

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2026 REFLECTIONS ON SESSIONS ATTENDED

Under the auspices of ECOSOC: 7-16 July 2026 at New York

Theme: “Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future for all”

- July 7, 2026

SDG 6 and interlinkages with other SDGs – Water and sanitation

The SDG 6 session at the High-Level Political Forum reinforced that water and sanitation are not stand-alone development goals but the foundation upon which many other Sustainable Development Goals depend. Discussions highlighted that despite notable progress since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the world remains significantly off track, with billions of people still lacking access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. The session emphasized that without accelerated action, SDG 6 is unlikely to be achieved before 2049.

A key takeaway was the strong interconnection between water, education, health, food security, energy, climate action, and ecosystem protection. Investing in WASH not only improves public health and educational outcomes but also strengthens agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and economic resilience. The discussions also underscored the importance of integrated water resources management, science-based policymaking, innovative financing, and stronger international cooperation, particularly in managing shared water resources.

The session reinforced that achieving SDG 6 is essential for accelerating progress across the entire 2030 Agenda. It also highlighted the importance of the upcoming 2026 and 2028 UN Water Conferences as opportunities to mobilize political commitment, investment, and partnerships that can deliver scalable, people-centered solutions while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Reflection: SDG 6 Special Event – Water and Sanitation

The **SDG 6 Special Event on Water and Sanitation** was one of the most impactful sessions I attended during the 2026 High-Level Political Forum. As the **Executive Director of The Williams Hope Alive Humanitarian Foundation (TWHAHF)**, I actively participated in the interactive discussions, engaging with ministers, United Nations agencies, development partners, and water experts on practical strategies for achieving SDG 6.

During the discussion, the Chairman, Mr. Onyekachi Williams shared the work our Foundation is undertaking in Nigeria. He highlighted our commitment to supporting schools and underserved communities through our **Pada School Girl Initiative** (menstrual health education), and our vision of expanding access to safe water infrastructure as a means of improving health, education, and dignity for children (SDG 6).

Beyond sharing our experiences, He used the opportunity to seek guidance from global experts and development partners on how community-based organizations can better scale sustainable

WASH interventions in rural communities. He asked questions on strengthening local implementation, building strategic partnerships, mobilizing sustainable financing, and ensuring long-term community ownership of water and sanitation projects. The responses reinforced the importance of integrating local leadership, government collaboration, evidence-based planning, and innovative financing mechanisms into rural WASH programmes.

The launch of the **UN SDG 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation 2026** and the **SDG 6 Country Acceleration Case Studies** demonstrated that countries are making measurable progress when policies are backed by strong institutions, adequate investment, and cross-sector collaboration. Learning from successful examples in China, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Uzbekistan provided valuable insights that could be adapted to the Nigerian context, particularly for rural communities.

This session strengthened my conviction that achieving SDG 6 requires more than infrastructure alone. Sustainable progress depends on education, community engagement, gender-responsive programming, local capacity development, and partnerships across governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector. The experience provided practical ideas and valuable connections that will help strengthen the implementation of TWHAHF's water, sanitation, and menstrual hygiene initiatives as we continue working to ensure that no rural community is left behind.

- July 8, 2026

Accelerating SDG Achievement in African Countries, LDCs, LLDCs and MICs

One of my key engagements during the 2026 High-Level Political Forum was participating in the thematic session on **"Accelerating SDG Achievement in African Countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Middle-Income Countries (MICs)."** I represented the **Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG)** under the **Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS)**.

In preparation for the session, I drafted a formal intervention on behalf of the EASG, highlighting the critical role of education, innovation, and integrated approaches in accelerating sustainable development 6 across Africa, LDCs, and LLDCs. Although I was unable to deliver the statement during the interactive discussion due to time constraints and the high number of requests for the floor, I submitted the intervention to the MGoS Secretariat to be included in the official HLPF archives, ensuring that the perspectives of the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group were formally captured.

The session brought together ministers, ambassadors, senior United Nations officials, representatives of international organizations, academia, civil society, and development partners to discuss practical strategies for accelerating SDG implementation. Discussions emphasized that African countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and many MICs continue to face structural barriers, including financing gaps, climate vulnerabilities, infrastructure deficits, and limited technological capacity. Speakers consistently highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking, stronger multistakeholder partnerships, increased investment, technology transfer, and capacity building.

A major takeaway for me was that sustainable development cannot be achieved through isolated sectoral interventions. Accelerating progress requires integrated solutions that connect education, water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure, innovation, and partnerships. As a representative of the EASG, the session reaffirmed my conviction that investing in education and research is fundamental to enabling countries to develop the human capital, innovation ecosystems, and institutional capacity needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It also provided a valuable opportunity to engage with high-level delegates and stakeholders while contributing the voice of the education community to the global dialogue on sustainable development.

- July 16, 2026

Secretary-General's Reports and the Way Forward to 2030

This session provided an important strategic overview of where the world stands in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and what must be done during the final years leading to 2030. Presentations on the Secretary-General's reports and the Committee for Development Policy report made it clear that while progress has been achieved in some areas, the overall pace remains far too slow, with overlapping crises—including climate change, economic instability, conflict, and growing inequalities—continuing to undermine global development efforts.

A recurring message throughout the discussions was that the remaining years to 2030 require a shift from incremental progress to transformative action. Speakers emphasized that stronger political leadership, evidence-based decision-making, innovative financing, technological advancement, and renewed multilateral cooperation will be essential if the SDGs are to be accelerated. The session also highlighted the significance of the **2027 SDG Summit** as a defining opportunity to renew global commitments and mobilize concrete action, supported by the scientific recommendations of the forthcoming **2027 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)**.

One of the most valuable insights from this session was the recognition that sustainable development is increasingly interconnected with emerging global trends, including rapid technological change, demographic shifts, climate risks, and evolving geopolitical realities. These challenges require integrated policies that are science-driven, inclusive, and responsive to local contexts.

For me, the session reinforced the importance of ensuring that education, research, innovation, and youth engagement remain central to sustainable development. As someone representing the Education and Academia Stakeholder Group (EASG) at the HLPF, I was encouraged by the emphasis on evidence-informed policymaking and the role of academia in generating knowledge and solutions that can guide effective implementation. The discussions also strengthened my conviction that meaningful partnerships between governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector will be indispensable for delivering the transformative actions needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and shape the global development agenda beyond 2030.

Reflection: From Global Water Bankruptcy to Implementation: Regional Solutions and Opportunities to Accelerate SDG 6, Leaving No One Behind

As Chairman of **The Williams Hope Alive Humanitarian Foundation (TWHAHF)**, I participated in the United Nations University (UNU) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) side event titled **"From Global Water Bankruptcy to Implementation: Regional Solutions and Opportunities to Accelerate SDG 6, Leaving No One Behind."** The session brought together representatives from the United Nations system, permanent missions, academia, regional organizations, and development practitioners to explore practical pathways for addressing the growing global water crisis.

The discussions introduced the concept of **"global water bankruptcy,"** emphasizing that the world is consuming and managing freshwater resources beyond sustainable limits. Speakers highlighted that water insecurity is no longer solely an environmental concern but a systemic development challenge affecting public health, food security, energy, climate resilience, economic productivity, and social stability. The session underscored that regional cooperation, evidence-based governance, sustainable financing, and integrated water management are essential for accelerating progress on SDG 6 and the broader 2030 Agenda.

Beyond the technical discussions, this event provided an exceptional opportunity to build relationships with international stakeholders working in water governance and sustainable development. During the session, I engaged with representatives from the **United Nations University (UNU)**, **Geneva Water Hub**, **FLOWs (Forum for Leadership on Water)** in Canada, and gained from several other organizations committed to advancing global water security. These interactions opened valuable conversations on potential collaboration, knowledge exchange, research partnerships, and opportunities to strengthen our water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programmes in Nigeria.

The insights gained reinforced TWHAHF's commitment to addressing water challenges through integrated community-based approaches that combine clean water access, sanitation, education, public health, and local capacity building. The event also strengthened my understanding that solving water challenges requires collaboration across governments, research institutions, civil society, and international organizations. The partnerships initiated during this session have the potential to support the Foundation's long-term vision of expanding sustainable WASH interventions in underserved rural communities while contributing to global efforts to achieve SDG 6 and ensure that no one is left behind.

Reflection: *WATERHer – Advancing SDG 6, Women-Led Water Access, Safety & Climate Resilience*

I participated in the side event "**WATERHer: Advancing SDG 6, Women-Led Water Access, Safety & Climate Resilience within Gender-Responsive Community Innovation for Sustainable Development**," jointly organized by the **Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations** and the Permanent Observer Mission of the Pan-African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation (**WSA**) to the United Nations.

The event highlighted the indispensable role of women and girls in advancing water security, sanitation, climate resilience, and sustainable community development. Speakers emphasized that women are not only among those most affected by inadequate access to water and sanitation but are also key drivers of innovative, community-based solutions. The discussions reinforced the importance of gender-responsive policies, women's leadership, inclusive governance, and investment in locally driven initiatives to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6.

One of the most valuable aspects of this event was the opportunity to network and collaborate with a wide range of participants, including senior executives and the Permanent Observer Mission of the Pan-African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation (WSA), representatives of Permanent Missions, United Nations stakeholders, researchers, and civil society leaders. After the event, I shared the work of **The Williams Hope Alive Humanitarian Foundation (TWHAHF)**, particularly our initiatives in rural communities focused on water, sanitation, menstrual hygiene management, girls' education, public health, and community empowerment.

These conversations generated significant interest in our integrated approach to addressing education and WASH challenges and opened discussions on opportunities for future collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic partnerships. It was encouraging to connect with organizations whose priorities align closely with our mission of improving the lives of underserved communities through sustainable development interventions.

The session reinforced my belief that achieving SDG 6 requires meaningful participation of women at every level of decision-making and implementation. It also demonstrated that strong partnerships between governments, international organizations, academia, and grassroots organizations are essential for developing scalable, community-led solutions that improve water access, strengthen climate resilience, and promote inclusive and sustainable development. For TWHAHF, this engagement marked another important step in expanding our international network and positioning the Foundation for future collaborations that can amplify our impact across rural communities in Nigeria and beyond.