



Water

a shared responsibility

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2



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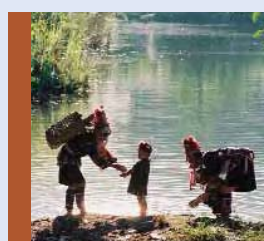
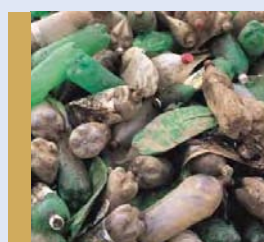
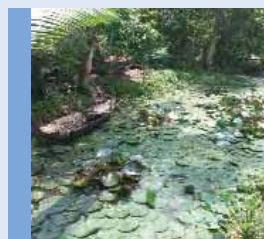
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*Water distribution during
a drought in Mandera,
Kenya*

Foreword

Water is an essential life-sustaining element. It pervades our lives and is deeply embedded in our cultural backgrounds. The basic human needs of a secure food supply and freedom from disease depend on it. Social development – endeavours such as the smooth functioning of hospitals – likewise relies on the availability of clean water. Economic development requires energy resources and industrial activities, and both are in turn water-dependent. The provision of sanitation for girls in schools offers yet another example of water's broader links – it has positive effects on hygiene and health, keeps girls in school, and helps to safeguard the natural environment. For these reasons and many more, access to safe drinking water and sanitation is both a development target in its own right and integrally linked to achieving all the Millennium Development Goals.

The United Nations *World Water Development Report* is the flagship publication of UN-Water, the inter-agency mechanism established to coordinate the activities of all United Nations agencies and entities working in the area of freshwater resources. First published in 2003 as a contribution to the International Year of Freshwater, the Report is produced by UN-Water's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). Working closely with governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and the private sector, WWAP monitors water problems, provides recommendations for meeting future demand, and develops case studies in order to promote informed discussion of freshwater issues.

This second edition of the *World Water Development Report – Water, A Shared Responsibility* – shows that collective responsibility is essential for assessing and monitoring progress and for meeting internationally-agreed targets and goals. As we move further into the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Life' (2005–2015), I urge all partners to work more closely together to promote respect for the natural ecosystems on which we depend, and to ensure that all people enjoy access to safe water and the benefits it makes possible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Annan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kofi A. Annan

UN Secretary General



*Fishing on the Mekong
River in Viet Nam*

Prologue

In March 2003, at the Third World Water Forum held in Kyoto, Japan, I had the pleasure of introducing the first *World Water Development Report*, which is now being used as an educational tool and as a guide for decision-makers in many countries around the world. Its impact was such that it created a momentum at the international level for the creation of the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Life' (2005-2015).

It gives me great pleasure, therefore, to introduce the second in this series of World Water Development Reports – *Water, A Shared Responsibility*. Its publication is most timely, coming just one year after the launch of the Decade and in time for the fourth World Water Forum in Mexico City in March 2006. Subsequent editions of the Report are scheduled for production in 2009, 2012 and 2015, and will provide substantive content for the Decade's agenda. They will assist in monitoring progress towards achieving the targets set at the Millennium Summit and the World Summit for Sustainable Development, many of which have timelines culminating in 2015.

Water, of course, is everyone's business. Hardly a day goes by when we do not hear of another flood, another drought or another pollution spill into surface waters or groundwaters. Each of these issues has a direct or indirect impact not only on human security but also on livelihoods and development. The issues involved range from those of basic human well-being (food security and health), to those of economic development (industry and energy), to essential questions about the preservation of natural ecosystems on which ultimately we all depend. These issues are inter-related and have to be considered together in a holistic manner.

It is thus entirely appropriate that some twenty-four agencies and entities within the United Nations system are involved, with a shared purpose, in producing a comprehensive and objective global report on water issues and the measures being taken to address the related challenges that beset humanity worldwide.

I am very proud that UNESCO, by housing the Secretariat for the World Water Assessment Programme and providing a trust fund to help underwrite the costs of the production of the Report, is facilitating the process of bringing the UN agencies together in common cause. I firmly believe that understanding the many systems that underlie water issues – scientific and cultural, economic and social – will enhance our ability to better manage this precious resource and will help lead to poverty elimination and world peace.



Koïchiro Matsuura

UNESCO Director General



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