

## Human Development Reports - United Nations Development Programme



### Human Development Report 2006

#### Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis

Throughout history water has confronted humanity with some of its greatest challenges. Water is a source of life and a natural resource that sustains our environments and supports livelihoods – but it is also a source of risk and vulnerability. In the early 21st Century, prospects for human development are threatened by a deepening global water crisis. Debunking the myth that the crisis is the result of scarcity, this report argues poverty, power and inequality are at the heart of the problem.

In a world of unprecedented wealth, almost 2 million children die each year for want of a glass of clean water and adequate sanitation. Millions of women and young girls are forced to spend hours collecting and carrying water, restricting their opportunities and their choices. And water-borne infectious diseases are holding back poverty reduction and economic growth in some of the world's poorest countries.

Beyond the household, competition for water as a productive resource is intensifying. Symptoms of that competition include the collapse of water-based ecological systems, declining river flows and large-scale groundwater depletion. Conflicts over water are intensifying within countries, with the rural poor losing out. The potential for tensions between countries is also growing, though there are large potential human development gains from increased cooperation.

The Human Development Report continues to frame debates on some of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. Human Development Report 2006:


- Investigates the underlying causes and consequences of a crisis that leaves 1.2 billion people without access to safe water and 2.6 billion without access to sanitation
- Argues for a concerted drive to achieve water and sanitation for all through national strategies and a global plan of action
- Examines the social and economic forces that are driving water shortages and marginalizing the poor in agriculture
- Looks at the scope for international cooperation to resolve cross-border tensions in water management
- Includes special contributions from Gordon Brown and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, President Lula, President Carter, and the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.


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