



World Water Day 2020

March 22, 2020

Theme: Water and climate change

As the global population grows, so does the demand for water, which depletes natural resources and damages the environment in many places. Solutions include protecting carbon sinks such as oceans and wetlands, adopting climate-smart agricultural techniques, and increasing the safe reuse of wastewater.

Water is our most precious resource – we must use it more responsibly. We must balance all of society's water needs while ensuring the poorest people don't get left behind

The global climate crisis is inextricably linked to water. Climate change increases variability in the water cycle, inducing extreme weather events, reducing the predictability of water availability, affecting water quality and threatening sustainable development and biodiversity worldwide.

Growing demand for water increases the need for energy-intensive water pumping, transportation, and treatment, and has contributed to the degradation of critical water-dependent carbon sinks such as peatlands. And, some climate change mitigation measures, such as the expanded use of biofuels, can further exacerbate water scarcity.

National and regional climate policy and planning must take an integrated approach to climate change and water management. Increased water stress and meeting future demands will require increasingly tough decisions about how to allocate water resources between competing water uses, including for climate change mitigation and adaptation. If we are to create a sustainable future, business as usual is no longer an option and water management needs to be scrutinized through a climate resilience lens.

We need more investment in improved hydrological data, institutions and governance, education and capacity development, risk assessment and knowledge sharing. Policies need to ensure the representation, participation, behavioural change and accountability of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. Adaptation plans need to incorporate targeted strategies that assist lower-income populations – those who are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts – to navigate new conditions.