



International World Water Day

22 March 2018

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International World Water Day – 22 March 2018

Every year on 22 March, people all across the globe hold the International World Water Day to direct attention to the vitality of freshwater and advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The celebration of the Day was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, and was implemented by the UN General Assembly, which adopted resolution [A/RES/47/193](#) of 22 December 1992 by which 22 March of each year was declared World Day for Water. This was to be observed in conformity with UNCED's recommendations contained in Chapter 18 (Fresh Water Resources) of Agenda 21.

States were invited to devote the Day to concrete activities, adapted to the national context, to promote public awareness through documentaries, conferences, round tables, seminars and exhibitions related to the conservation and development of water resources and the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21. The World Water Day is coordinated by UN Water, the inter-agency mechanism in charge of coordinating activities and action on freshwater related issues, along with governments and partners.

For citizens, World Water Day is an opportunity to learn about the vitality of water, be inspired to share insights, and take action to preserve resources. This year's theme is "Nature for Water", with the objective of exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges we face in the 21st century.

This year's World Water Day inaugurates the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", which will last until the World Water Day of 2028. The decade aims at accelerating efforts to meet water-related challenges such as lack of access to safe water and sanitation, heightened pressure on water resources and ecosystems, and an aggravated risk of droughts and floods.



WATER ACTION DECADE
2018 - 2028

On occasion of World Water Day and the Water Action Decade, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) examines water in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reveals its importance for all aspects of human life, discusses contemporary water challenges, and unravels how these can be tackled on the basis of nature-based approaches. In concluding, GICJ attempts to make a strong case for international cooperation in this regard. GICJ remains concerned at the persistent asymmetries and inequities between and within States, which are perpetuated by the lack of effective cooperation between developed and developing countries in view of the right to sustainable development enshrined in Article I, paragraph 10 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Water Sustains Life

Water is a vital building block of life. We not only rely on it to quench our thirst and protect our health; water is also essential for economic, social, and human development. We rely on water to survive and thrive. Yet, it is far from being freely accessible for many. Over 663 million people have to lead a life without a safe water supply close to home, have to afford countless hours queuing or venturing to distant sources, and are left with the detrimental impacts of contaminated water.

844 million people don't have clean water.

(WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) Report 2017)

2.3 billion people don't have a decent toilet.

(WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) Report 2017)

31% of schools don't have clean water.

(UNICEF, Advancing WASH in Schools Monitoring, 2015)

Every minute a newborn dies from infection caused by lack of safe water and an unclean environment.

(WHO, 2015)

Diarrhoea caused by dirty water and poor toilets kills a child under 5 every 2 minutes.

(WASHWatch.org)

Around the world up to 443 million school days are lost every year because of water-related illnesses.

(Human Development Report, 2006)

Every \$1 invested in water and toilets returns an average of \$4 in increased productivity.

(WHO, 2012)

The World Bank says promoting good hygiene is one of the most cost effective health interventions.

(Disease Control Priorities, third edition (volume 2), 2016)

If everyone, everywhere had clean water, the number of diarrhoeal deaths would be cut by a third.

(Tropical Medicine and International Health, 2014)

See <https://www.wateraid.org/facts-and-statistics>

This year's theme "Nature for Water" explores nature as means to overcoming the water challenges we are currently confronted with. Water-related crises around the world are revealing the seriousness of environmental damage. Floods, droughts, and water pollutions are exacerbated by the degradation of our ecosystems. Nature-based solutions are core to solving many of the serious water challenges. "Green" infrastructure can fuel sustainable solutions. New forests can be planted, rivers can be reconnected to floodplains, and wetlands can be replenished to rebalance water cycles and improve human health and livelihoods.

Water, the UN, and the Sustainable Development Goals



Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 is at the heart of such processes and is directed towards the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. The number of people depending on untreated water resources is to be decreased by half and water recycling and safe reuse is to be increased. The global goal of sustainable development cannot be achieved without water. Freshwater breathes life into socio-economic development, energy and food production, ecosystems and humans themselves. In specific, the achievement of this goal is considered essential for the attainment of other SDGs such as health, education, economics and the environment. At the nexus of society and environment, it is also essential prerequisite for adapting to climate change.

Water is also a rights issue. As the world population grows, competing commercial demands on water resources become more fervent. There is thus a dire need to water resources are distributed in a manner to ensure adequate water supply to all affected communities so they are able to lead healthy lives, sustain their livelihoods, and have access to clean sanitation facilities. Access to clean and private sanitation facilities are particularly crucial for women and girls so they can manage menstruation and maternity in dignity and safety. As regards human rights, water is interlinked with sanitation. In conjunction, they are vital components of the rights to health, education, and economic productivity.

Recently, in July 2010, water and sanitation have been recognized by the UN General Assembly as human right. Specifically, the Assembly affirmed the right of every human being to safe, acceptable and affordable and proximate access to sufficient water for personal and domestic uses.



Water has been on the UN agenda for a long time, with a focus on global crises caused by insufficient water supply to satisfy basic human needs and growing demands on the world's water resources to fulfill human, commercial and agricultural needs.

- United Nations Water Conference (1977)
- International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990)
 - International Conference on Water and the Environment (1992)
 - Earth Summit (1992)
- 'Water for Life' International Decade for Action 2005-2015 helped around 1.3 billion people in developing countries gain access to safe drinking water and drove progress on sanitation as part of the effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals.
 - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
 - 2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
 - 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development
- 2015 Paris Agreement within the UN Convention Framework on Climate Change

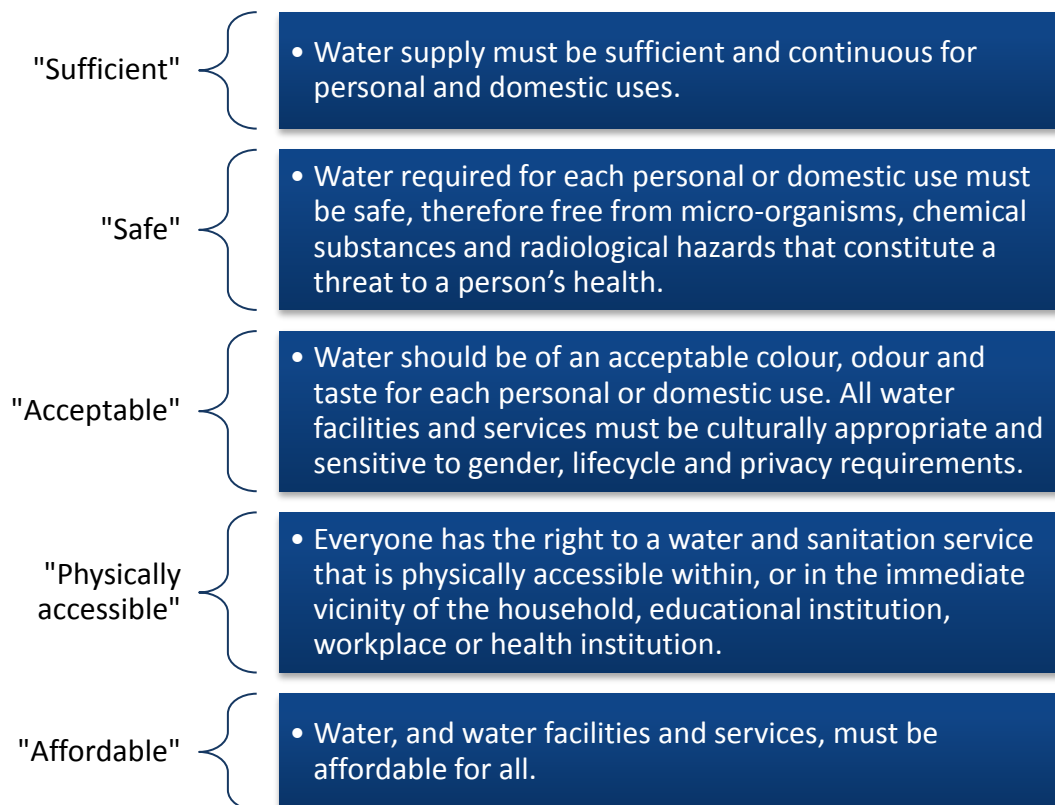
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Having been recognized by the United Nations as human rights, the deprivation of access to safe, sufficient and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene has severe implications for the health, dignity and prosperity of billions of people, and has serious consequences for the realization of other human rights.

The right to water entails that everyone should have access to sufficient, safe, acceptable, affordable, and physically accessible water for personal and domestic use. Meanwhile, the right to

sanitation provides for every person's physical and affordable access to sanitation, in all spheres of life, that is safe, hygienic, secure, and socially and culturally acceptable and that provides privacy and ensures dignity.





A vast number of people are still deprived of basic amenities worldwide. Currently, 2.3 billion people do not have basic sanitation facilities such as toilets and latrines. An estimated 1.8 billion people drink water that may be contaminated by faeces, while the drinking water of an even higher number is exposed to sanitary hazards. Unclean water and poor sanitation are a major cause of child mortality, with childhood diarrhea being a prominent disease that leads to the death of 1.5 million children per year, mostly among children under the age of five in developing countries. Central development goals, notably efforts to end extreme poverty and disease in the poorest countries, are severely impeded by contaminated water and lack of basic sanitation.

To ameliorate water and sanitation and pursue the development goals, investment in improved sanitation is crucial. Such investment carries significant economic benefits, which can particularly be reaped by poor children in disadvantaged communities.

Improved drinking water needs to be coupled with improved sanitation and hygiene practices to attain full benefits for health and wellbeing. Beyond these immediate benefits, WASH has significant wider socio-economic benefits, particularly for women and girls. Its constitution of the sixth of the Sustainable Development Goals is testament to WASH's fundamental role in public health and sustainable development. To guarantee the fulfillment of the right to access to safe water and sanitation require well-resourced, capable institutions delivering services and altering behavior in resilient and appropriate ways.

While people as rights-holders can claim their rights, States as duty-bearers must ensure the rights to water and sanitation equally and without discrimination. Those people deprived of these rights must be at the center of development efforts, as required by international human rights law. The latter also demands a commitment to the progressive reduction of inequalities by combating discrimination and stigmatization, which often impedes the affected people's equal access to water and sanitation. To guarantee the integration of human rights into development agendas, rights and obligations with regards to water and sanitation must constitute the framework for the international community.



Family provided with buckets and chlorine and taught how to wash hands properly at home during an Ebola outbreak. (UNWater, Photo UNMEER /Martine Perret)

WASH and livelihoods

As the lack of access to WASH causes disease and imposes time constraints, many adults are prevented from earning their livelihoods, let alone growing to their full potential professionally. Access to WASH can thus relieve people of associated burdens and can even create employment in relevant services. WASH can help pave the way towards the SDGs, particularly with regards to poverty, work and economic growth, not least because it facilitates the achievement of gender equity.

As women and girls are often responsible for water collection and care for relatives affected by lack of WASH, they are deprived of education because of their domestic roles. Lack of WASH deepens the marginalization of women and girls by trapping them in a cycle of poverty and grind, with detrimental impacts on society and economy.

WASH and education

Education is a fundamental right for children. Yet, countless children in low-income communities with no access to WASH cannot attend class due to sicknesses or duties of water collection for their families. Those children who are at school often suffer from dehydration and lacking sanitation, and are unable to concentrate and prone to sicknesses. Especially for

adolescent girls, access to safe water supply and private, clean sanitation facilities can prevent drop-out from school. Moreover, hygiene education at school can signify the transition to better health for all children



Girls in Kuma Garadayat, North Darfur, celebrate the inauguration of their new school as part of the six development projects in the areas of education, sanitation, health, community development and women empowerment. Photo by Albert González Farran (UNWater, UNAMID)

WASH and health

Universal access to WASH would boost global health. The lives of 840,000 people currently dying every year from associated diseases could be saved, child malnourishment could be drastically reduced, and physical and mental under-development could be alleviated. Women and girls could manage their menstrual cycles safely and in a dignified manner, and medical staff, expectant mothers and their families could ensure a safe and healthy start in life for their newborn children.

Financing WASH

Investment in WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) needs to significantly increase and be utilized more effectively to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically towards the universal access to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene. Funds should come from three major sources, the three Ts:

- Taxes from individuals and businesses;
- Transfers such as overseas aid, remittances or market interest rate lending;
- Tariffs paid by households, businesses and governments.

Effective fundraising and their implementation are crucial for the provision of good services. Significant financing, policy and governance gaps persist on the path towards universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate sanitation, and hygiene, and towards the eradication of open defecation. Thus, the targeted investment in physical service infrastructure in relevant areas is another primary concern.

Water, Food and Energy

Sustainable development largely proceeds at the nexus of water, food and energy. Growth in the global population, urbanization, and economy raise demands for all three. The interlinkage between the three domains critical for the SDGs necessitates an integrated approach to ensuring water and food security, and sustainable agriculture and energy production worldwide. Water being a finite resource having to fulfill the needs of exponentially more people and sectors, and being vital to the energy and food sectors, sustainable water resource management and ecosystem protection is imperative for human survival and sustainable progress.



Wind energy windmills near highway and sea shore.(UNWater)

Energy Efficiency

Instead of fostering the water-intensive fossil fuel and biofuel production and shale gas extraction, investment should be made into less water-intensive renewable energy, such as hydropower and wind. Geothermal energy is an alternative with great potential as long-term, climate independent resource that produces little or no greenhouse gases and does not consume water.

Agriculture absorbs the largest amounts of the world's freshwater resources and food production and supply consume more than a quarter of energy. Therefore, conscious water investment and efficiency measures by farmers can save water and energy.

In the face of rapid urbanization, particularly in low-income countries with limited capacities for urban planning and control and water and energy services, conscious consumption and reliable supplies should be encouraged. The use of multiple water sources, including rainwater harvesting and wastewater reuse, and only treating water adequate for its intended use, would be a significant step into the right direction.

Ensuring food and nutritional security

Although the world's water resources still suffice for the food production for everyone, food and nutritional insecurity persists. Diseases associated with WASH continue to cause child mortality, malnourishment, and loss of productivity. Particularly in water scarce regions, there is a dire need for robust strategies for the protections of water availability, agricultural production, and avoidance of food price volatility. Advances in genetics and technologies facilitating the sustainable intensification of crops, livestock and fish production can help meet demand as efficiently as possible.



*A man serves lentils to a young girl at a feeding centre in Mogadishu, Somalia in 2017 during a severe drought.
(UNWater, UN Photo/Tobin Jones)*

Contemporary Water Challenges

UNWater has identified the following water-related challenges that require our urgent redress today. GICJ would like to underline that relevant recommendations can only be successfully implemented if we enhance international and national cooperation, notably through needed technical support to developing countries and the involvement of all sectors of civil society, especially vulnerable populations gravely affected by water-related issues.

2.1 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services.

(WHO/UNICEF 2017)

4.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services.

(WHO/UNICEF 2017)

340,000 children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases.

(WHO/UNICEF 2015)

Water scarcity already affects four out of every 10 people.

(WHO)

90% of all natural disasters are water-related.

(UNISDR)

80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused

(UNESCO, 2017).

Around two-thirds of the world's transboundary rivers do not have a cooperative management framework.

(SIWI)

Agriculture accounts for 70% of global water withdrawal.

(FAO)

Roughly 75% of all industrial water withdrawals are used for energy production.

(UNESCO, 2014)

Water and Climate Change

Climate change will show its devastating impact primarily through the medium of water. Water availability is becoming less predictable, and more frequent flooding is imperiling water points and sanitation structures and is a source of contamination.

Droughts are exacerbating water scarcity and gravely affecting people's health and productivity. Rising temperatures and more extreme, less predictable weather conditions are project to impact availability and distribution of rainfall, snowmelt, river flows and groundwater, and further reduce water quality. The most vulnerable and marginalized communities are expected to be the worst affected. As the severity and frequency of floods and droughts is rising, health hazards and food insecurity are increasing and continue to fuel refugee dynamics and political instability.

The role played by water in the world's mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change cannot be understated. Access to sustainable water resources and sanitation services serves as crucial measure to mitigate climate change. Importantly, an integrated approach to water, the biosphere and environmental flows needs to inform the development of sustainable agricultural and economic systems that can simultaneously facilitate the deceleration of climate change, protection from extremes and adaptation to the unavoidable.

Water and Disasters

Disaster often becomes manifest through water, with floods, landslides, tsunamis, storms, heat waves, cold spells, droughts and waterborne disease outbreaks becoming more prevalent and intense. Unplanned urbanization and degradation of ecosystem services exacerbates the effects and costs of such occurrences. Reducing perils to, and strengthening the resilience of, water and sanitation services are core to providing for availability in the view of a climatically uncertain future.



A woman walks through a flooded market in Port au Prince. Hurricane Sandy passed to the west of Haiti October 25, 2012 causing heavy rains and winds, flooding homes and overflowing rivers.

Photo Logan Abassi (UNWater, UN/MINUSTAH)

Water-related disasters represent direct challenges, including damage to buildings, crops and infrastructure, and loss of life and property, and indirect challenges, including losses in productivity and livelihoods, increased investment risk, indebtedness and human health impacts. Even those state and non-state actors that are not concerned with the human cost of water-related disasters should use the increasing economic cost as strong incentive for investment in and action on preparedness, prevention, and disaster-risk reduction.



*Children displaced by flooding in South Sudan collect water from submerged hand pump.
[UNWater, UNMIS]*

Water and Ecosystems

Ecosystems – forests, wetlands, grasslands – are vital for the global water cycle. Freshwater is therefore reliant on the healthy functioning of ecosystems. Sustainable water management depends on the recognition of the water cycle as biophysical process.

Ecosystems are also critical for the mitigation of the effects of floods and droughts, and their conscious usage can supplement or replace conventional water treatment systems, due to the water purification process inherent in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Water for drinking, wildlife habitat, and economic productivity can be scooped from such sources.

Natural wastewater contains valuable resources such as nutrients and organic carbon, which can be employed for the rejuvenation of ecosystems to enhance their benefits for societies and economies. Recognizing ecosystems as integral to development solutions, and enhancing integrated water resources management, can foster sustainable development.

Definition of an ecosystem

An ecosystem is a dynamic and complex functional unit of interacting plant, animal and microorganism communities and their nonliving environment. It encompasses all living things, including plants, animals, and organisms and their interactions with one another and their non-living environment, including soil, sun, earth, climate, weather, and atmosphere. Each part plays a distinct role and contributes to the health and productivity of an ecosystem.

Water and Gender

Women face disproportionate challenges in leading safe, productive and healthy lives when faced with a lack of safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and hygiene facilities at home and public places. As primary caretakers of household water supply, sanitation and health across low-income and other countries, women and girls face multiple aggravated barriers to obtaining other occupations or participation in education. Their marginalization is compounded by a lack of water, sanitation and hygiene, which is thus an essential target towards achieving gender equality.

Unsafe and insufficient water supply and lack of sanitation facilities is detrimental to women's and girls' basic right and wellbeing as 1) women and girls are usually allocated the responsibility of often time-consuming and arduous water collection; 2) women and girls are highly vulnerable to abuse when using sanitation sites, 3) women have specific hygiene needs during menstruation, pregnancy and child rearing.



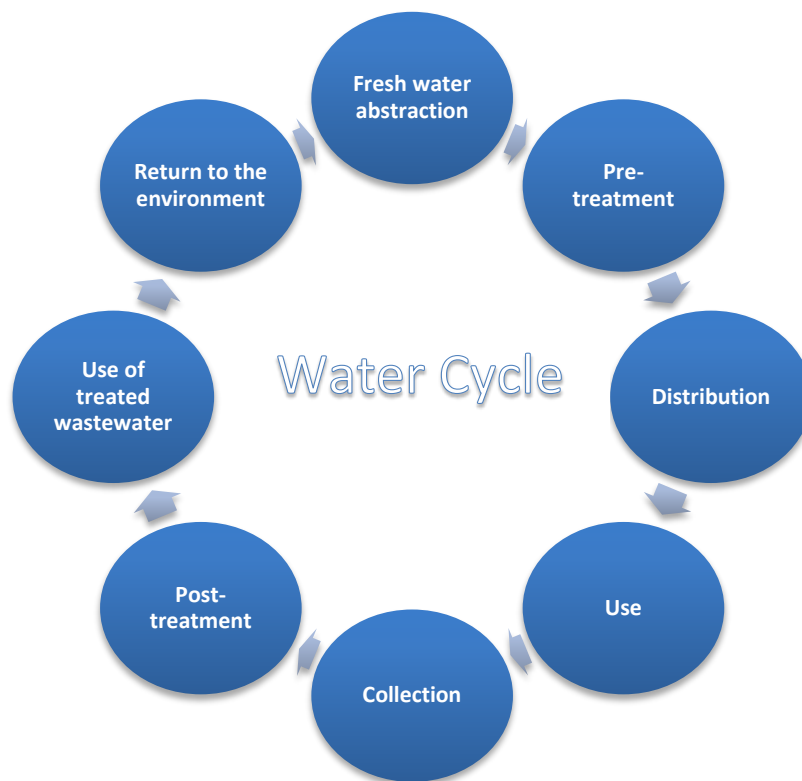
Rural women in Senegal attend a literacy class after the introduction of the Multifunctional Platform Project (MFP) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), because they no longer need to spend several hours a day gathering firewood or collecting water. (UNWater; UN Photo/Evan Schneider)

Water Quality and Wastewater

While good water quality is fundamental to human health, social and economic development and the ecosystem, its maintenance is becoming increasingly challenging in the context of the degradation of natural environments and population growth. Improved wastewater management and decreased pollution is thus essential.

Valuing the potential of wastewater rather than its elimination are cornerstone of a more circular and thus sustainable economy. Indeed, safe wastewater management could protect ecosystems and provide us with energy, nutrients and other recoverable materials.

As the world's population grows, urbanization accelerates and economic development proceeds, the quantity and pollution of wastewater escalate. Therefore, water must be managed attentively during every part of the water cycle:



Good water management is highly conducive to the availability of safe and sufficient water supplies. If utilized consciously, wastewater can satisfy the growing water demand in rapidly expanding cities, foster energy production and industrial development, and enhance sustainable agriculture.

The exacerbation of untreated sewage, agricultural runoff and industrial discharge has resulted in the degradation of water quality and contamination of water resources. With around 80 percent of untreated wastewater flowing back into the ecosystem, 1.8 billion people utilize contaminated drinking water, which poses a substantial health hazard and causes cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio.

Wastewater and cities

Vast proportions of wastewater are discharged directly into nearby surface water drains or informal drainage channels, predominantly in low-incomes areas of cities and towns in developing countries. Apart from household effluent and human waste, the wastewater system also absorbs highly toxic chemicals and medical waste dispersed from hospitals, industries, minding and motor garages.

In cities in which wastewater is collected and treated, treatment varies depending on the system used. What should be ensured is that wastewater is treated according to the quality standard appropriate for its intended usage.

Growing demand for water in urban areas necessitates novel approaches to wastewater collection and management. Particularly reusing wastewater would help tackle issues such as food production and industrial development.



Wastewater and industry

Industry is a major consumer of water, accounting for 22 percent of global water use. Striking inequalities between developed and developing countries persist, with Europe and North America consuming 50 percent as opposed to 4-12 percent by developing countries (2009). Presumably, the proportion of water used by developing countries will increase significantly in the course of rapid industrialization. Domestic and local wastewater use will be vital for sustainable development and save financial resources that can be invested elsewhere.

Over the past years, societal and environmental pressures have prompted industry to reduce and treat its wastewater, and to reuse or recycle it after suitable treatment to gain economic and financial benefits. “Industrial symbiosis” facilitates reuse of wastewater within or between businesses for specific purposes. Process water, for instance, may be used for cooling and heating, while rainwater may be used for irrigation, toilet flushing, and vehicle cleaning.

Wastewater in agriculture

Agriculture is potential source of environmental pollution, due to increased use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to maximize yields to meet demand. Untreated or insufficiently treated wastewater pollutes surface and groundwater. Therefore, wastewater management is essential for the right to health of workers.

Due to their high nutrient content and lack of conventional water resources, non-conventional water resources, especially wastewater, are becoming increasingly important to farmers. Its safe usage is conducive to food security and livelihood improvements.



Farmers are increasingly looking into non-conventional water resources, mainly wastewater, whether due to its high nutrient content or lack of conventional water resources.(UNWater)

Water Scarcity

Water scarcity can signify lack of availability due to physical shortage, or lack of access due to the failure of institutions to guarantee supply or provide adequate infrastructure. As water use keeps growing globally and as regions are increasingly unable to ensure sustainable delivery, water scarcity stretches over regions in every continent. The demand of neighboring water resources by rapidly growing urban areas as well as climate change and bio-energy will amplify the issue of water scarcity on the path to development.

Even if water scarcity does not affect every country and region yet, water must be treated as scarce resource and integrated water resource management should be strengthened to align water supply to specific needs and demands.

Water and Conflict

The **263** transboundary lake and river basins cover almost half the Earth's surface.

145 States have territory in these basins, and 30 countries lie entirely within them.

There are approximately **300** transboundary aquifers, helping to serve the **2 billion** people who depend on groundwater.

Aquifers, lake and river basins shared by two or more countries constitute transboundary waters, which sustain the lives and livelihoods of countless people across the globe. The management of these vital resources is fundamental to fostering peaceful cooperation and sustainable development, especially in the face of increasing water scarcity.

Historical and current instances reveal that the depleted and degraded transboundary water resources can spark social unrest and conflict within and between countries. Addressing the serious impacts of climate change compounded by growing demand due to population and economic growth necessitates a supranational, integrated approach to the management of these resources built upon legal and institutional frameworks.

Cooperation is absolutely essential, particularly in view of growing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and water scarcity in some regions. Collaborative management must encompass wetlands around lakes and floodplains crossing national boundaries, as these harbor thriving ecosystems that provide populations with good and protection from flooding and pollution.

Overexploitation of vital transboundary waters undermines such ecosystem services and imperils the reliability and sustainability of water supplies, which can lead to international tension if one side is disproportionately affected. Unilateral actions, even if ostensibly positive, can trigger contention and conflict. For instance, if one country takes steps to adapt to climate change by constructing a dam, the river's downstream flow in another country could be hampered.

Thus, the management of transboundary waters has implications for the sustainable development within and beyond national borders. Supranational cooperation is therefore crucial in water-dependent sectors such as agriculture, industry, energy, navigation and water supply and sanitation. Effective cooperation and development of shared waters is conducive to food and energy production, to poverty reduction and the control of rural-urban migration. "Transboundary water management creates benefits for everyone to share: international trade, climate change adaptation, economic growth, food security, improved governance and regional integration."

Since 1948, the negotiation of international water agreements such as the UNECE Water Convention has registered notable achievements, whereas 37 acute conflicts have broken out over water. Two-thirds of the world's transboundary rivers still await cooperative management.



Drina River Basin in the Western Balkans where Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia cooperate over transboundary waters. (UNWater)

Water and Urbanization

For the first time in history, **more than half** of the global population live in towns and cities. By **2050**, that proportion is expected to rise to **two-thirds**.

Population growth is happening fastest in urban areas of less developed regions, with the urban population estimated to grow from **3.9 billion people today to 6.3 billion in 2050**.

Today, **700 million urbanites** live without improved sanitation, contributing to poor health conditions and heavy pollution loads in wastewater, and **156 million** live without improved water sources.

Urbanization is rapidly progressing, with all of the world's population growth expected to be absorbed by urban areas and rural-urban migration carrying on. Overcrowded slums with inadequate or non-existent water and sanitation services will accommodate the vast majority of urbanites as planning and infrastructure have not kept pace in many regions. Extending vital services to these people plays a key role in ensuring sustainable growth, public health, and security. Furthermore, more efficient use of water within cities and the safe reuse of more waste will put less strain on the surrounding ecosystems.



A view of passengers aboard trains connecting the suburbs of Kolkata, India. The Asia-Pacific region is urbanizing rapidly with 1.77 billion people, 43% of the region's population, living in urban areas. UN Photo/Kibae Park



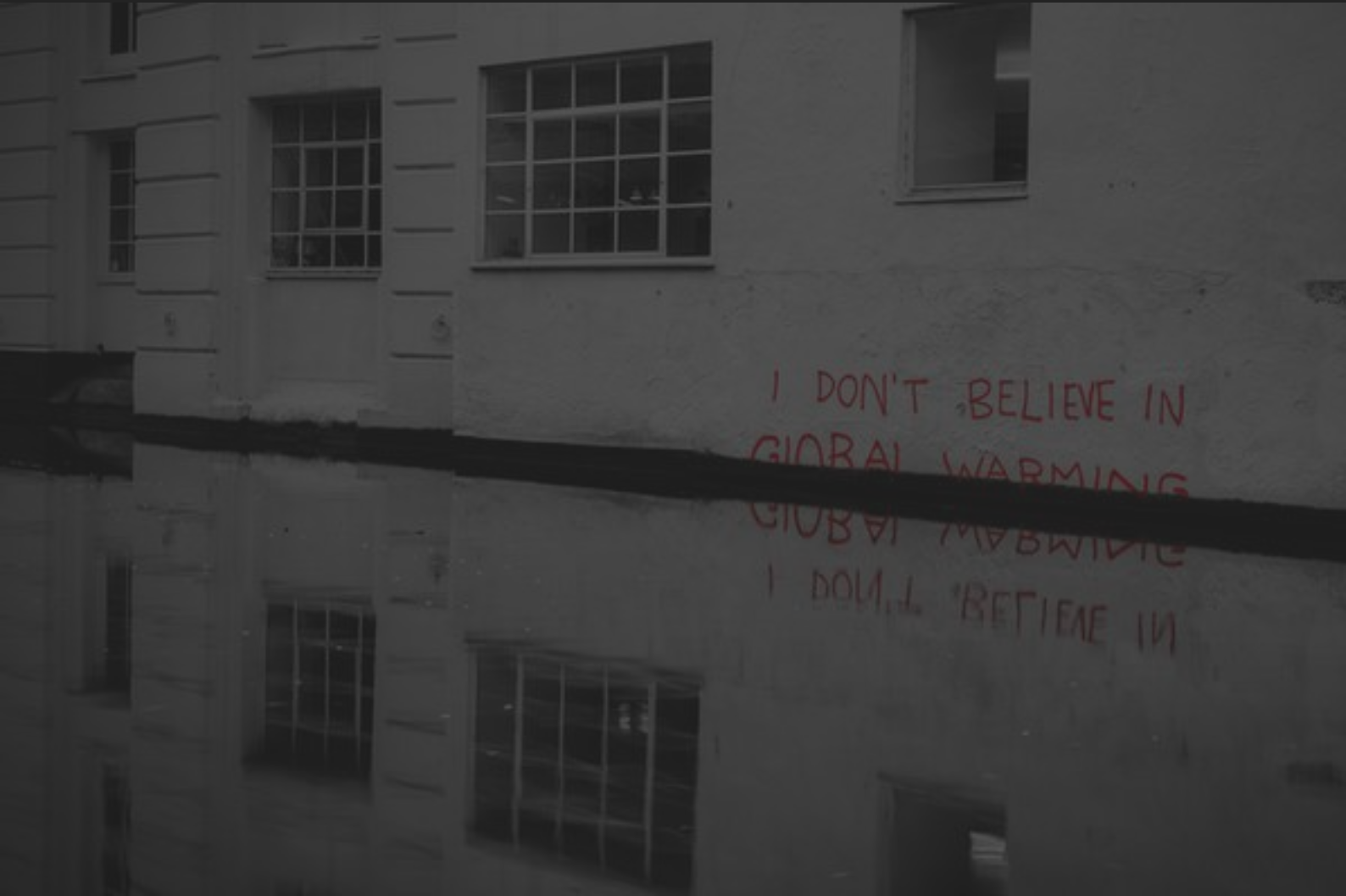
New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda, adopted by world leaders in December 2016, provides a global standard for sustainable urban development, and encourages rethinking in planning, management and life in cities. It constitutes a roadmap for building cities that can serve as engines of prosperity and platforms for cultural and social welfare while protecting the environment. The Agenda also lays the path towards the Sustainable Development Goals and towards actions to tackle climate change.

Conclusions and Recommendations

To steadily move forward on the path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, GICJ stresses the importance of protecting and preserving water resources and build on nature-based solutions to effectively meet water-related challenges. Climate change concerns everyone and efforts to decelerate, counteract, and adapt to it must be focus of our efforts towards sustainable development. GICJ highlights the importance of international cooperation in addressing the global climate change threat and the shared development goals that place people and the planet at the center.

We therefore call for effective cooperation between developed and developing countries in view of the right to sustainable development enshrined in Article I, paragraph 10 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In particular, we call for the effective implementation of strategies, policies, and best practices for sustainable development such as the South-South Cooperation, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We stress the importance of SDG 17, namely the global partnership for sustainable development, which must include the private sector and all sectors of civil society, especially marginalized and vulnerable communities that are affected strongest by climate change and other water-related challenges. Lastly, we call for the stepping up of efforts with regards to the investment in and implementation of the Paris climate agreement.



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