

US Women's Caucus at UN : Climate - Women and Water

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Summary

Freshwater is a prerequisite to human health, peace, security, safety, and economic development. The worst effects of the climate crisis are and will be felt through water's impact on the lives of women and children. One-third of the world's population is currently experiencing some kind of physical or economic water scarcity. Most of the world's 1.2 billion poor people, two thirds of whom are women, live in water scarce countries and do not have access to safe and reliable supplies of water for productive and domestic uses.¹

Six years into the SDGs, the world is not on track to achieve SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2. Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a quadrupling of current rates of progress in safely managed drinking water services, safely managed sanitation services, and basic hygiene services.² The least developed countries have the furthest to go and huge barriers to getting there. Many more countries are facing challenges in extending services to rural areas and to poor and vulnerable populations that are most at risk of being left behind.

Although progress has been made since Beijing '95, women remain significantly under-represented at all policy/decision-making levels in natural resource and environmental management.³ Training and internships in fields such as water engineering, land-use planning, agricultural science, forestry, and marine science are needed to build career pipelines for improved diversity in policy-making leadership.

WATER -- Fast Facts

- Worldwide, 200 million work hours are consumed by women collecting water for their families each day.⁴
- Only 0.5% of water on Earth is useable and available as freshwater.⁵
- Based on projected demand, the world will face a 40% shortfall in freshwater supply within 10 years.⁶
- By 2030, high water stress is expected to become common in 45 cities and include almost 470 million people.⁷
- A quarter of all health care facilities have no basic water services, which means 712 million people have no access to water when they use health care facilities.⁸
- The current rate of progress on achieving water and sanitation for all will have to **quadruple** to meet the 2030 deadline.⁹

WATER – Recommendations

- A. Create a legal and cultural 'level playing field' for access to and control of land and water and in designing multiple use water systems.
- B. Extend safe drinking water and sanitation services to rural areas and at-risk populations.

- C. Ensure institutional commitment to making gender equality and inclusion a major goal in the water sector. This includes sharing best practices, adopting meaningful participatory decision-making processes and partnerships at all levels (including in rural communities).
- D. Be led by ecosystem and watershed-based approaches. Countries should then include a gender lens before approving any transboundary/inter-country water management projects, including hydropower.
- E. Promote a women-led shift away from our industrial food system and one-use, polluting culture, and toward Integrated Water Resource Management.
- F. Increase scholarships and internships for women in water systems management.
- G. Collect, analyze, and report disaggregated gender/ethnic/age inclusion data at all levels.

WATER – Suggested Readings

1. *2021 State of Climate Services–Water*, Global Framework for Climate Services & World Meteorological Organization <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:160a212a-4bb5-4624-b13e-34ab08d11041>
2. *Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, 2000-2020*, Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, WHO/UNICEF <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:30676023-cd52-4d71-91a1-f09a145a288c>
3. *Global Water Supply and Demand Trends Point Toward Rising Water Insecurity*, Strategic Analysis Paper, Feb 2020, Future Directions International <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/global-water-supply-and-demand-trends-point-towards-rising-water-insecurity/>
4. *Gender and Water, Securing Water for Rural Livelihoods, The Multi-use System Approach*, 2007, International Fund for Agricultural Development https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40706239/Gender+and+Water+-+Security+water+for+rural+livelihoods_the+multiple+uses+system+approach/0b3d7bac-c073-4e8f-8424-2d0473b7d226
5. *Water, gender and climate: better data for better adaptation strategies*, 5/11/2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/water-gender-and-climate-better-data-better-adaptation-strategies>

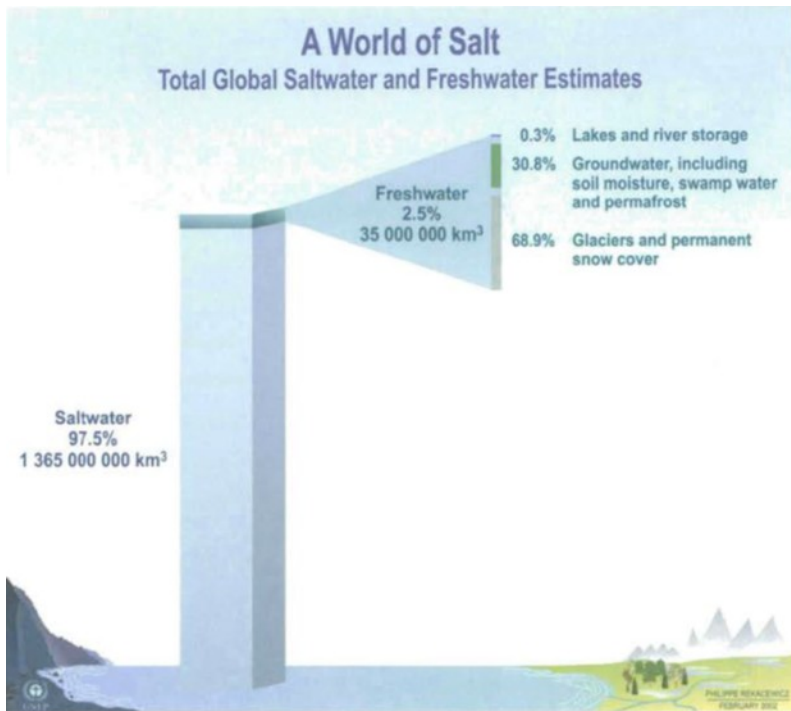
Footnotes

- 1 https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40706239/Gender+and+Water+-+Security+water+for+rural+livelihoods_the+multiple+uses+system+approach/0b3d7bac-c073-4e8f-8424-2d0473b7d226
- 2 https://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/whounicef-joint-monitoring-programme-for-water-supply-sanitation-hygiene-jmp/
- 3 <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/global-water-supply-and-demand-trends-point-towards-rising-water-insecurity/>
- 4 <https://water.org/our-impact/water-crisis/womens-crisis/>
- 5 <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/arwec/water-facts-ww-water-sup.html>
- 6 <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-on-household-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-2000-2020/>
- 7 <https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/library/2021-state-of-climate-services-water>
- 8 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240030848>
- 9 <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/climate/state-of-climate-services-report>

GLOBAL WATER STRESS HOTSPOTS



Figure 2: Global water stress hotspots. Hotspot areas are those classified by FAO24 as water scarce and by WRI25 as areas with high or extremely high-water stress.



Source: Igor A. Shiklomanov, State Hydrological Institute (SHI, St. Petersburg) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, Paris), 1999.

ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

BILLIONS OF PEOPLE STILL LACK ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

IN 2020



2 BILLION PEOPLE

26%

LACK SAFELY MANAGED DRINKING WATER



3.6 BILLION PEOPLE

46%

LACK SAFELY MANAGED SANITATION



2.3 BILLION PEOPLE

29%

LACK BASIC HYGIENE

ENSURING UNIVERSAL ACCESS IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

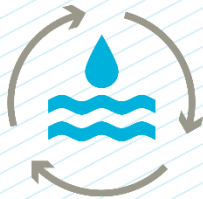


2.3 BILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN WATER-STRESSED COUNTRIES (2018)



BETWEEN 1970 AND 2015, NATURAL WETLANDS SHRANK BY 35% ↓

3 x THE RATE OF FOREST LOSS



129 COUNTRIES ARE NOT ON TRACK TO HAVE SUSTAINABLY MANAGED WATER RESOURCES BY 2030

CURRENT RATE OF PROGRESS NEEDS TO DOUBLE