



2026 HLPF Virtual Side Event

**Clean Drinking Water, Sanitation, Mental
Health and Social Wellbeing – Our Initiatives**
Date: 08 July 2026; Time: 10 am – 11:15 am (EST)

Sponsor: Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) Summary Virtual Side Event 2026 HLPF

Background

Safe, fresh water is a basic human right, and yet across the world, women do not have an equal say in how it is collected and managed. And they consistently pay a higher price to obtain it. According to World Health Organization (WHO), more than 2.1 billion people do not have clean drinking water in their homes. There are 292 million people who are forced to spend over 30 minutes per trip collecting, a task which mostly falls to women and girls. For this, they pay not just with their time and physical safety but also in lost opportunities in education, employment and civic engagement. And they have very little input into how to create safer and more equitable options. Women's Health and Education Center's (WHEC's) aim is to make water and Sanitation a force for a more prosperous, safer and equitable future, with special focus on schools and healthcare facilities. Water promotes peace.

Concept Note:

<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/2026-HLPF-Side-Event-Concept-Note.pdf>

Key Issues Discussed

The objectives of this Side Event were:

1. Our projects and programs are tailored to meet people where they live – support women's leadership in every aspect of water management and distribution;
2. Safe, clean drinking water means protection from preventable diseases and freedom to focus on school curriculum, play and work;
3. Equitable water access bolster community resilience, improve equitable access and promoting women's and girls' education and leadership;
4. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women- and men-workers.
5. Promote education, training and professional development for women of all ages.
6. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality at regional, national and international levels.
7. Building the evidence-based, mainly community-based research that is affordable and has immediate implications for programs and local partners.

8. Provide strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States' priorities and efforts, building effective partnership and civil society and other relevant actors.

WHEC Statement: <http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/documents/2026-HLPF-Virtual-Side-Event-WHEC-Statement.pdf>

Recommendations for Action

WHEC's publications are aimed at a broad range of audience, and it is hoped the everyone who reads this comes away with a realization of the complexity of the issues at stake and an appreciation of the work that lay in front of us.

1. The world has seen a dramatic increase in out-of-school rates, for both girls and boys in developing countries. SDG Action # 50616; [Water, Sanitation and Hygiene \(WASH\) Implementation for Schools and Healthcare facilities | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash-implementation-schools-and-healthcare-facilities)
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2. WASH-related health burden ranging from – child death, diarrheal disease, enteric infections and related sequelae, malnutrition, maternal and neonatal infections, infections from unsafe healthcare waste management and antimicrobial resistance to name a few. Impacts on well-being: Dignity, personal safety (fear, anxiety, stress), school attendance, livelihoods (economic productivity, poverty). **SDG Action # 49770;** [Water & Sanitation – Essential to Improve Maternal and Child Health | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/water-sanitation-essential-improve-maternal-and-child-health)
<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/water-sanitation-essential-improve-maternal-and-child-health>
3. This NGO, focuses on the importance of supporting those countries and communities that host large number of refugees, promoting the inclusion of refugees in host communities, ensuring the involvement of development actors from an early stage, and developing a 'whole-of-society' approach to refugee responses.

YouTube Video Link: <https://youtu.be/7zFfKVUIOxs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zFfKVUIOxs>

