

G20: Water Conservation for a more Sustainable Climate



- *Shri Pankaj Kumar, Secretary, DoWR, RD & GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti*

India assumed the G20 Presidency on December 1st, 2022, taking over from Indonesia. The G20 leadership offers the country the opportunity to showcase the “India story” to the world countering multiple contingencies including global warming, food and energy shortage, terrorism, geopolitical conflict, and bridging the digital divide.

As the largest democracy in the world, and the fastest growing economy, India’s G20 presidency will play a crucial role in building upon the significant achievements of the previous 17 presidencies. The G20 theme of this year “One Earth, One Family, One Future” perfectly captures India’s underlying philosophy of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (the world is one family), which will guide India’s G20 leadership.

The first G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting concluded with a positive note with all G20 countries expressing support on the themes outlined by MoEF&CC for India’s Presidency. Discussions on restoring degraded land, promoting blue economy along the coastal sustainability, enhancing biodiversity, preventing forest fire and marine littering and strengthening Circular Economy have created the platform for a more insightful deliberation in the second Summit.



Best Practices on Water Resource Management

During its G20 Presidency stint, India is looking forward to an integrated, comprehensive and consensus-driven approach to mitigate the challenges of climate change and water scarcity. Water conservation in fact is an integral part of the Indian identity and cultural history and has become even more relevant in the present day. "Saving" water is not just about conservation, but to ensure the availability of enough clean water at any given time and place to meet our combined needs.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India has taken various initiatives for promoting water conservation through Artificial Recharge and Rain Water Harvesting. The Jal Jeevan Mission program aims to connect more than 193 million rural households with functional household tap water connections by 2024. Our ambitious Namami Gange mission has created a paradigm shift in river rejuvenation, pollution abatement, conservation of ecosystems and holistic approach to river basin management. It has recently been recognized as one of the top 10 World restoration flagships to revive the natural world by the UN.

India is also implementing the largest dam rehabilitation program in the world, to build climate resilience for critical water storage infrastructure.

Further, to ensure long term sustainability of ground water resources through a combination of demand and supply side interventions, the scheme of Atal Bhujal Yojana is being implemented through community led, Gram Panchayat-wise Water Security Plans having convergence with ongoing /new schemes.

With these efforts and many more schemes, India is gradually moving towards the goal of becoming a water secure nation by year 2047. In this scenario, we are eager to host the second G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) meeting focusing on water conservation and managing water resources sustainably and equitably.

We look forward to the participation of multiple delegates from G20 countries, along with representatives of international organizations, deliberating on the global best practices and ideas on water resource management. I am confident that discussions on river rejuvenation, focusing on the National Mission for Clean Ganga, Climate Resilient infrastructure, Ground Water Management, Strategies for universal access to sanitation and clean drinking water, through the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission will help participating countries to learn from each other and accelerate achievement of the sustainable development goals.

History and heritage are synonymous to Gujarat. Glorious Gujarat is home to many ancient city ruins, palaces, forts and tomb standing proudly bearing testimonies to the golden era of dynasties. The stepwell of Rani ki Vav and Adalaj Vav demonstrate the ancient water management practices of India's long-standing tradition of conserving water resources. Gujarat with its mix of the old and the new-traditional water wisdom and modern technologies used in creating water infrastructure, will provide a valuable platform for 20 countries to bring out and learn from the best in each.