



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



WWDR 2015

Water for a Sustainable World

Main Messages

Overarching Message

Water is at the core of sustainable development. Water resources, and the range of services they provide, underpin poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental sustainability. From food and energy security to human and environmental health, water contributes to improvements in social well-being and inclusive growth, affecting the livelihoods of billions.

Message 1: water provides a range of **benefits and services** that are key factors in achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth, that are vital to nearly all forms of economic activity and that underpin the livelihoods of billions.

Message 2: water resources are **renewable** but the amounts available at any time or place will reflect the limits of their **natural cycle**. When managed within these limits, they establish a sustainable basis for development. Exceeding these limits or abusing the resource through unsustainable growth patterns can undermine development, compromise the health of ecosystems, and impoverish vulnerable communities.

Message 3: water resources and services have been a key factor in the **progress** made in the **last 30 years**, contributing to improvements in health, food security, social equity, economic growth and environmental sustainability and playing a role in improving the livelihoods of hundreds of millions lifted out of poverty. Unfortunately, this progress has not been evenly distributed across the globe and much still needs to be done in most places.

Message 4: water management and decisions affecting water will play a key role in addressing the **new development challenges** of the middle of the 21st century, including urbanization, sustainable industrial development and economic growth, eradicating persistent poverty, ensuring food and energy security, responding to new patterns of consumption and conserving threatened ecosystems.

Message 5: the many **values and benefits** of water resources and the ecosystem services that provide them should be more fully taken into account in the calculation of social and economic costs and benefits of development decisions and investments in water management. When efficiently and transparently managed, investments in water generate social, economic, financial and other benefits that greatly outweigh its costs.

World Water Assessment Programme

UNESCO Programme Office for
Global Water Assessment



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World Water
Assessment Programme

Message 6: water management enhances the **security** and **resilience** of and reduces **risks** faced by vulnerable people and ecosystems threatened by unsustainable patterns of demand, pollution, changes to climate and land-use patterns and increasing exposure to extreme events.

Message 7: the decisions that determine how water resources are used (or abused) are not made by water managers alone. Progress towards sustainable development thus requires engaging a **broader range of political actors** – in government, civil society and business – to take account of water in their decision-making processes and responses.