

THE VOYAGE

THEORY TO PRACTICE | VOLUNTEERISM TO PROFESSIONALISM

Association of Professional Social Workers and Development Practitioners (APSWDP)

In Special Consultative Status with Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2019

Affiliated with Department of Global Communications (DGC) of the United Nations

Accreditation under United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Observer Status under

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and UNFCCC

Affiliate Member UNESCO MIL Alliance

PROMOTING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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“The world is
changed by your
example, not by
your opinion”-

Paulo Coelho



PICTURE: HUDCO AWARD 2024 BEING RECEIVED BY APSWDP AT VIGYAN BHAWAN NEW DELHI.

APSWDP NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE DESK OF EDITOR IN CHIEF

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume V, Issue 27 of our Quarterly Newsletter **'The Voyage'**. This edition offers comprehensive coverage of our diverse programs and activities, including workshops, events, learning opportunities, and networking for professionals, as well as recent partnerships with various organizations at COP29. Additionally, it features expert commentary and practitioner insights, along with a series on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water. We have also introduced a Know Your Member section to highlight our esteemed members.

EXPERT'S SPEAK

Dr. Anshu Kumar, Former Regional Technical Advisor, Montreal Protocol, UNDP and Former CC Specialist, UNICEF, Bangkok



Joining APSWDP has been a rewarding experience, offering opportunities to expand my professional network, participate in impactful workshops, and collaborate with experts in social development. The association has enriched my knowledge, honed my skills, and provided valuable resources, empowering me to make meaningful contributions to society.

Dr. Mousami Prasad, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

In my short period of acquaintance with APSWDP, I have developed great admiration for their work. The team engages with our youth and communities which has deep impact in the society. They do this on a complete voluntary basis, which shows their passion for sustainability. I look forward to working with them on many projects that can help India on its path to sustainable development.



AN INTRODUCTION TO UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS - 14 (UN- SDG 14): LIFE BELOW WATER

- *ELSIE GABRIEL

Introduction:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14), titled “Life Below Water,” focuses on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas, and marine resources. This goal acknowledges the critical role oceans play in sustaining life on Earth and underscores the urgent need to address threats to marine ecosystems. This article delves into SDG 14, its significance, challenges, and global efforts to achieve its targets.



The Role of Oceans in Sustainability

Oceans are the planet’s lifeline. They produce over half of the world’s oxygen and act as a major carbon sink, regulating the global climate. Beyond their ecological functions, oceans are vital for economic activities such as fisheries, tourism, and international trade. With their vast biodiversity, marine ecosystems also sustain countless species and human communities that depend on them for survival.

Challenges Facing Ocean Health

Despite their importance, oceans are under severe threat due to human activities:

1. **Marine Pollution:** Plastic waste, oil spills, and untreated sewage pollute the seas, harming marine life and ecosystems.
2. **Overfishing:** Unsustainable fishing practices deplete fish stocks, disrupting the balance of marine ecosystems.
3. **Ocean Acidification:** Rising carbon dioxide levels cause the oceans to acidify, impacting coral reefs, shellfish, and the broader marine food chain.
4. **Habitat Destruction:** Coastal development, bottom trawling, and climate change destroy critical habitats like coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrasses.

Key SDG 14 Targets and Their Significance

To address these challenges, SDG 14 outlines several targets:

- * **Reduce Marine Pollution:** By 2025, significantly reduce marine pollution, particularly from land-based activities such as plastic and chemical runoff.
- * **Sustainable Fisheries:** Implement science-based management plans to end overfishing and support sustainable fish stocks.

- * **Protect Marine Ecosystems:** Conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2030.
- * **Marine Technology:** Enhance scientific knowledge and transfer marine technology to developing countries for sustainable practices.

Global Efforts to Achieve SDG 14

Governments, organizations, and communities worldwide are collaborating to achieve SDG 14:

- * **International Initiatives:** Programs like the United Nations' Decade of Ocean Science aim to advance knowledge and innovation for ocean conservation.
- * **Marine Protected Areas (MPAs):** Over 8% of the world's oceans are now designated as MPAs, safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems.
- * **Policy Frameworks:** Agreements such as the Paris Climate Accord and the High Seas Treaty emphasize ocean conservation within broader sustainability goals.

Community Involvement and Stakeholders

Achieving SDG 14 requires collective action:

- * **Local Communities:** Indigenous and coastal communities play a vital role in protecting marine resources through traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.
- * **Youth and Women:** Young leaders and women's groups are championing innovative solutions for ocean conservation and raising awareness.
- * **Diving Communities:** Scuba divers and marine educators are becoming key agents of change, documenting underwater ecosystems and promoting conservation.

India's Efforts Towards SDG 14

India, with its 7,500 km coastline, is actively working to protect its marine ecosystems:

- * **Blue Economy:** The Indian government has prioritized sustainable ocean-based economic growth.
- * **Conservation Programs:** Initiatives in Lakshadweep and the Andaman Islands focus on coral reef protection, sustainable tourism, and community-based fisheries.
- * **Marine Biodiversity:** India's national parks and sanctuaries, such as the Gulf of Mannar and Sundarbans, play a crucial role in protecting marine species.

The Interconnection of SDG 14 with Other SDGs

SDG 14 is deeply interconnected with other Sustainable Development Goals:

- * **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Healthy oceans mitigate climate impacts by absorbing carbon dioxide.
- * **SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production):** Reducing waste and pollution contributes directly to marine health.
- * **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** Empowering women in coastal communities enhances sustainable fisheries and livelihoods.

Call to Action

Oceans belong to everyone, and their conservation demands a global commitment. Here's how we can contribute:

- Reduce single-use plastics and support clean-up drives.
- Advocate for stronger marine conservation policies.
- Support local and global organizations working for ocean health.
- Implement Ocean Literacy: Promote education and awareness about the vital role oceans play in our ecosystems. Ocean literacy empowers individuals to make informed decisions, engage in sustainable practices, and become advocates for marine conservation. Schools, universities, and community programs should incorporate ocean literacy into their curriculums to foster a deeper connection with the ocean.
- Engage as Citizen Scientists: Individuals can contribute valuable data by participating in projects like beach clean-ups, coral reef monitoring, and reporting marine biodiversity observations. These efforts help researchers and organizations track ocean health and implement targeted conservation actions.
- Community Contributions to SDG 14: Coastal communities and citizen groups can collaborate on sustainable fisheries, mangrove restoration, and coral reef protection projects, directly supporting SDG 14 targets.

Addressing Ocean Crises and Disasters

With rising ocean temperatures, increasing cyclones, tsunamis, and coastal flooding, the ocean crisis has become a direct threat to human lives and ecosystems. To mitigate these risks, we are conducting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) skill training through Handicapped Scuba Association (HSA) courses in remote islands like the Andamans, Lakshadweep, and coastal regions such as Kerala. These courses equip participants with lifesaving skills, underwater disaster management expertise, and techniques for inclusive climate resilience.

How the APSWDP can start the project for Students from schools and universities who can play a vital role by:

- Participating in HSA training programs to build practical skills in disaster response.
- Learning about the integration of scuba diving and ocean conservation, and climate adaptation to address the unique challenges of their regions.
- Advocating for inclusive disaster management and supporting vulnerable coastal communities through educational initiatives and volunteering.
- Through education, training, field trips and active participation, students can become the next generation of leaders driving SDG 14 and ensuring a safer, more sustainable future for our oceans and coastal communities.

By embracing these actions, we can collectively work toward achieving the targets of SDG 14 and ensuring a sustainable future for all.



Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goal 14 is more than just a commitment to preserving marine life—it is a pledge to secure the future of our planet. Oceans are essential for life, livelihoods, and climate stability. As we approach 2030, let us collectively work to ensure that the “Life Below Water” thrives, supporting the sustainability of life above it.

References

1. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal14>
2. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>
3. <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/14-life-below-water/>
4. <https://www.unep.org/topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-14-life-2>

* **Elsie Gabriel** is an Indian environmentalist and underwater diver. She is the founder of the Young Environmentalists Programme Trust, national coordinator of the Oceans Climate Reality Project, and the co chairperson of the Oceans School in Lakshadweep Islands. In 2021, she was named the Ocean Quest Global Ambassador for India, and in 2023 she was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame. She is the Member of APSWDP.

"The sea, the great unifier, is man's only hope. Now, as never before, the old phrase has a literal meaning: we are all in the same boat."

- Jacques Yves Cousteau, Oceanographer



APSWDP PROGRAM & PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATES

Composite Targeted Intervention Project (CTIP), Chandigarh and Link Workers Scheme (LWS) Project Ludhiana.

The CTIP and LWS Project, spearheaded by the Association of Professional Social Workers and Development Practitioners (APSWDP) in collaboration with Chandigarh State AIDS Control Society (CSACS), and Punjab State AIDS Control Society (PSACS) advanced its mission to reduce HIV/AIDS vulnerabilities among high-risk groups (HRGs) through multi-dimensional initiatives. The quarter focused on advocacy, capacity building, healthcare access, and strategic planning, yielding significant progress.

Key Activities and Outcomes:

1. Advocacy for Social Inclusion:

- Conducted community engagement meetings with transgender groups (21st November), advocacy sessions with IT Park Police Station (19th November) and CID, Punjab Police (20th November) to address HRG challenges and sensitize stakeholders for strengthening partnerships and fostering an inclusive policy environment to improve community integration.

2. Capacity Building and Skill Enhancement:

- Project team participated in workshops, including a two-day SOCH-ABDM Digital Health training (21st-22nd October), a three-day programmatic mapping workshop (26th-28th November), and legal compliance training on the HIV/AIDS Act (5th December) for Enhancing team competency in digital health, mapping techniques, and legal frameworks, leading to better service delivery and adherence to national guidelines.

3. Enhanced Healthcare Access:

- Hosted a free health camp on World AIDS Day on 30th November at Chandigarh for 115 individuals, and organized a street campaign, drawing competition & street play and screening on 2nd December with participation of more than 150 HRGs and their families, common people, youth.

4. Strategic Oversight:

- Conducted review meetings and developed the Annual Action Plan (28th December) to align project goals with future priorities for ensuring accountability, proactive adjustments, and a clear strategic vision for FY 2025-26.

HUDCO Award 2024 conferred to APSWDP.

Ms. Rekha Trivedi, Project Director cum Secretary General APSWDP received HUDCO National Level Best Practice Award 2024 to Improve the Living Environment at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 9th October, 2024. The award was given by Shri Tokhan Sahu, the State Minister of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, in the august presence of Shri Katikithala Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN India Head, and Shri Sanjay Kulshrestha, the Chairman and Managing Director of HUDCO.



APSWDP INTERNATIONAL ECO-VISIONARY DIALOGUE ON ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURES: PAVING THE WAY TO COP29

The International Eco-Visionary Dialogue, was organized by APSWDP in association with IIT Kanpur, ACCEC Jeju, TCP India & SA, UNESCO MIL Alliance, ADSAYO, Azerbaijan and supported by other six youth organizations on 9 October 2025 in hybrid format while commemorating World Habitat Day 2024, seeks to align with these global priorities by placing special emphasis on youth leadership, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and global cooperation. In the dialogue, more than 570 young leaders, experts, academicians, activists, practitioners, and policymakers have participated to explore how youth can drive the future of urban development in ways that are equitable and ecologically sound. By integrating perspectives from various global communities, the event was aimed to generate actionable insights that will contribute to the conversations at COP29 and beyond.



Know Your Members



DR. RADHIKA DEV VARMA
ACADEMICIAN

Dr. Radhika Dev Varma is a Professor of Law and Head of the Department at the University Institute of Legal Studies, Chandigarh University with 16+ years of experience in Teaching, Research, and Administration. She has done her B.Com from the University of Delhi, New Delhi; LL.B, LL.M, and Ph.D. from Panjab University, Chandigarh. Her areas of expertise are Criminal Law, Environmental Law, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). She has to her credit 47 publications in National and International reputed journals and books including Scopus Indexed publications, Springer.



MS. KANU PRIYA
ANALYST

Kanu Priya is a young policy analyst with a strong interest in public policy, content writing, and developing innovative skills. She holds a Bachelor's degree from MCM DAV College, Chandigarh and a Master's degree from PGGCG 42, where she consistently excelled academically, earning top rankings in all four semesters of her Master's program at the Panjab University. Kanu Priya is currently doing her Internship under The Urban Learning Internship Program (TULIP) with the Capacity Building Division of Punjab Municipal Infrastructure Development Company, Department of Local Government, Punjab.



MR. ARUN KUMAR SHARMA
CINEMATOGRAPHER

Arun Kumar Sharma, a skilled Cinematographer and Director of Photography (DOP) from Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. After completing a PG Diploma in Cinematography from Chitkara Network One in 2007, he began his career as a Camera and Broadcast Instructor at Chitkara University. With professional experience at Day and Night News, Reliance Broadcast, and Zee News, Arun has also freelanced extensively, working on documentaries, films, web series, corporate movies, and TV commercials. Currently, he conducts filmmaking classes and continues his creative journey in movie production, showcasing his passion and expertise in visual storytelling.



MR. IQBAL SINGH
SOCIAL WORKER

Iqbal Singh, MSW and D. Pharma, is a dedicated social worker with over 8 years of experience at Civil Hospital, Yamunanagar, Haryana. Actively involved with various NGOs, he focuses on child and women welfare, addressing critical social issues with compassion and expertise. His diverse skill set and commitment to community development make him a valuable contributor to advancing social causes and improving lives.

APSWDP DELEGATION AT UNFCCC COP 29 BAKU IN AZERBAIJAN AND AT COP 16 RIYADH IN SAUDI ARABIA

APSWDP has been conferred provisional Observer Status in 2022 and confirmed full Observer Status in Conference of the Parties (COP) at its twenty-seventh session (COP 27) at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. In 2024, APSWDP nominated 22 delegates from professional background including government and non government entities from the USA, India, Mongolia, Azerbaijan under leadership of Dr. Vivek Trivedi. In addition, APSWDP nominated 10 virtual youth delegates in COP 29 from eminent organizations including The Climate Reality Project India and South Asia.



APSWDP organized three meetings on fostering international collaborations and partnerships at COP 29 venue with participation of more than 50 global delegates in addition to two roundtable discussions in partnership with Extreme Hangout, Young Environmentalists Programme Trust, WFUNIF, ACCEC and ADSAYO Azerbaijan. APSWDP signed 11 MOUs with global organizations at COP 29 for building partnership for the SDGs. The APSWDP delegation met Sadguru, Founder ISHA Foundation at COP 29 and was enlightened from his messages for sustainable development.



APSWDP's second four member delegation led by Dr. Sumit Arora represented in UNCCD COP 16 at Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in December 2024. APSWDP delegation interacted with Hon. Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India at India Pavilion and other global dignitaries from eminent organizations including CSO Alliance, South Korea, UNITAR CIFAL Saudi Arabia and, UN Habitat, Saudi Arabia at COP 16.

Job Opportunities

Multiple Vacancies

**Project Coordinator- Prison Intervention Program
National Coalition Of People Living With HIV In India (NCPI+)
Location: Ropar, Punjab
Apply by: 09 Jan 2025**

Link:

https://www.devnetjobsindia.org/jobDescription.aspx?Job_Id=248934

**Senior Team Co-Coordinator (Female) - Girls Program
Jagori Rural Charitable Trust
Location: Dharamshala, H.P.
Apply by: 27 Jan 2025**

Link:

https://www.devnetjobsindia.org/jobDescription.aspx?Job_Id=248753

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APSWDP Membership

Join APSWDP as Life Associate/ Annual member/ Student member for knowledge networking (terms and conditions applied).



Write your intent to join at apswdp@gmail.com



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