

Water is essential for Life.

Its availability is an inevitable necessity. Considering the finite nature of freshwater resources on one hand, and increasing demand on the other, the need to protect and manage water resources properly is crucial.

There is no doubt that the Arab Region is facing the most challenging water resources conditions in the world. The per capita share of renewable water resources is currently under 500 m³/capita/year in about 70% of the Arab countries. These severe conditions have lead many countries in the region to fossil groundwater exploitation, and sea water desalination, which eventually translates into high water development costs and adverse impacts on the environment.

More than 65% of the renewable water resources are transboundary and originate outside of the region. About 50 million people lack access to safe drinking water and about 80 million people lack access to proper sanitation in the Arab Region.

To reduce the percentage of people without access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation by half by 2015, the Arab Region will need to provide drinking water services to about 83 million more people, and will need to provide sanitation services to about 96 million people, leaving another 83 million people without access to drinking water services and 96 million people without access to proper sanitation services. Threats of water pollution in the region can pose substantial constraints in rendering the scarce available water resources out of reach.

Water is a driving force for sustainable development, vital to all living organisms and ecosystems and essential to human health, food production and social and economic development. Political commitment, education, and community action is key to more sustainable patterns of water conservation and use.

World Water Facts



Food It takes about 3000 litres of water to produce our daily food ration, about 1000 times what we need for drinking purposes



Health Over half of the developing world's hospital beds are occupied by people suffering from preventable diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation



Environment Water-related disasters such as tsunamis, floods and droughts are the second most frequent and devastating natural disasters after windstorms



Disaster prevention Approximately 13 times more people die per reported disaster in developing countries than in developed countries



Energy Hydropower supplies at least 50 per cent of electricity production in sixty-six countries, and 19 per cent in twenty-four countries. Worldwide small hydropower development is expected to grow by a further 60 per cent by 2010



Scarcity By 2025, it is expected that 3.4 billion people will be living in countries defined as water-scarce



Culture In nearly all the world's major religions, water is attributed important symbolic and ceremonial properties



Sanitation One dollar invested in water supply and sanitation can provide an economic return of up to 34 times, depending on the region



Pollution In developing countries, more than 90 per cent of sewage and 70 per cent of industrial wastewater is dumped untreated into surface water



Agriculture Irrigation increases yields of most crops by 100 to 400 per cent. Over the next 30 years, 70 per cent of gains in cereal production will come from irrigated land.