

WORLD WATER DAY 2013

International World Water Day is held annually on 22 March as a means of focusing attention on the importance of fresh water and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

An international day to celebrate fresh water was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day.

Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of fresh water. States are invited to devote the Day, as appropriate in the national context, to concrete activities such as the promotion of public awareness through the publication and diffusion of documentaries and the organization of conferences, round tables, seminars and expositions related to the conservation and development of water resources. The fulfilment of basic human needs, our environment, socio-economic development and poverty reduction are all heavily dependent on water. Good management of water is especially challenging due to its unique characteristics: it is unevenly distributed in time and space, the hydrological cycle is highly complex and perturbations have multiple effects. Rapid urbanization, pollution and climate change threaten the resource while demands for water are increasing in order to satisfy the needs of a growing world population for food production, energy, industrial and domestic uses.

Water is a shared resource. Cooperation is essential to strike a balance between the different needs and priorities and share this precious resource equitably. Water cooperation between different social groups, economic sectors, regional governments, countries and present and future generations, is crucial not only to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of water but also to create and maintain peaceful relations between people.

In recognition of this reality, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2013 to be the International Year of Water Cooperation. World Water Day was dedicated to the same theme that year.


Today, over 780 million people do not have access to improved sources of drinking water and 2.5 billion people are without improved sanitation. Population growth associated with changing consumption




patterns, especially in cities, is driving an increase in water demand. Our lifestyles are more water hungry. With the world population expected to grow from a little over 7 billion today to 8 billion by 2025, water withdrawals should increase by 50% in developing countries and by 18% in developed countries. Water for irrigation and food production constitutes one of the greatest pressures on freshwater resources.

An estimated 148 states share a basin with one or several countries, which is a potential source of conflict, as actions upstream have impacts on downstream countries. The Danube, for example, is shared by 19 countries, and the Nile River by 11. Water over-extraction, diversion, pollution, scarcity and the neglect of existing agreements are often at the roots of water tensions. Shared waters provide opportunities for cooperation across nations and support political dialogue on broader issues such as regional economic integration, environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Cooperation mechanisms can vary in terms of decision-making structures, levels of participation, and rules and regulations, but the principle remains the same: when water resources are cooperatively shared and managed, peace, prosperity and sustainable development are more likely to be achieved. Cooperation can help overcome inequity and prevent conflicts and thus contribute to poverty eradication, socio-economic development and improve living conditions and educational chances, especially of women and children.

1  Find in the text the corresponding English translations.

- a. *consapevolezza*:
- b. *gestione*:
- c. *impegnativo*:
- d. *irregolarmente*:
- e. *condiviso*:
- f. *servizi sanitari*:
- g. *a monte*:
- h. *a valle*:
- i. *problematiche*:
- j. *superare*:

2  Match these expressions from the above passage to the correct definition.

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. advocating for | 1. to find a compromise between |
| b. strike a balance between | 2. elimination |
| c. fulfilment | 3. lack of attention |
| d. in recognition | 4. supporting publicly |
| e. driving an increase | 5. unfairness |
| f. neglect | 6. leading to a growth |
| g. inequity | 7. to acknowledge something |
| h. eradication | 8. satisfying the needs |