

## **Bridging Systems, Building Trust: Advancing Water, Energy, Innovation and Sustainable Cities through Coordinated Policy Actions**

### ***A UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue***

Thursday, 9 July 2026  
15:00-16:30 EDT  
Conference Room 6 and online  
UN Headquarters, New York

### **Concept note**

#### **Introduction**

With only four years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries face mounting pressures, from climate impacts and demographic shifts to widening inequalities and eroding public trust, that threaten to slow or reverse progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet this moment also presents an opportunity to reimagine policy approaches, strengthen social foundations and accelerate transformative change.

To support Member States in these efforts, and share new solutions with a wide audience, UN DESA will organize a Global Policy Dialogue to explore how these principles can guide integrated policy solutions to advance the SDGs under review at this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF): SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Through two high-level panels, each pairing members of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB) with youth voices, this Dialogue will examine how integrated policy design, social investment and institutional innovation can restore trust, expand opportunity and accelerate SDG implementation. The event will be hybrid, open to all participants, and supported by interactive polling and audience engagement to ensure a dynamic exchange of perspectives.

This dialogue is made possible by the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund. All are welcome to join.

#### **Format**

The 90-minute event will feature opening remarks, two panel discussions, and audience Q&A. The discussion will be interactive and led by a professional moderator. Time will be reserved during the

polls. The audience will be invited to submit questions in advance at registration and during the session using Slido.

### **Location**

The event will be held in a hybrid format, in Conference Room 6 at UN Headquarters in New York, with in-person speakers and an in-person and online audience.

### **Platform**

The event will be produced with the support of the UNTV technical crew. It will be streamed live on Zoom, UN DESA's Facebook Page and UN WebTV. The audience can access the online Slido platform (via QR code and/or provided link) to participate in the polls, submit their questions, or vote up questions posed by others.

### **Language**

The event will be in English with online multilingual captioning available in the six UN languages where possible. International Sign Interpretation will be provided.

### **Host/moderator**

UN DESA will hire a professional moderator, Roben Farzad, to facilitate this event.

## **Draft Programme**

### **Introduction** **(4 minutes)**

- Moderator makes welcome remarks and provides logistical information
- Moderator launches interactive poll 1

### **Welcome remarks** **(3 minutes)**

- **Mr. Li Junhua**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

### **Discussion 1: People-centered Pathways to SDG 6 & SDG 7: Water, Energy, and Social Inclusion** **(36 minutes)**

#### **Speakers:**

- **Mr. Adedoyin Adeleke**, Executive Director of Green Growth Africa, Co-chair of the Independent Group of Scientists
- **Mr. David Smith**, Director, Centre for Environmental Management, The University of the West Indies; Coordinator, Institute for Sustainable Development, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, and member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB)
- **Ms. Åsa Persson**, Strategic Advisor and Researcher, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Climate Action Centre; Chair, Swedish Climate Policy Council, and member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB) **(virtual)**
- **TBC youth speaker 1**
- **TBC youth speaker 2**

- **Moderator launches poll 2**
- **Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions**
- **Moderator to ask questions from the audience**

**Video**

**(2 minutes)**

- Video from UN DESA

**Panel discussion 2: Innovating for Sustainable Cities and Inclusive Growth: Advancing SDG 9 & SDG 11**

**(36 minutes)**

**Speakers (tbc):**

- **Mr. Claver Gatete**, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Africa
  - **Ms. Xiaolan Fu**, Professor of Technology and International Development; Founding Director, Technology & Management Centre for Development, University of Oxford, and member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB)
  - **TBC youth speaker 1**
  - **TBC youth speaker 2**
- **Moderator launches poll 3**
  - **Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions**
  - **Moderator to ask questions from the audience**

**Concluding remarks**

**(4 minutes)**

- **Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær**, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, UN DESA

**Wrap-up**

**(2 minutes)**

- Moderator's final remarks
- The exit survey will launch upon the end of the event