



## **According to a poll from the World Water Council (WWC) only half of Millennials surveyed globally know that access to safe water is a human right**

- *More than three-quarters of Millennials surveyed worldwide are convinced that government and institutions need to lead the fight to make global access to safe water and sanitation a reality*
- *More than two-thirds of Millennials think not enough is being done to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring water and sanitation for all*
- *This week the World Water Council (WWC) organizes a stakeholder meeting in Brasilia attended by 500 high-level representatives, Heads of States and water experts; this meeting is to prepare for the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, which will unite over 30.000 stakeholders in Brazil in March 2018 to find collaborative solutions to water-related challenges*

*World Water Council, 26th of April, 2017* – With less than one year to go before the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum takes place in Brasilia in March 2018, the World Water Council (WWC) calls on all governments to focus on water issues and prioritize water resources and management. This is in accordance with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals to make water and sanitation for all a reality by 2030. Action and investment are needed at the highest political level to deliver safe water and sanitation universally.

### **Access to improved drinking water: a major achievement for the international community**

According to the latest figures from the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme in 2015, 91% of the global population uses an improved drinking water source, up from 76% in 1990. This highlights that there has been significant progress in access to drinking water, as 2,6 billion people, equivalent to one-third of the current global population, have gained access to an improved drinking water source since 1990.

However, due to poor quality water and poor management, improved water sources does not equate to access to safe drinking water.

In addition, while access to improved sources has increased in all regions, rates of progress have varied. Coverage in Asia has increased dramatically, with over half a billion people gaining access in China alone. In Latin America and the Caribbean 95% of the population now have access to improved drinking water sources. However in Sub-Saharan Africa, a lot remains to be done, as approximately one-third of the population is still without improved access to drinking water sources.

Furthermore, there are significant rural and urban disparities. Four out of five people living in urban areas now have access to piped drinking water on premises, compared with just one in three people living in rural areas.

Moreover, the global progress achieved in access to sanitation lags far behind water, as the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for sanitation failed to meet its target. By the time the MDGs reached their deadline in 2015, it was estimated that 32% (2,4 billion) people globally still didn't have access to improved sanitation facilities.

### **Improved water sources are not always safe water sources**

Despite the global achievements in improved water sources, it is estimated that at least 25% of improved water sources are essentially unsafe due to various reasons, including among others, the presence of fecal contaminants.

Actually, over one-third of Millennials polled have experienced firsthand negative effects of a lack of safe water. Although, nearly half of the Millennials are aware that there has been huge progress in access to safe water in Asia over the past 5 years, less than one-third think that progress has been made in Africa.

World Water Council President Benedito Braga comments: *“World leaders realize that sanitation is fundamental to public health, but we need to act now. In order to make water and sanitation universally available by 2030, we need commitment at the highest levels. Of equal importance is that water sources are being optimized to ensure that they are safe water sources.”*

### **Investing in water security offers a high return on investment**

Braga continues: *“For every dollar invested in water and sanitation, there is an estimated \$4,3 dollar (400%) return in the form of reduced health care costs for individuals and society worldwide. And this does not take into account the benefits to global development, which enables countries and societies to progress economically, culturally and politically. For example, for every \$1 billion dollars invested in water and waste water, an estimated 28.500 jobs will be created.”*

It is, therefore, important to invest in infrastructure that improves water security and resilient management of resources, for populations, for economies, and for the environment. Indeed, businesses are also increasingly aware of the importance of investment in sustainable water resources management, with 46% of CEOs agreeing that resource scarcity and climate change will transform their business in the next five years.

Csaba Kőrösi, Director of Environmental Sustainability at the Office of the President of the Republic of Hungary and Sherpa of the High Level Panel on Water (HLPW), comments: *“Global water investments must be tripled to the level of \$600 billion a year to meet the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. A promising first step was that during a meeting with the High Level Panel on*



*Water in Budapest last year, the World Bank and eight other Multilateral Development Banks as well as the Green Climate Fund collectively pledged to work towards doubling the amount invested into water infrastructure over the next 5 years. However, public and concessional finances will not be enough to reach the investment level necessary for a water secure world. Private funds must have a role as well."*

*Kőrösi continues: "Time is in short supply. We have 15 to 20 years before facing a significantly bigger challenge emanating from climate change and regional water crises interlinking into a global one."*

### **Water for everyone: sharing actions and responsibilities**

The World Water Council (WWC), founded in 1996, is comprised of over 300 member organizations globally, with the primary goal to catalyze action on critical water issues at every level so as to improve water security around the world. *"The World Water Council (WWC) calls on all stakeholders to share the actions and responsibilities for our common endeavor,"* President Braga says.

In particular, the World Water Council (WWC) is recognized as a key facilitator in water security finance discussions and a driving force for political change in the quest for water security. The World Water Council (WWC) pioneers numerous exciting and innovative programs, working to promote adaptation measures for water usage in the face of imminent climate change, increase political investment, and create water-conscious cities.

The World Water Council (WWC) considers it is equally important to keep the public informed, which includes Millennials, on the progress being made towards improving water security. Traditional media (64%) and the Internet and social networks (45%) are the main source of information for Millennials about issues such as climate change and water issues, far ahead of universities (21%), family and friends (15%), work (10%) and government (9%).

### **The World Water Forum: catalyzing change for a water-secure world**

This week, continuing in its mission to improve water security, the World Water Council (WWC) organizes a stakeholder meeting in Brasilia attended by 500 high-level representatives, Heads of States and water experts; this meeting is to prepare for the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum. The Forum is expected to be attended by over 30.000 participants and will take place from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2018, in Brazil, under the theme "Sharing Water." The event is composed of five processes, namely the Thematic Process, Political Process, Regional Process, Citizens' Forum and Sustainability Focus Group.

*Braga comments: "As the creator and owner of the World Water Forum, the World Water Council (WWC) looks forward to building on the success achieved during the 7th World Water Forum in Korea in 2015, which marked a step forward in*



*international water cooperation by implementing a roadmap to guide work and by securing major political agreements.”*

Braga concludes: *“During the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, the world’s largest water-related event, we are committed to engaging policy and decision-makers in a multi-stakeholder dialogue to establish commitments for improved water resources and service development.”*

Click to download image of President Braga:

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World Water Council President Benedito Braga available for interviews upon request.

***About the World Water Council:***

The World Water Council (WWC) is an international multi-stakeholder platform organization, the founder and co-organizer of the World Water Forum. The World Water Council’s mission is to mobilize action on critical water issues at all levels, including the highest decision-making level, by engaging people in debate and challenging conventional thinking. The Council focuses on the political dimensions of water security, adaptation, and sustainability, and works to position water at the top of the global political agenda. Headquartered in Marseille, France, and created in 1996, the World Water Council brings together over 300 member organizations from more than 50 different countries. More on [www.worldwatercouncil.org](http://www.worldwatercouncil.org) @wwatercouncil #wwatercouncil

***For more information, please contact:***

Selina Ashdown – [selina@marcodecomunicacion.com](mailto:selina@marcodecomunicacion.com) (+34) 689 911 653

Evelyne Hollands – [evelyne@marcodecomunicacion.com](mailto:evelyne@marcodecomunicacion.com) (+34) 659 226 47

*The Millennials poll was carried out from 17 to 19 April 2017 by Cint on behalf of the World Water Council in 16 countries globally:*

- *Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea*
- *Europe: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom*
- *Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru*
- *USA*

*Sample:*

- *2031 responses*
- *Location: Asia (25%), Europe (25%), Latin America (25%) and USA (25%)*
- *Men (50%), women (50%)*
- *Age bracket: 18-25 (46%) and 25-30 (54%)*

*Methodology:*

- *Online questionnaire*
- *10 questions*