



United Nations & Water Diplomacy

Countries are relying more and more on transboundary water resources to meet



their growing water demands; yet, because transboundary basins create inevitable linkages and interdependencies among neighboring countries, actions to this end may have cross-border impact. For example, the unilateral use of shared waters by one country may affect water availability for use in another co-riparian country—seasonally, quantitatively, qualitatively, and over time. Tension and conflict over competing water use may also emerge.

This requires effective Multi Track Water Diplomacy. Track Two Water Diplomacy refers to informal, non-governmental negotiations involving academics, civil society, and policy experts to resolve transboundary water conflicts. Unlike Track One diplomacy, which involves official state actors, Track Two fosters trust-building, dialogue, and cooperation between conflicting parties outside formal diplomatic channels. It is particularly useful in regions with high political tensions, where direct government negotiations may be challenging.

The UN plays a crucial role in promoting transboundary water diplomacy through various agencies and frameworks. The UN facilitates dialogues between states to prevent water-related conflicts and promote equitable and sustainable management of shared water resources.



While the United Nations (UN) actively engages in water diplomacy through formal mechanisms (Track One diplomacy), there is a noticeable lack of institutionalized Track Two diplomacy policies within its frameworks. .

The UN primarily operates through state-centric approaches, relying on formal negotiations, treaties, and intergovernmental dialogues.

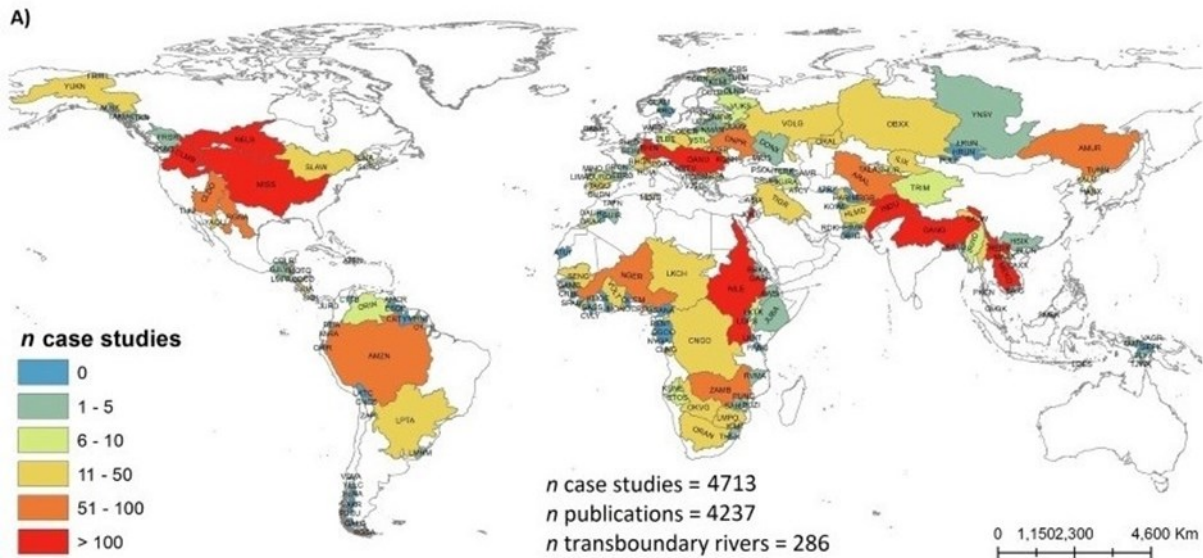
The UN's water diplomacy efforts focus on state representatives, leaving civil society, academia, and informal networks with little institutionalized space for participation. UN water policies are often driven by state priorities rather than grassroots, bottom-up engagement. This excludes marginalized communities and indigenous groups, whose voices are critical in resolving water disputes.

Institutionalizing Track Two Mechanisms within UN agencies to promote informal, non-state-led dialogue on transboundary water issues is needed. By integrating Track Two diplomacy, the UN can enhance conflict resolution, trust-building, and long-term water cooperation beyond formal governmental negotiations.

Dursun Yıldız

Director

Global water research overlooks needs of the Global South, study reveals



Global coverage of transboundary literature showing the distribution of 4713 case studies from 4237 research articles covering 286 transboundary rivers.

22/01/2025

University of Manchester

A university with a reputation for learning and innovation that resonates globally.

A groundbreaking study led by researchers at The University of Manchester has exposed **significant gaps in global research on transboundary rivers**, revealing that **the water needs of people in the Global South are being disproportionately overlooked**.

Rivers which flow across international borders are essential for the lives of billions of people - they supply drinking water, support agriculture and provide livelihoods. However, these rivers face increasing challenges from pollution, climate change and political tensions.

The new research - which examined 4713 case studies across 286 river basins - shows that **while large rivers in the Global North receive significant research attention, many equally important rivers in the Global South are being neglected**.

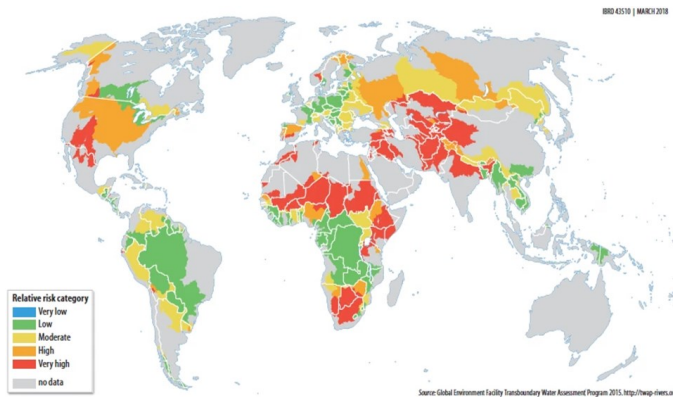
The study found that research in the Global North focuses more on technical aspects of river management and governance, while the Global South is primarily studied in the context of conflicts and resource competition.

In Asia, **research is concentrated on large river basins with geopolitical significance, like the Mekong and Indus**, often overlooking smaller basins where water crises are most severe. Africa faces similar challenges, with research concentrated on climate change impacts and water-sharing conflicts, but with limited infrastructure to support more comprehensive studies.

The study also reveals that small and medium-sized river basins - which are critical for local communities in the Global South, and often face the most pressing water security challenges - are being widely overlooked in research.

This lack of research has real-world implications for people living in the Global South. It means that the specific challenges they face such as water scarcity, lack of access to clean water and conflict over resources are not being adequately addressed. The people that rely on these rivers for their livelihoods are therefore at risk, and it undermines their ability to cope with climate change and other pressures on water supplies.

The research emphasises that a collaborative, inclusive approach is necessary to address these issues. It calls for more research focused on smaller river basins with participation of local communities, increased investment in research infrastructure in the Global South, and more partnerships between researchers in the Global North and South.



According to the researchers, these changes could help to promote sustainable management of transboundary rivers, ensuring that these crucial resources are managed equitably for all.

"Our analysis shows a clear need for a shift in how research is conducted on transboundary rivers," stated Dr Meheebub Sahana from The University of Manchester, one of the study's authors. "We need to empower local researchers, enhance science diplomacy, and increase funding for underrepresented regions. Collaborative North-South partnerships should prioritise addressing socio-economic, cultural and geopolitical complexities while bridging critical knowledge gaps in these vital areas to ensure effective and equitable management of water resources."

Source: https://smartwatermagazine.com/news/university-manchester/global-water-research-overlooks-needs-global-south-study-reveals?utm_source=Smart+Water+Magazine&utm_campaign=17905ad447-SWM_Weekly_25112024_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-16ce795513-305026585

Africa Desk Established at HPA Hydropolitics Academy Center



Hydropolitics Association Hydropolitics Academy Center decided to give importance to African studies, taking into account the challenges that Africa faces in many areas such as water resources, water management, transboundary waters, and the increasing role of this situation in the future of Africa and other countries. In this context, an Africa Desk was established at the HPA Hydropolitical Academy Center.

The Africa Desk will more closely follow the developments in Africa's transboundary water basins in the areas of expertise of the HPA Hydropolitical Academy Center. It will collaborate with universities and non-governmental organizations in African countries in areas such as education and training , research, joint project development and conferences ,transferring knowledge and experience on basin -wide regional development projects and sustainable water management.

Transboundary Watersheds in Africa

There are 63 transboundary river basins and 38 transboundary groundwater basins on the African continent, which includes 54 countries. These basins cover 64% of Africa's total surface area, and transboundary waters constitute 90% of the freshwater resources on the continent.

These basins contain water resources that cross the borders of two or more countries and are critical to the continent's water security and agricultural production.

Africa's water resources are unequally distributed across the six most water-rich countries. Central and West Africa have 54% of the continent's total water resources. The twenty-seven poorest countries in terms of water are countries that have only 7% of water.

Approximately 50% of the continent's total surface water resources are concentrated in a single river basin, namely the Congo basin, and 75% of the total water resources are concentrated in eight river basins

The largest river basins of the continent are Congo, Niger, Ogoague (Gabon), Zambezi, Nile, Sanga, Chari-Logone and Volta. They are river basins. Approximately 40% of the African population lives in transboundary river basins.

It is estimated that the population of Africa, which is 1.3 billion today, will increase to 2.8 billion in 2060 and this continent will be the continent with the youngest population in the world.

However, there are various difficulties in water sharing and management in many transboundary water basins. In particular, drought, overuse of water resources and climate change increase water security risks in these regions.



Türkiye's Relations with Africa

Türkiye has strong relations with the African continent in the fields of economic, political, security, cultural and humanitarian aid. Türkiye put forward the Africa Initiative Action Plan in 1998

and declared 2005 as the "Year of Africa" and took important steps to improve its relations with African countries.

During these years, Türkiye-Africa Cooperation Summits were held and various agreements were signed with African countries. The First Türkiye-Africa Cooperation Summit held in Istanbul in 2008 was a turning point in Türkiye's relations with Africa. Türkiye was accepted as an observer member of the African Union in 2008 and signed a strategic partnership agreement with the African Union in 2014. .

As of 2024, Türkiye has embassies in 44 countries on the African continent. Ankara maintains active diplomatic and economic relations with these countries. Among these countries, Türkiye has important strategic partners such as South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya and Algeria.

The development projects carried out by Türkiye in African countries through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) provide significant contributions to these countries in areas such as health, education, agriculture and infrastructure. Hospitals, schools and water wells built in Somalia, Sudan and Niger increase the living standards of local people. In addition, scholarships and training opportunities provided to African youth through educational and cultural collaborations are among the important steps that will strengthen Türkiye-Africa relations in the long term.

HPA News



World Wetland Day 2025 and Africa



World Wetlands Day is an environment-related celebration which dates back to the year 1971 when several environmentalists gathered to reaffirm protection and love for wetlands.

The UN officially endorses February 2 as World Wetlands Day because this date marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (also known as the Ramsar Convention), which was signed in Ramsar, Iran on February 2, 1971. Since 1997, World Wetlands Day has been used to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits, as well as promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands.



“Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future” is the theme for World Wetlands Day 2025. The theme underscores the urgency of bold action to protect these natural habitats for the welfare of all people – and so future generations can continue to benefit from all that wetlands provide.

In Africa, the day highlights the ecological value of wetlands, including their role in water purification, flood control, biodiversity conservation, and climate regulation. Moreover, governments, NGOs, and international organizations collaborate on wetland policies and actions



during events on this day and launch programs to protect wetlands, such as Ramsar-designated wetland sites, while advocating for stronger wetland policies.



On this day, they also strive to strengthen conservation actions to protect these habitats, especially for migratory birds and endangered species. In Africa, wetlands provide resources like water, fish, and fertile soil, directly impacting livelihoods, thus awareness campaigns emphasize sustainable wetland use to boost economic activities without harming ecosystems. In addition, wetlands are critical carbon sinks, so World Wetlands Day highlights their role in mitigating the effects of climate change by reducing carbon emissions.

World Wetlands Day has been instrumental in driving awareness, policy, and action for wetland conservation across Africa, therefore continued focus on education, sustainable practices, and government support will ensure wetlands contribute significantly to environmental sustainability and socioeconomic development.

Source: [NatureNews](#)

Why the UN Should Promote Track Two Water Diplomacy

Dursun Yıldız

Director -Hydropolitics Academy -Türkiye

February 5, 2025



Water is a vital resource, and its management is a key element in achieving many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) is the primary water-related goal, water intersects with many other SDGs, including climate action, agriculture, life below water, and land ecosystems.

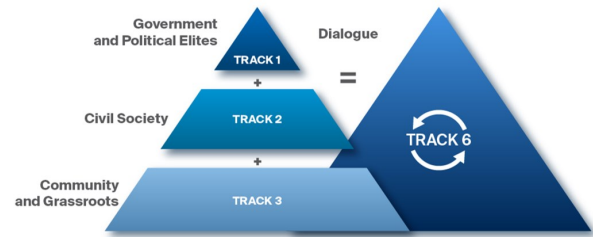
Hydro diplomacy plays a crucial role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6.1, which aims to "ensure universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030." 153 countries share rivers, lakes, and aquifers across borders. Hydro diplomacy helps these countries establish agreements for equitable water distribution and joint management. By resolving water-related disputes, hydro diplomacy ensures peaceful and cooperative relationships, reducing risks of conflicts that hinder access to clean water.

Through diplomatic platforms, countries can exchange best practices, technology, and expertise for improving water infrastructure and access. Climate change worsens water scarcity and quality issues, which directly impact SDG 6.1.

Hydro diplomacy fosters regional cooperation on climate adaptation strategies to ensure sustainable water resources, even in vulnerable regions.



In summary: Hydro diplomacy at both regional and international levels is crucial to achieving the SDGs. By promoting peace, ensuring access to clean water, fostering economic growth, addressing climate change, and supporting environmental sustainability, Hydro diplomacy refers to the process of negotiating and managing water-related issues between countries or regions, to ensure equitable, sustainable, and peaceful access to water resources as well as contribute to the achievement of the SDGs



UN organizations can support civil organizations and non-governmental actors for civil diplomacy and track two diplomacy for multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Civil diplomacy is the diplomatic activities carried out individually between the non-official representatives of the countries. Civil Diplomacy is carried out through 'civil organizations.

Diplomacy Track One and Two	
Track One	Track Two
• Governments • International and regional Organisations (EU, UNO, AU)	• International and local NGOs • Research institutes • Churches • Individuals

Track One Diplomacy is a state diplomacy that focuses on the top leadership level of conflicting parties. Multi-track diplomacy recognizes that the transformation of deep-rooted conflicts cannot be left solely to governmental entities, but must be expanded to include non-governmental actors, civil society, and other informal channels. By expanding the approach to peacemaking and peace-building outside of Track One,

In this context Track Two Water Diplomacy refers to informal, non-official diplomacy efforts aimed at building trust, fostering dialogue, and addressing water-related conflicts or challenges outside of formal government negotiations. It involves non-state actors, such as academics, NGOs, community leaders, and policy experts, working alongside or in parallel with official (Track One) diplomacy to achieve shared water management goals.



Hydropolitics Association promotes Track Two Water Diplomacy on international platforms. Hydro diplomacy can be integrated into the UN system to help achieve these goals, particularly in peace, economic development, health, and environmental sustainability. The UN, through its agencies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN-Water, and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), can play an essential role in facilitating hydro diplomacy, coordinating international frameworks, and promoting collaboration on shared water challenges.

Additionally, The United Nations (UN) can play a significant role in supporting Track Two Water Diplomacy by providing resources, expertise, and platforms for informal dialogue and capacity building. UN organizations (UN-Water, UNECE, UNDP) can provide a neutral and trusted space for multi-stakeholder dialogues.

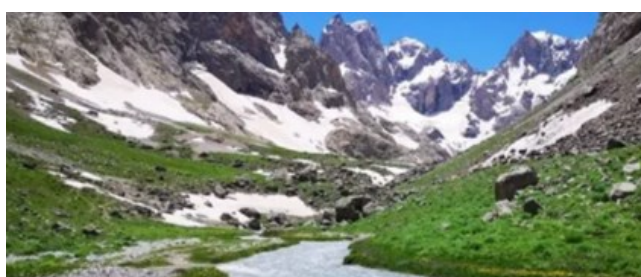
The UN can offer training programs and technical assistance to local actors involved in Track Two diplomacy.

The UN should promote successful examples of Track Two water diplomacy as part of the SDG 6 framework to inspire further cooperation and can act as a bridge between Track Two and Track One diplomacy, ensuring informal dialogues influence formal negotiations.

Theme World Water Day 2025 is ‘Glacier Preservation’



In 2025, the theme of World Water Day is ‘Glacier Preservation’. On the 22nd of March, the focus will be on the critical role glaciers play in global water systems and the urgent need to address their rapid decline due to climate change. World Water Day is organised every year on the 22nd of March by UN Water.



The theme of World Water Day 2025 is 'Glacier Preservation'. Glaciers are critical to life – their meltwater is essential for drinking water, agriculture, industry, clean energy production and healthy ecosystems. During World Water Day many events are taking place globally to create awareness. Last year the theme was Leveraging water for peace to highlight that water governance is key for peace. More information about this year's theme will be made available on the website of UN-Water shortly.

Gaza:

“No electricity, no food, no water, no gas.”



**GAZA NEEDS
HELP**

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News Coordinator: Dr. Nuran YILDIZ
Dr. Doğan YILDIZ
Content : HPA Technical Unit – www.hidropolitikakademi.org
Editor: Dursun Yıldız
Design : ada Strateji Türkiye

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We need to build a future,
Where people live in harmony with nature

HPA

Think Forward .Lead Forward