

Climate Change: How Can We Adapt?

Water is central to the world's development challenges. Whether it is food security, poverty reduction, economic growth, energy production, human health—water is the nexus. Climate change is the spoiler. No matter how successful mitigation efforts might be, people will experience the impacts of climate change through water. Floods and droughts will be more frequent and severe, rainfall patterns will change, water temperatures will increase and sea levels rise as a consequence of climate change.

The conferences convened by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provide an opportunity to make water resources management a strategic approach to adapting to climate change.

Investments in water are investments in adaptation.

We urge the Parties to the UNFCCC to commit to:

INTEGRATION

Integrate adaptation strategies with water resources management. Water is an engine of economic development. Its management and allocation needs to be integrated within national development priorities. An integrated approach also provides the framework for benefit-sharing of transboundary waters, which are a driver for regional cooperation.

INFORMATION

Improve the collection of water and climate information. Better information makes for better modelling scenarios which make for better responses. Vulnerable "hotspots" — arid regions, areas reliant on shrinking water resources, small island developing states and low-lying deltas — must be identified so that resources for data collection are prioritised.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Build climate resilience by investing in infrastructure— both "hard" infrastructure such as water storage, new technologies for water recycling and irrigation, and "natural" infrastructure such as wetlands.

INVESTMENT

Prioritise water resources management in allocating adaptation funds. Investing in water is cost-effective: it delivers immediate benefits as well as long-term social, economic and environmental resilience. Today's investments in water should be seen as part of a strategy to build a climate resilient world: mitigating against floods, droughts and other threats, while contributing right now to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

INSTITUTIONS

Strengthen water management institutions that provide water for people, industries, energy, agriculture and ecosystems. From transparent regulatory frameworks to multi-stakeholder dialogues, stronger institutions can cope with present climate variability and be in a better position to cope with future adaptation. As climate change unfolds, innovative institutional solutions will need to be found for closer collaboration with disaster risk reduction efforts.

We need "partnerships for adaptation" that empower communities to identify local coping strategies and enable all stakeholders to participate in water resources management.

A Water Secure World

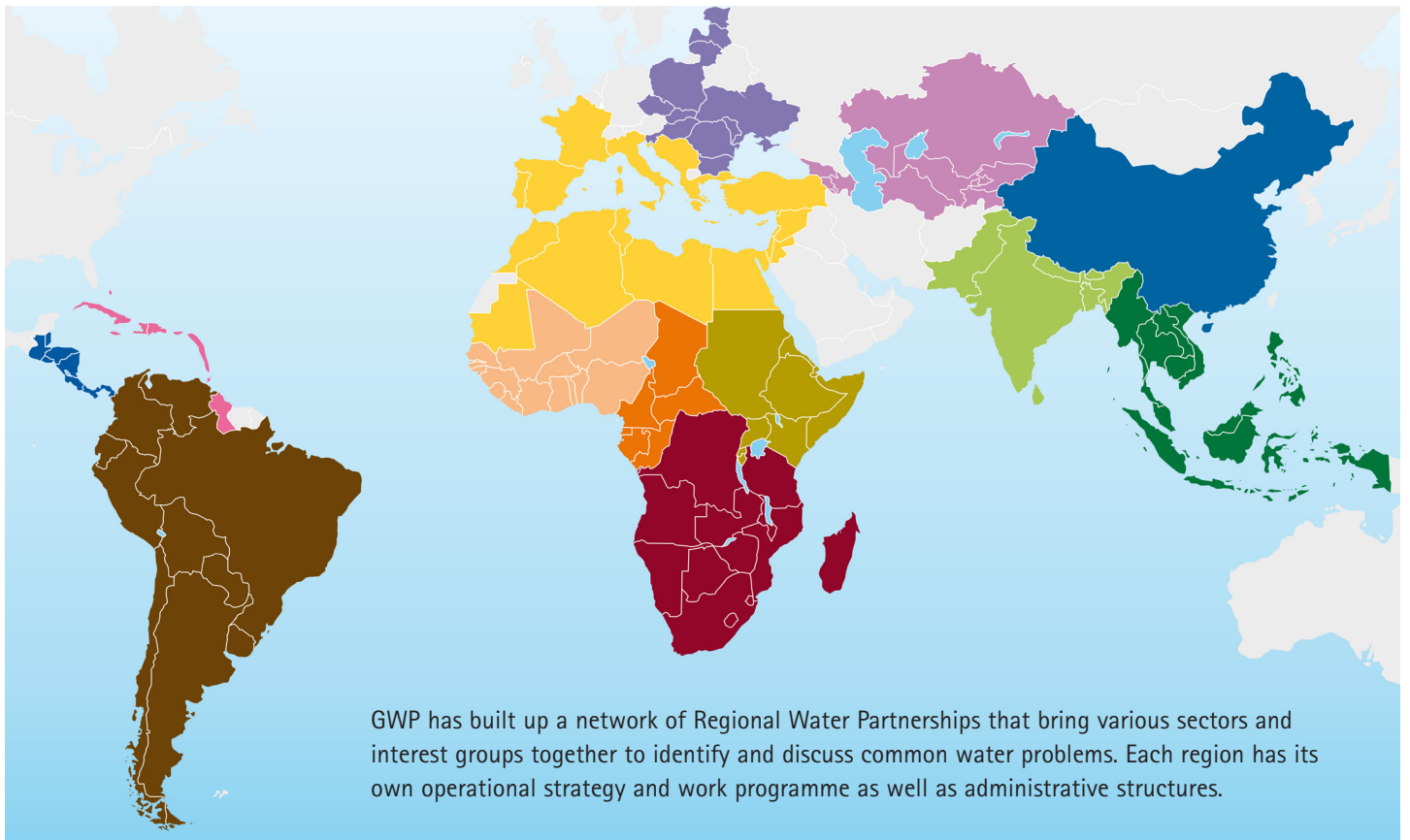
The Global Water Partnership is an intergovernmental organisation of 13 Regional Water Partnerships, 80 Country Water Partnerships and more than 2,500 Partner organisations in 158 countries. The GWP network is committed to building a water secure world.

A Global Action Network

The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a non-profit action network focused on facilitating and supporting countries in change processes for the sustainable management of their water resources. GWP was established in 1996 as a multi-stakeholder partnership of government agencies, public institutions, private companies, professional organisations, multilateral development agencies and others.

The Partnership helps countries connect water resources planning and operations at different scales – transboundary, regional, basin, national and local – so that actions are coherent and sustainable.

The GWP Technical Committee provides clear insights to lead and inform policy makers on emerging issues, drawing on the thinking of acknowledged world experts, and provides high quality, evidence-based information to support development practitioners. The Technical Committee also works at the regional and country level to provide advice and support, and to co-ordinate and promote the provision and sharing of knowledge and experiences.



GWP has built up a network of Regional Water Partnerships that bring various sectors and interest groups together to identify and discuss common water problems. Each region has its own operational strategy and work programme as well as administrative structures.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Water Management, Water Security and Climate Change Adaptation – GWP Technical Committee Background Paper No. 14
Messages towards COP 17: Call to Action on Water in the Climate Change Negotiations – GWP Briefing Note

Other climate change documents can be found at www.gwp.org.

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