

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



WWDR 2019

LEAVING

NO ONE BEHIND

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Foreword

by Audrey Azoulay, *Director-General of UNESCO*

Access to water is a human right: it is vital for the dignity of each and every individual.

The 2019 edition of the World Water Development Report focuses on the theme of “Leaving No One Behind”. It argues that fulfilling the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all can also significantly contribute to the achievement of the broad set of goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: from food and energy security, to economic development and environmental sustainability. Based on the latest data, this report’s findings clearly illustrate the need to make substantial progress towards delivering on the 2030 Agenda promise of reaching the most vulnerable.

The stakes are high: nearly a third of the global population do not use safely managed drinking water services and only two fifths have access to safely managed sanitation services. The intensification of environmental degradation, climate change, population growth and rapid urbanisation — among other factors — also pose considerable challenges to water security. Furthermore, in an increasingly globalised world, the impact of water-related decisions cross borders and affect everyone.

At the current pace of progress, billions of people will remain unable to enjoy their right to access to water and sanitation and the multiple benefits that such access can provide. Yet, this report concludes these objectives are entirely achievable, so long as there is a collective will to do so, entailing new efforts to include those ‘left behind’ in decision-making processes.

This latest Report, coordinated by UNESCO, is the result of a collaborative effort of the UN-Water Family and was made possible thanks to the long-standing support of the Government of Italy and the Umbria Region, to whom we are extremely grateful.

I am convinced that the 2019 edition will spur action and help support Member States in making informed decisions to build more resilient, more peaceful communities, leaving no one behind.



Audrey Azoulay

Foreword

by Gilbert F. Houngbo, *Chair of UN-Water and President of the International Fund for Agriculture Development*

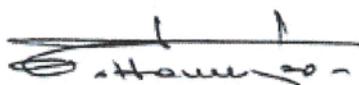
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls on us to transform our world and leave no one behind. The 2019 edition of the United Nations World Water Development Report demonstrates how improving the management of water resources, providing access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all contribute to the goals that underpin the 2030 Agenda. Water for all is essential for eradicating poverty, building peaceful and prosperous societies and reducing inequality.

The numbers speak for themselves. As the Report shows, if the degradation of the natural environment and the unsustainable pressure on global water resources continue at current rates, 45% of global Gross Domestic Product and 40% of global grain production will be at risk by 2050. Poor and marginalized populations will be disproportionately affected, further exacerbating already rising inequalities.

The 2019 edition looks at different dimensions of inequality linked to food and nutrition, disasters and migration, drawing on data and information from the UN family and others. For example: if women had the same access as men to productive resources – including land and water, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30%, raising total agricultural output in these countries by 2.5 to 4%. This could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by around 12 to 17%. Further, the overall risk of being displaced by disasters has doubled since the 1970s. The depletion of water and other natural resources is increasingly recognized as a driver of displacement that triggers internal and international migration.

The 2019 Report provides evidence of the need to adapt approaches, in both policy and practice, to address the causes of exclusion and inequality. This is key to ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

To build knowledge and inspire people to take action, UN-Water commissions UN-Water publications such as the UN World Water Development Report drawing on the experience and expertise of UN-Water Members and Partners. Thanks are due to all my colleagues, and especially to UNESCO for coordinating the production of this Report that will contribute to greater sustainability and resilience, and to creating a world where no one is left behind.



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