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FAOWATER

SHARED WATERS SHARED OPPORTUNITIES

World Water Day
2009



TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS
22.03.2009

World Water Day 2009

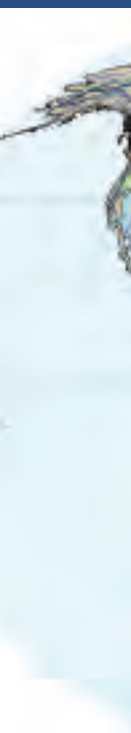
Shared Waters - Shared Opportunities

This year on World Water Day, we call attention to the waters that



Nearly 40 per cent of the world's population lives in river and lake basins shared by two or more countries. The world's 263 transboundary basins include the territory of 145 countries and cover nearly half of the Earth's land surface. Great reservoirs of freshwater also move silently below borders in underground aquifers. There are over 270 known transboundary aquifers.

Ground

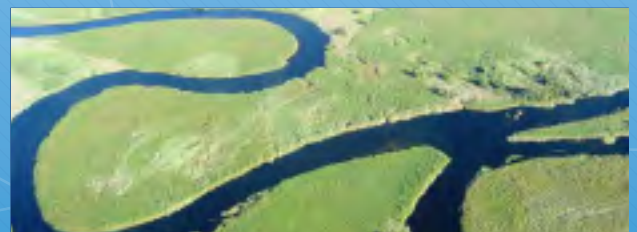


The Challenges Ahead

Every government wants to ensure that its citizens have the water they need to lead healthy, happy and productive lives. As populations and economies grow, national demands for freshwater increase.

Major Transboundary River Basins

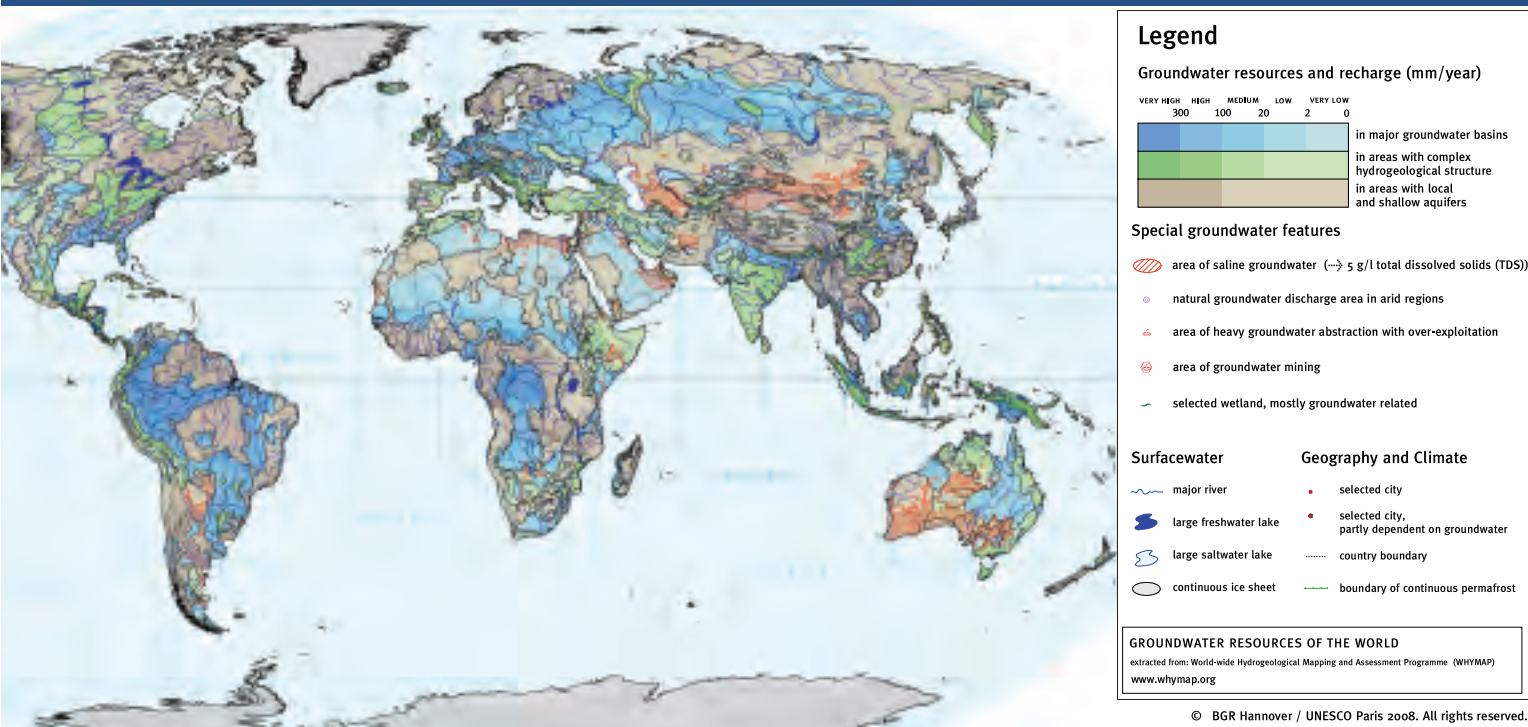
2,850 km	4,350 km	4,700 km	6,400 km	6,800 km
Germany Austria Slovakia Hungary Croatia Serbia Romania Bulgaria Moldova Ukraine Italy Poland Switzerland Czech Republic Slovenia Bosnia and Herzegovina Montenegro The former Yugoslave Republic of Macedonia Albania	Laos Thailand People's Republic of China Cambodia Vietnam Myanmar	Zambia Tanzania Burundi Rwanda Central African Republic (?) Cameroon Angola Democratic Republic of the Congo Republic of the Congo	Brazil Peru Bolivia Colombia Ecuador Venezuela Guyana	Burundi Rwanda Tanzania Kenya Uganda Democratic Republic of the Congo Ethiopia Eritrea Sudan Egypt
Danube	Mekong	Congo	Amazon	Nile



There is enough freshwater to meet everyone's needs. But the world's supply of freshwater is not evenly distributed and often not appropriately managed. Many countries are already facing increasing scarcity of freshwater. By 2025, 1 800 million people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could be under stress conditions.

at cross borders and link us together.

Water Resources of the World



In some areas, the availability of good quality fresh-water has been reduced due to pollution from human waste, industry and agriculture. The figures are disturbing. Every day, 2 million tons of human waste are disposed of in water courses. In developing countries, 70 percent of industrial wastes are dumped untreated into waters where they pollute the usable water supply. Since 1900, half of the world's wetlands, our principal source of renewable freshwater, have been lost. Putting an end to the deterioration of transboundary wetland ecosystems is critical for securing a stable supply of water for our homes, farms and industries.



Climate change will certainly have an impact on water resources and their management. As temperatures rise, rainfall patterns are expected to change, increasing the risk of floods, drought and other water-related disasters in many areas. Glaciers and icefields, the immense reservoirs of freshwater stored in the world's mountains and polar regions, are already melting.

Cooperation and not conflict

With many countries at different stages of development, with different economic interests and different political outlooks, all trying to satisfy their water needs with limited water resources, some people foresee a future filled with conflict. But history shows that cooperation, not conflict, is the most common response to transboundary water management issues. Over the past 60 years there have been nearly 300 international water agreements and only 37 cases of reported violence between states over water.

Water: Conflict or cooperation?

37

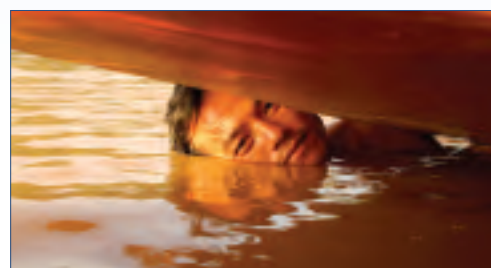
Cases of
violence
between states
over water

300

International
water
agreements

Work remains to be done to improve and implement these international agreements. In addition, more agreements are required. Of the world's 263 international river basins and transboundary aquifer systems, 158 do not have any type of cooperative management framework in place.

Nurturing the opportunities for cooperation in transboundary water management can help build mutual respect, understanding and trust among countries and promote peace, security and sustainable economic growth.



Whether we live upstream or downstream, we are all in the same boat. We all share the responsibility for managing the world's transboundary waters for current and future generations.

For more information on World Water Day 2009 email:
info@worldwaterday09.info

or visit the official World Water Day 2009 website:
www.worldwaterday09.info

World Water Day
2009



World Water Day 2009 is presented by UN-Water (www.unwater.org) and co-ordinated by UNESCO (www.unesco.org) with the assistance of UNECE (www.unece.org)

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