

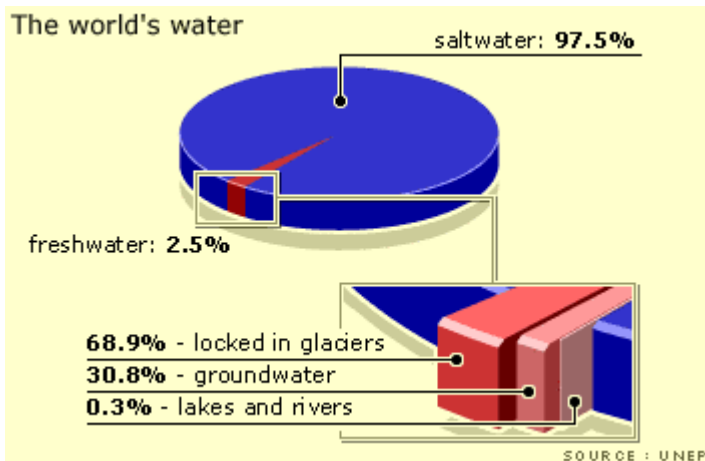
# **Water**

**- Crisis and economy**

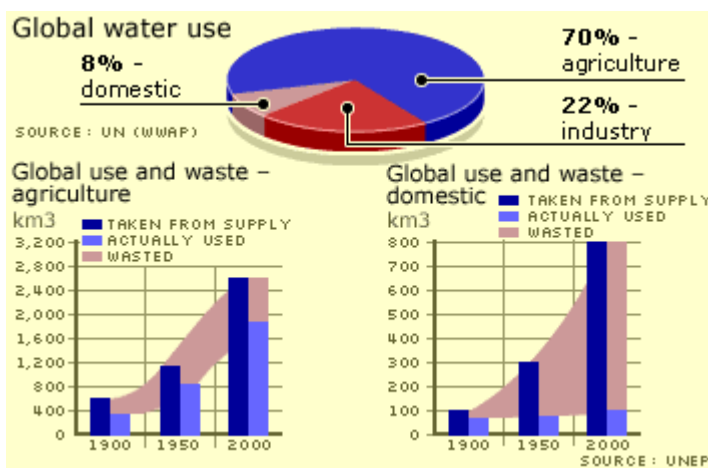
# Water Crisis

Water is indispensable for human health and well-being. Water also alleviates poverty and hunger. Without water there would be no life on this planet.

Although water covers about two-thirds of the Earth's surface, only 2.5% of the world's water is not salty, and 68.9% of that is locked up in the icecaps and glaciers. This leaves 30.8% groundwater and only 0.3% in lakes and rivers.



Global water use has tripled since 1950 and has been increasing faster than the world's population. We use approximately 70% of our water in agriculture, 22% we use in the industrial world and 8% for domestic use. Much of the water extracted ends up wasted. The UN body says wasted water is costing Europe around 10 billion dollars a year.



## Future water resources

While the world's population tripled in the 20th century, the use of renewable water resources has grown six fold. Within the next fifty years or so, the world population will increase by another 40 to 50 %. This population growth - coupled with industrialization and urbanization - will result in an increasing demand for water and will have serious consequences on the

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environment. According to the UN will two in three people face water shortages by 2025 and another 2.5 billion people will live in areas where it will be difficult to find sufficient fresh water to meet their needs. Many people will be forced from their homes to seek for water. The poor are the ones who will suffer most. Water shortages can mean long walks to fetch water, high prices to buy it, food insecurity and disease from drinking dirty water.

The areas most at risk from the growing water scarcity are in semi-arid regions of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.



***“No single measure would do more to reduce disease and save lives in the developing world than bringing safe water and adequate sanitation to all.”***

*- UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan*

It is very important that we take care of our water supplies, and help each other in doing so. ***"The simple fact is that there is a limited amount of water on the planet, and we cannot afford to be negligent in its use. We cannot keep treating it as if it will never run out,"***

*- IAEA's director, Mohamed El-Baradei*

## Water for life



Kofi Annan



United Nations

The 'Water for Life' Decade was launched on 22nd March 2005 by the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan with the following message:

### **Dear friends,**

Water is essential for life. Yet many millions of people around the world face water shortages. Many millions of children die every year from water-borne diseases. And drought regularly afflicts some of the world's poorest countries. The world needs to respond much better. We need to increase water efficiency, especially in agriculture. We need to free women and girls from the daily chore of hauling water, often over great distances. We must involve them in decision-making on water management. We need to make sanitation a priority. This is where progress is lagging most. And we must show that water resources need not be a source of conflict. Instead, they can be a catalyst for cooperation.

Significant gains have been made. But a major effort is still required. That is why this year marks the beginning of the "Water for Life" Decade. Our goal is to meet the internationally agreed targets for water and sanitation by 2015, and to build the foundation for further progress in the years beyond.

This is an urgent matter of human development, and human dignity. Together, we can provide safe, clean water to all the world's people. The world's water resources are our lifeline for survival, and for sustainable development in the 21st century. Together, we must manage them better.

Kofi A. Annan



The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed in December 2003 that the years 2005 to 2015 as the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life'.

A decade of action! The primary goal of the 'Water for Life' Decade is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015.

These commitments include the Millennium Development Goals to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 and to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources. At the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, two other goals were adopted: to aim to develop integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005 and to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.

A major effort is required in this decade to fulfil these commitments and extend access to these essential services to those who remain unerved, the majority of whom are poor people.

As women play a central role in water provision and management, a special emphasis will be placed on ensuring the participation and involvement of women in these development efforts.

Among the themes that are central for the 'Water for Life' Decade are: scarcity, access to sanitation and health, water and gender, capacity-building, financing, valuation, Integrated Water Resources Management, trans-boundary water issues, environment and biodiversity, disaster prevention, food and agriculture, pollution and energy.

UN-Water is coordinating the 'Water for Life' Decade, 2005-2015. UN-Water is the United Nations inter-agency mechanism of all relevant agencies, departments and programmes involved with water-related issues.

### **Making a difference**

Power and money isn't always necessary, everyone can help out and save water. We have to rethink how much water we really need if we are to learn how to share the Earth's supply.

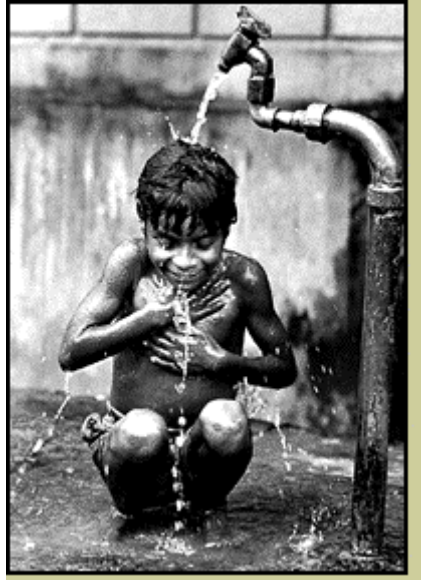
While dams and other large-scale schemes play a big role worldwide, there is also a growing recognition of the value of using the water we already have more efficiently rather than harvesting ever more from our rivers and aquifers.

***"We need to increase water efficiency especially in agriculture. We need to free women and girls from the daily chore of holding water often over a great distance. We need to make***

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*sanitation a priority. And we must show that water resources need not be a source of conflict,"*

*- Kofi Annan*



For millions of people around the world, getting it right is a matter of life and death.

### **Water and economy - It's a rich man's world**

An American uses 50 times more water than a person from Kenya. There is 296,2 million people living in USA. Kenya has a population of 31,6 million people. If we take USA's population times 50 we would get how many Kenyan persons there could live in USA. This is about 15000 million people. So, one American equals 50 Kenyans.

The 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 1999: There was over 6 billion people in the world.

### **Water – a resource:**

Water is a resource – a source we, humans, can use to cover our needs.

Water is also a natural resource.

A natural resource is a resource made by nature.

Clear water is a conditional resource, that means that it, if managed in the right way, will be able to renew itself.

For example a water source will cleanse itself if it is exposed to minimal amounts of contamination.

The resources of clear water are unlikely divided on this earth. We in Norway have plenty of water. It falls over 12 000 square meters of water each year. Therefore we can use much water. We use 500 litres per person each day. ½ of this goes to the industry.

We have good access to cheap waterpower, and we are only 4,5 million people.

This means that we can produce lots of waterpower and sell it, because we don't use it all to ourselves.

Some development-countries, have none, few or bad resources.

This makes them poor.

Because they have so few water resources, or *clear* water resources they produce very small amounts of products. Very often, or closer to always, this production is not enough to feed their people, even less to sell to other countries.

Resources equal production. Production equals money. Money equals good living standards.

“There is enough resources for everyone to get enough to eat.

*Life-quality* must be centered, not material living standards.

If we don't put in a huge redistribution, we won't solve the environmental problems.

If we don't show compassion and fight for other peoples right to live a life in safety, we will never win the fight for a better environment – only reduce the environmental-problems close to us, for a while.”

*(Reidar Andestad, leader FIVH – The future in our hands)*

The worlds population is also constantly growing. This causes large pressure on the nature and environment. More people means more pollution, more production and industry, this gives money to those countries, the industry-countries, who can produce lots of products.

Since development-countries have low production, industry-countries do most business with other industry countries. Industry- countries get richer and richer, while development countries get poorer.

Development countries also have to buy products from industry countries, but the products are way to expensive, that is another reason why they don't have much food, or clear water.

“You gotta drink that muddy water.

If there's nothing else to drink.

And if there aint no muddy water.

then you really have to think.

You gotta drink that muddy water.

If it's the only chance you've got.”

*(“Drink that muddy water”, by The Scarecrows.*

*www.scarecrows.no)*

If you don't have clear water, you don't get money. If you don't have money, you can't make clear water.

We need Sustainable development.

### **Sustainable development:**

Sustainable development is a development wich makes sure that all people in the world have their basic needs covered (water, food, shelter). Not taking more from the nature, than the

nature can reproduce. This must be done without destroying the resources for future generations.

To do this we have to learn how to:

- Conduct to the nature, not fight it  
-It is our friend, not our enemy.
- Use environmental-friendly technology  
-We have the knowledge to do it.
- Make poverty history  
-Once and for all

Make poverty history? Can that be done?

The answer is: Yes, it can.

The development countries need money. They must produce things.

Yes, but many development countries *do* produce things. They produce things such as tea, coffee and cotton. They sell these things cheap to the industry countries.

Then they have to buy things from the industry-countries, because they have used close to all of their cultivable land on exportable products. This leaves almost nothing left to the population of the country.

The industry countries, however, get higher and higher living standards. Therefore the products they sell to the development countries are high priced.

This makes that the development countries have to *lend* money from the industry-countries.

The development countries, off course, have to pay the money back to the industry countries.

Development countries pay more money to the rich north, the industry countries, than the industry countries gives to them in money help from organisations and so on.

“Big strong people unwilling to give  
Small in vision and perspective  
One in five kids below the poverty line  
One population runnin' out of time”

*(Quote from “Punk-Rock Song”,  
by Bad Religion)*

Consumption, especially of fresh water, is parallel to high living standards.

A economical development in the industry countries will increase the consumption of water.

Or the water consumption is already increasing, because of the population growth.

So, we are pumping mother nature for what she can give us. And blaming her when she is unable to give it to us. We have to know that *we* are the problem. Only *we* can fix it.

We have to set our priorities straight. Not only think about money. If there is the possibility to do something to do something, and there is, we can not let money stop us. We have to do it no matter what.

If we don't do it, it will not only mean the death of millions of people, but we will have destroyed the foundations of a better world to the future generations. The future depends on us. There is so many other things, more important than money.  
Water is a human right.

This is a letter sendt to the american president in 1855, 150 years ago. The man who wrote it was Chief Seathl. The land we talk about is the piece of land wich later became the city Seattle, named after the chief.

### **“THIS EARTH IS SACRED**

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. The Great Chief also sends us words of friendship and good will. This is kind of him, since we know he has little need of our friendship in return. But we will consider your offer, for we know if we do not do so, the white man may come with guns and take our land. What Chief Sealth says, the Great Chief in Washington can count on as truly as our white brothers can count on the return of the seasons. My words are like the stars --- they do not set.

How can you buy or sell the sky --- the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. Yet **we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water.** How can you buy them from us? We will decide in our time. Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing in the forest and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. **The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on.** He leaves his fathers' graves, and his children's birthright is forgotten. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the redman. But perhaps it is because the redman is a savage and does not understand . . .

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the leaves of springtime or the rustle of insect's wings. But perhaps because I am a savage and do not understand --- the clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of a whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a mid-day rain, or scented with a pinion pine. The air is precious to the redman. For all things share the same breath --- the beasts, the trees, the man. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench.

If I decide to accept, I will make one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage and I do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffalos on the prairies left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beast also happens to man. **All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth also befalls the sons of the earth.**

Our children have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame. And after defeat, they turn their days into idleness and contaminate their bodies with sweet food and strong drink. It matters little where we pass the rest of our days --- they are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth, or that roamed in small bands in the woods, will be left to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours.

One thing we know which the white man may one day discover. Our God is the same God. You may think now that you own him as you wish to own our land. But you cannot. He is the Body of man. And his compassion is equal for the redman and the white. This earth is precious to him. And to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator. The whites, too, shall pass --- perhaps sooner than other tribes. **Continue to contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.** When the buffalo are all slaughtered; the wild horses all tamed; the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men; and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift and the hunt, the end of living and the beginning of survival.

We might understand if we knew what it was that the white man dreams, what hopes he describes to his children on long winter nights, what visions he burns into their minds, so they will wish for tomorrow. But we are savages. The white man's dreams are hidden from us. And because they are hidden, we will go our own way. If we agree, it will be to secure your reservation you have promised. There, perhaps, we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last redman has vanished from the earth, and the memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people, for they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. If we sell you our land, love it as we've loved it. Care for it, as we've cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land, as it is when you take it. And with all your strength, with all your might, and with all your heart --- preserve it for your children, and love it as God loves us all. One thing we know --- our God is the same. This earth is precious to him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny. “

(Chief Seathl's letter to the american president, 1855. Taken from [www.alternativescentral.com](http://www.alternativescentral.com) )

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