

Raising the Political Profile of Water



GWP's Global Strategy argues that sustainable development will not be achieved without a water secure world. A water secure world means ending fragmented responsibility for water and integrating water resources management across all sectors such as finance, planning, agriculture, energy, tourism, industry, education and health. This integration is at the heart of our Strategy.

Because water is central to development, investing in water delivers immediate benefits as well as long term social, economic and environmental resilience, and addresses the critical development challenges facing the world today.

Feeding the world

Feeding the world has been a top priority for decades. The task is not getting easier. It is estimated that over the next 40 years the world will need to double its food production to meet growing populations – set to increase by around 50% over the next 50 years. As is well known, agriculture already uses more water than any other human activity. This means efforts to increase food production will have to be undertaken with less water, especially as climate change puts our water resources under even greater stress.

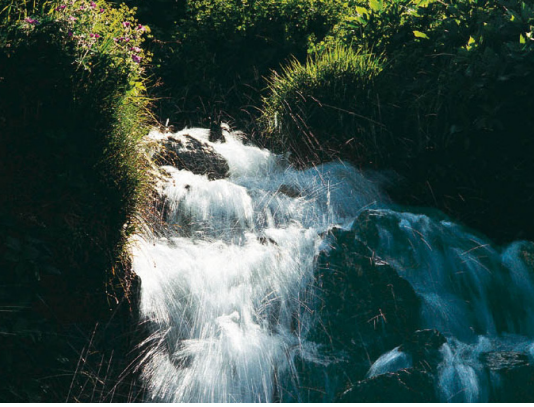
A world of cities

It isn't just that there are more people to feed, it is where they live. The world's urban population is expected to increase from around 3.3 billion today to over 6 billion by 2050. Partly as a result of economic development, we've become an urban world so rapidly that cities, especially in the developing world, have not kept up with providing clean water supplies, sanitation and wastewater treatment for their burgeoning populations. Leaders must ensure that sourcing water for megacities does not jeopardise the water needs of the rest of their country.

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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 161 countries. The GWP network is committed to building a water secure world.



Sharing benefits

And because water is no respecter of local or national boundaries, economic development increases the risk of serious conflict over transboundary waters. States must cooperate to share the benefits that water provides. Regional institutions and processes must be strengthened to provide a platform for countries to negotiate with their neighbours on how they will manage and use shared water.

Climate change

As if these long-term challenges aren't enough, climate change is the great spoiler. Most climate change impacts are felt through water (or its absence): higher sea levels, more variable rainfall, more frequent and intense floods and droughts, and more desertification. With climate change, we have an opportunity to build resilience through better water management which will mitigate future threats while contributing today to poverty reduction.

Financing and governance

Building that resilience means financing water infrastructure. But it also means reforming institutions, building their capacity and knowledge, and promoting good governance. This is about financing water resources management, a long neglected area. Strong links need to be built between water and finance experts to tackle chronic underinvestment and the waste of scarce funds.

Social change for a water secure world

Dealing with these global water issues requires commitment at the highest political level. Water security will only be reached when political leaders take the lead, make the tough decisions about the different uses of water and follow through with financing and implementation. GWP sees its role as having the technical expertise and convening power to bring together diverse stakeholders who can contribute to the social and political change processes that bring the vision of a water secure world closer to reality.

