

Speech by Volunteer Groups Alliance Coordinator David Styers representing Faisal Alfadl, Secretary-General of the Saudi Green Building Forum (SGBF) Addressing the United Nations General Assembly, UN Water Conference – Organizational Session – Stakeholder Intervention, on Monday 3rd of March 2025, UN Headquarter NY, USA

Theme: SDG 6 as the Centric Interlinkage for SDGs—Valuing Water, the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, and Sustainable Economic and Urban Development

I am honored to address this distinguished assembly to prioritize sustainability at every level. The Saudi Green Building Forum firmly believes that SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation – is not just one goal among many; it is the foundation upon which all other SDGs depend.

Water is the lifeblood of sustainable cities, energy security, food systems, and climate resilience. Without clean water,

- Our cities cannot thrive (SDG 11),*
- Our energy systems cannot function (SDG 7), and*
- Our climate action will fall short (SDG 13).*

We must act decisively. To position SDG 6 at the core of global sustainability efforts, we call on the General Assembly to prioritize three critical action points:

Establish Mandatory Water Efficiency Standards in Urban Development (SDG 6 & SDG 11)

Urban areas consume over 80% of global water supply, yet inefficient infrastructure leads to enormous losses. Sustainable urban development must make water efficiency a top priority in all new and existing buildings.

Invest in Water-Smart Energy Systems (SDG 6 & SDG 7)

Water and energy are inseparable. 10% of global freshwater withdrawals are used for energy production, while many water treatment systems rely on fossil fuels—exacerbating both water scarcity and climate change.

Make Water Security a Central Pillar of Climate Action (SDG 6 & SDG 13)

Climate change is first and foremost a water crisis—with rising droughts, floods, and desertification threatening billions worldwide. Yet, water security remains largely absent from climate policies.

We urge the General Assembly to:

1. Ensure every Nationally Determined Contribution includes water resilience strategies, integrating SDG 6 into climate commitments.
2. Promote nature-based solutions, such as wetland restoration, sustainable irrigation, and groundwater recharge, to strengthen climate resilience.
3. Foster international cooperation on transboundary water management to prevent water scarcity from becoming a source of conflict.

Without urgent action, climate-driven water stress will disrupt food security, displace millions, and heighten global instability. Water must be central to all climate adaptation efforts.

Water is not just a resource—it is life, it is energy, and it is the key to a sustainable future. Let us act now.

Thank you.