduras and Africa, the struggle to protect ancestral and unceded territories, and practices that can guide us as advocates of respecting indigenous land and reducing water contamination.
- [*Session 3 – Eco-Affinity: Water and Climate Activism through Contemplative and Faith-Based Practice*](#) explored the concept of “eco-affinity” - love of nature or a sense of “being nature” - that becomes naturally embodied as a result of deep contemplative and faith-based practice, especially in nature settings. Examples are Be Nature retreats or mindful beach clean-ups, compassionate eco-action through volunteerism and service, or the cultivation of kindness to nature as oneself.
- [*Session 4 – Community-Based Water and Climate Transformative Action*](#) was a synthesis of learning about BIPOC history, Indigenous perspectives and actions, and eco-affinity, and participation in the UN Water Conference. Transformative “glocal” solutions include personal transformation as citizens, community-building and mobilizing through education, and legislative action that honors history and ancestry.

Key recommendations for action

- Expand investment in trauma-informed intergenerational water-based healing and holistic water literacy and aquatic training programs among historically marginalized groups.
- Fund and screen films that tell stories with historical and evolving scientific understanding about water injustices, traditional and indigenous water conservation methods, water healing properties, and nature-based solutions.
- Educate marginalized communities on cost-effective zero waste practices via family campaigns, community clean-ups, youth education and leadership and oral water histories.
- Pass legislation that measures and conserves water use, tracks and bans PFAs pollution, protects water sources, applies indigenous methods of adaptation and mitigation, and enforces a constitutional, enforceable right to clean and healthy waters.
- Stop infringement of Tribal Treaty Rights and passing Rights of Nature for all Tribal Nations in the southeast USA.
- Increase political participation and decision-making by traditionally marginalized groups, who care for 80% of the world's biodiversity.
- Incorporating climate equity in fiscal planning, budgeting, project prioritization, program and policy development among BIPOC communities.
- Making explicit linkages between toxic and predatory industries.

For more information read our [Written Statement](#) or contact info@ahameducation.org