



## **The 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum unites world leaders and thousands of experts to mark World Water Day**

- *Co-organized by the World Water Council and the Government of Brazil, the 8<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum gathers over 10 Heads of State, upwards of 100 Ministers, Parliamentarians and Mayors and thousands of water and sustainable development experts and global citizens in Brazil to commemorate World Water Day on 22 March.*
- *By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas.*
- *80% of countries report insufficient funding to meet national drinking water targets.*
- *More than 840 million people worldwide, or 1 in 9, do not have access to safe drinking water, and 2.3 billion, or 1 in 3, lack access to a toilet.*

*World Water Council, 19 March 2018* – More than 840 million people worldwide, or 1 in 9, do not have access to safe water, and 2.3 billion, or 1 in 3, lack access to a toilet. “*Around the world, more people have mobile phones than toilets,*” explains Matt Damon, water activist and actor. In a global effort to avoid widespread water crises and to improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation globally, the World Water Council organizes the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of its World Water Forum, which is taking place in Brasilia from 18 – 23 March, coinciding with World Water Day.

More than 10 Heads of State, including the President of Brazil, Michel Temer, President of Hungary, János Áder, President of Senegal, Macky Sall, South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, alongside CEOs of fortune 500 companies, among many others, have travelled to the Brazilian capital to participate in high-level panels and more than 200 sessions, where the future of water security will be mapped out for the next three years. Throughout more than 200 sessions, thousands of attendees will come together to find solutions for our world's water security challenges.

The first World Water Forum was hosted by Morocco in 1997. Among its triumphs, the triennial World Water Forum has been instrumental in promoting the acknowledgment of Access to Water as a Human Right, which was finally recognized in 2010 by the UN. This came on the heels of the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (Istanbul, Turkey) where the fundamental nature of this right was defended at every turn.

Furthermore, the World Water Forum and its creator, the World Water Council, have played key roles in ensuring recognition for Sustainable Development

Goal 6 (SDG), ensuring safe access to water and sanitation for all. This goal, set by the United Nations in 2015, is to be achieved by 2030.

The Southern Hemisphere hosts the World Water Forum for the first time, opening South America's doors to dialogue and an exchange of experiences and best practices related to the use of water. This Brazilian edition will offer a Citizens Village, which welcomes all global citizens free of charge to participate in the debate through exhibitions, lectures, movies, arts & crafts workshops, entertainment, talk shows and gourmet food courts. The World Water Council invites everyone to be part of its flagship global water event.

The World Water Forum is also a crucial opportunity for global authorities to share knowledge and develop strategies for various issues, such as combating climate variability and water scarcity. By 2025, half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas as droughts, floods and other water crises are plaguing many parts of globe, such as Cape Town, South Africa, or São Paulo. The Brazilian city's main water supply, the Cantareria reservoir, was recently reduced to 5% capacity, comparable to just a month's supply. The irony of this reality rests in the fact that Brazil hosts the world's largest source of freshwater, 12% of the global supply.

Without water, there is no life, no food, no development. At the World Water Forum, under the over-arching theme of "Sharing Water," in light of water's role in uniting communities and tearing down barriers, decision-makers from around the world will band together to discuss and present recommendations in order to secure water for our future.

*"Water is essentially a political issue and must be dealt with at the highest decision-making levels. We have a great deal of scientific knowledge and we have a huge number of solutions to choose from, but policy-makers must make it a priority so these proposals can be put into practice,"* explains World Water Council President, Benedito Braga.

Across the globe, some of the most pressing problems surrounding water are not about quantity, but quality. This is a matter of life and death for many worldwide; as 660 million people are without access to improved drinking water resources and 2.4 billion lack access to improved sanitation.

In particular, severely low levels of sanitation coverage are leading causes of death and disease across the globe; as recently as 2016, 8% of children under 5 died from diarrhea, which is usually caused by contaminated drinking water. Those without adequate sanitation access live primarily in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Women and girls are affected the most by drinking water and sanitation issues, as they spend a collective 200 million hours per day collecting water.

World Water Day 2018 highlights "nature-based solutions" to current water-related challenges, often exacerbated by climate change, disasters and population growth. The World Water Forum will help demonstrate to leaders

how a combination of existing infrastructure, geographic realities, natural resources, and adequate financing can lead to better water management. For every \$1 invested in water and sanitation, the economic return in terms of averted health costs and productivity is \$4.

Through the organization of the World Water Forum, the World Water Council (WWC), calls on all governments make water their top priority and encourages them to increase their budgets for sustainable multipurpose water infrastructure to ensure safe water for everyone on the planet and for different uses as well, like food and energy production, while safeguarding the environment. The fact that 80% of countries report insufficient financing to meet national drinking-water targets cannot continue to be a reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The need for renewed commitment and innovation is clear, as financing must triple to €90 billion per annum, taking into account operating and maintenance costs, to meet UN Sustainable Development Goal 6.

### **Key reports unveiled at the World Water Forum:**

1. *Ten Action Points for Financing Water Infrastructure*, the report identifies the barriers to finance flows from non-traditional sources and opportunities for ways forward.
2. A report on *Increasing Financial Flows for Urban Sanitation* and a set of eight case studies. The report focuses primarily on financing urban sanitation and provides insights into what urban sanitation could look like in 2030 and how it could be financed.
3. *Global Water Security: Lessons Learnt and Long-Term Implications*. This book takes lessons from ten case studies and proposes innovative policies for bringing all water users on board to reach sustainable water security.
4. *Start with Water: Putting water on local action agendas to support global change* puts water on local action agendas to support global change and seeks to provide strategies and support to help cities make concrete contributions to global agendas. It is presented as a set of eight recommendations incorporating case studies from around the world.
5. The *Implementation Roadmaps report* assesses progress that has been made by the water community on the challenges identified at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum.
6. The *IWRM Paper on Water Resource Management* builds on the achievements of past decades. The World Water Council's IWRM Task Force has tailored new and updated key political messages to trigger the revitalization of IWRM.

### **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

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