



# Hydro Politics

## Newsletter

November 2022

Issue:40

## Water Politics Justice and the Right to Water



The right to clean water has been adopted by the United Nations as a basic human right. Yet how such universal calls for a right to water are understood, negotiated, experienced, and struggled over remains a key challenge.

Realizing the right to water involves re-organizing and re-thinking ways of relating to water, but also requires engaging with the wider transformations needed to make this world more sustainable and just.” -

The right to water remains elusive for a great number of people around the world. Despite decades of efforts by activists, policy-makers, and committed scholars, access to water remains deeply contested and unevenly distributed. The world faces a growing water crisis. This is not just about water availability, but about distribution: who gets what and how water is used.

The right to safe and sufficient drinking water for all is one of the main issues and struggles of our time. Unequal power relations at local, national, and transnational scales, combined with policies and intervention practices that are often highly adverse for the vulnerable, make those with water abundance tend to squander leaving the others to face ever greater injustice

The right to water for all has been invoked many times over the past decade or so. Yet, very little has been achieved to achieve more equitable access to water despite resounding declarations of assorted national and international public and private organizations. Water shortages in the world bring death, social injustice, political instability, and economic stagnation. Therefore water politics matters.



## In historic move,

## UN declares healthy environment a human right



28 JUL 2022

The United Nations General Assembly declared today that everyone on the planet has a right to a healthy environment, a move backers say is an important step in countering the alarming decline of the natural world.

In [a resolution](#) passed Thursday morning at UN headquarters in New York City, the General Assembly said climate change and environmental degradation were some of the most pressing threats to humanity's future. It called on states to step up efforts to ensure their people have access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment."

The resolution is not legally binding on the 193 UN Member States. But advocates are hopeful it will have a trickle-down effect, prompting countries to enshrine the right to a healthy environment in national constitutions and regional treaties, and encouraging states to implement those laws. Supporters say that would give environmental campaigners more ammunition to challenge ecologically destructive policies and projects.

"This resolution sends a message that nobody can take nature, clean air and water, or a stable climate away from us – at least, not without a fight," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

"This resolution sends a message that nobody can take nature, clean air and water, or a stable climate away from us – at least, not without a fight," Those changes come as environmental campaigners increasingly use the law to force countries to address pressing environmental problems like climate change.

[Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#)

## Groundwater

Groundwater has been out of sight and out of mind for too long



. It is the world's most abundant freshwater resource and a crucial regulator of water extremes such as floods and drought. When we protect groundwater we save lives and ecosystems, improve

health, reduce hunger and tackle climate change all at once. We must therefore increase understanding of groundwater so we can improve its governance and protect this vital resource.

Groundwater makes up 99 percent of all freshwater that is not frozen. It provides nearly half of the world's population with drinking water and contributes to about half of the global food production. For some 2.5 billion people in the world, groundwater is their one and only source of freshwater. But the importance of groundwater is not only a question of drinking water and irrigation of crops. Groundwater is, in the words of the 2020 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate, groundwater expert [John Cherry](#), "the Earth's life support system."

In 2015, research based on satellite images from the American space agency NASA showed that many of the world's biggest groundwater aquifers are being depleted at a much faster rate than they can be replenished. The situation may be most critical in India, which relies on groundwater for much of its food production but where the capacity of 54 per cent of groundwater wells are decreasing.

Groundwater is also threatened by pollution from agriculture, manufacturing and fracking. Chemicals such as PFAS are increasingly found in the drinking water in many countries. But the full extent of this problem is not known, since most countries do not monitor their groundwater. This means that the world's freshwater may be even more limited than we think.

Source : <https://siwi.org/why-water/groundwater/>

## UNECE @ COP27: Strengthened cooperation between countries key to successful climate change actions and ensuring water security

08 November 2022



at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, UNECE Executive Secretary Olga Algayerova stressed the importance of cooperation between countries for successful climate change policies and actions, especially when it comes to addressing water security. Impacts of climate change and water-related disasters know no borders since 60% of global freshwater flow is in transboundary basins shared by 153 countries. Transboundary cooperation is crucial for the implementation of the Sustainable Development

Goals 6 and 13, and other goals on poverty reduction, food security, health, ecosystem protection and peace. Finally, transboundary cooperation fosters regional integration and stability, Ms. Algayerova noted.

**Water and climate are inextricably linked.** Disasters and climate change impacts are mostly felt through the water cycle, as seen in the past several months. It is therefore important that Egypt has put water high on the agenda of COP27, in negotiations and through initiatives such as Action for Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARE).

**“I strongly encourage countries to include water and transboundary cooperation, where appropriate, into their climate policies, such as National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions, and their implementation,” Ms. Algayerova said.**

**However, financing climate change adaptation remains a challenge for most transboundary basins** across the world. Activities to strengthen the capacity of basin organizations to access finance, in particular climate finance, are implemented under the UN Water Convention in cooperation with international financial institutions and other partners. They include trainings and sessions focused on facilitating funding and preparing bankable project proposals - which have benefited the Lake Chad basin, the Drin basin and Africa more broadly - as well as guidance materials. For example, the publication *Financing Climate Change Adaptation in Transboundary Basins* was developed by the World Bank in cooperation with UNECE and other partners.



The UN Water Convention provides a unique global legal and intergovernmental framework for cooperation in climate change adaptation, including flood and drought management, in transboundary basins. Since the global opening of the convention, more than 130 countries have participated in its activities. Six countries from Africa joined it, while 20 more are in the process of accession. Ms. Algayerova called upon all countries sharing transboundary waters to join the convention.

**Water, climate and transboundary cooperation will be at the centre of the discussions at the 2023 UN Water Conference, co-hosted by the Netherlands and Tajikistan and held in New York in March 2023.** Considering how important water is for climate change, the conference should result in concrete actions and commitments, including on transboundary water cooperation, Ms. Algayerova noted.



# Statement of HYDROPOLITICS ACADEMY (HPA), Türkiye on Better Water Resources and Water Services Management



HYDROPOLITICS ACADEMY

HPA urges all governments to integrate action on better managed water resources and water services than ever before

We congratulate the Water-Policy Group to release of Essential Drop To Net Zero: Unpacking Freshwater's Role In Climate Change Mitigation Report and its detailed analysis of how improved water management can contribute to emission reductions and in doing so deliver multiple other benefits.

As the WPG does, we Hydropolitics Academy also urges commitment **to innovative water policies** to enable the full realization of SDG6 while pursuing Paris Agreement goals.

Water can be managed to achieve higher climate resilience with adaptation interventions throughout the water cycle, lowering energy demand, boosting sustainable agriculture, and improving health.

Hydropolitics Academy, Türkiye

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

# HPA

*Think Forward . Lead Forward*

November 2022

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