



Research Report

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Issue of: Preventing the armament of water conflicts in problem areas in the near future



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Forum: General Assembly 1

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Introduction

"But the water problems of our world need not be only a cause of tension; they can also be a catalyst for cooperation....If we work together, a secure and sustainable water future can be ours." ~Kofi Annan, February 2002

Water presents each a danger and an opportunity for the international system. The increasing shortage of fresh water blocks improvement, undermines human wellbeing, and assumes critical roles on the conflict continuum between and within states. While seldom (if at any time) starting a war between states, water allotment is usually key in finishing conflict and the beginning of public and territorial reconstruction and advancement.

Inside states, water shortage will expect to be a progressively combative and violent role once, for instance, water-dependent areas do not cultivate livelihoods anymore, prompting destabilizing movement streams. Conflict-neutralization, -compromise, and -reconstruction overlook water as a danger in key areas of the world (e.g., Southern and East Africa, including the Great Lakes region; the Middle East; and Central, Southeast, and South Asia). Water has in addition proven to be a profitable pathway for social and economic improvement. The hazard is not the water scarcity, but the organizations that manage water and its connected tensions.

In less economically developed regions, water is often imperative to regional development. We as the General Assembly 1 have a huge task in front of us to focus on transforming water from a conflict potential to a cooperative measure.

Disclaimer: This Research Report will mainly focus on water disputes. If you are interested in the armament of such, please read the Research Report on the second issue of the General Assembly 1, HMUN 2021.

Definition of Key Terms

Drought

A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to a shortage of water.

Flood

An overflow of a large amount of water beyond its normal limits, especially over what is normally dry land.



Groundwater Depletion

Groundwater depletion, a term often defined as long-term water-level declines caused by sustained groundwater pumping, is a key issue associated with groundwater use.

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive determines the quality and quantity norms

(, exempli gratia, good quantitative status and good chemical status) for European waters, to be classified as “good” or “poor”.

Water Management

Water management is the control and movement of water resources to minimize damage to life and property and to maximize efficient beneficial use.

General Overview

Water is, like most natural assets, fixed -around 400 million cubic kilometres. For the 8 billion people, plus the countless creatures dependent on water, that walk this earth, only a little 2.5% is usable. This leaves a progressively-increasing demand for water – the problem lies on these lines. Nations are becoming more aware of the importance of the presence of a depleting source of water. Agricultural businesses are for the production of produce highly dependent on the accessibility of usable water, which in various regions leads to scarcity of not only water but also food. The scarcity of water had therefore quickly risen to be one of the big collective global crises. The ever-growing population does not give us a lot to look forward to, with the United Nations expecting more than 4 billion people living in places of water-scarcity.

This global crisis can be led back to a number of reasons:

First and foremost, a change in climate has prompted a move within the locations of centralizations of water, resulting in both extreme droughts and floods, and with fault risk-perception and plans, governments can have a hard time dealing with either one.

Furthermore, with progressive growth of our population, the demand for fresh has seen huge extents over the course of the past years. Especially since



groundwater has depleted rapidly, it is predicted that the Middle East will be groundwater-depleted by 2050.

Thirdly, frameworks and infrastructure surrounding water are both very unproductive and often badly managed, with political disputes as a result. Social and political disagreement has more than once unfortunately led to misuse and sometimes even break-down of these frameworks.

At long last, in spite of the growing awareness globally of the alarming scarcity of the resource, water is still wasted on exceptional levels. These failing systems, along with all reasons stated above have led to the so-called Water Crisis.

Water can play various roles in a conflict:

Trigger: Water as a trigger or main driver of contention, where there is a conflict about the control of water or water frameworks or where monetary or actual admittance to water, or shortage of water, triggers violence.

Weapon: Water as a weapon of contention, where water assets, or water frameworks themselves, are utilized as an asset or weapon of war.

Casualty: Water assets or water frameworks as a loss of contention, where water assets, or water frameworks, are deliberately or accidentally victim of violence.

Global Water Conflicts:

Time Period	No. of Conflicts	Trigger	Weapon	Casualty
1800-1899	14	8	2	8
1900-1999	177	48	65	83
2000-2009	220	79	32	121
2010-present	466	172	39	285

Note: In a conflict, water can assume multiple roles, most popular Casualty and Trigger.

Nile River Basin Conflict

The Nile River has been a source of conflict among its eleven bank nations. Between upstream and downstream countries there is violent conflict about right over and access to water. Especially Egypt versus Ethiopia have called the slow yet present negotiations to a stand-still. In 2015, these negotiations slowly lived up again to an agreement about a major dam built by Ethiopia



Shortage in Yemen

As a result of extreme mismanagement, Yemen's water accessibility is declining drastically, leading to unequal distribution and corruption, having its consequences on the population.

Turkey, Syria and Iraq: Euphrates-Tigris

The Euphrates-Tigris Basin is split among Turkey, Syria and Iraq, with parts of the river bowl located in and along the borders of Iran. Badly-planned water management, combined with political tensions between the nations, have stressed relations within the basin. Although tensions have somewhat released, there is still no formal agreement.

Dispute between Afghanistan and Iran

Afghanistan's efforts to reach the water of the Helmand stream frightened Iran. The Iranian government sees Afghanistan's rural development and dam development as dangers to public and water safety. The stubbornness of Afghanistan together with other conflicts in the region has resulted in reluctance to negotiate.

Dam dispute in Mekong River Basin

The Mekong bowl is seeing a huge development in this hydropower age, notably in China and Laos. This has prompted political strains as nations downstream of the dams are victim to the negative effects they will accomplish, from additional noteworthy flooding to occasional absence of water. China is making an attempt to engage with downstream riparians by offering support and assistance for further construction downstream, but these have not reacted to China's effort. Therefore it continues to be a source of conflict.

Major Parties Involved

Egypt

Egypt is one of the main parties in the Nile River Basin Conflict, as they, for thousands of years, have been dependent on the water coming from the Nile River

Ethiopia

In 2011, Ethiopia began building a humongous hydroelectric dam across one of the Nile Rivers tributaries, which almost resulted in a, by Egypt, long-threatened war.

UN UNESCO-IHP Groundwater Portal

The UN UNESCO-IHP Groundwater Portal aims to help improve understanding of water resources and foster effective water management.



PCCP

The main UN initiative is the Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential, whose activities include: training water professionals in the Middle East and organizing educational efforts elsewhere. Its target groups include diplomats, lawmakers, civil society, and students of water studies; by expanding knowledge of water disputes, it hopes to encourage cooperation between nations in dealing with conflicts.

For other relevant parties, see the general overview.

Timeline of Key Events

1960 Rising tensions involving the ongoing Euphrate-Tigris Basin conflict

2007 Start of the ongoing Nile River Basin Conflict

2021 Ongoing water shortages and public discontent in Yemen

2021 Ongoing dispute between Afghanistan and Iran about the Helmand River

2021 Ongoing disputes about the Mekong River Basin

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

The United Nations have set out to find a solution for this problem numerous times in the past. All passed resolutions and reports on this issue can be found on the United Nations website. Some earlier resolves include:

In 2012, the United Nations published "the UN Water Development Report: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk", a comprehensive report of all freshwater resources underlining the importance of coordinated approach to management and allocating water and states that in order to reach certain goals, it is paramount to take water into account with decision making.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6: "Clean Water and Sanitation", aims to ensure every human clean water and sanitation by 2030. Great progress has been made toward this goal, however, a lot should still be done to resolve the issue.



Possible Solutions

What the problem at hand needs are solutions that both tackle the main issue of the Global Water Crisis and resolve issues and tensions preventing any further conflict. To address this issue means putting transregional differences aside and starting negotiations towards a better and water-containing future.

One way to improve water security and preservation is by providing and promoting new water protection ways and advances between the MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries) and also the LEDCs (Less Financially Developed Countries). As obvious through the instances of all conflicts, such disputes happen mainly in these LEDC's. That offers us an opportunity to also help further development on social and political are, minimizing possibility of mismanagement of water infrastructure.

Furthermore, we can address this issue at the price of water itself, re-evaluating fresh water internationally. Raising prices would result in less waste and contamination. This could also lead to more recycling of old water – so called “grey water”.

The instalment of new legislative bodies to promote cooperation and participation is a legislative approach. Participation of governments and instances could lead to new laws and regulations, promoting and ensuring overall mediation of conflict.

Appendices

I. A list of water conflicts (chronologically) as well as their descriptions and causes for conflict. <http://www.worldwater.org/conflict/list/>

II. UN Water Report: Contains information regarding the current situation of water scarcity present globally. <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-annual-report-2018/>

III. Analyzes Water, Conflict and Cooperation in Central Asia (with emphasis on the role of international law and diplomacy)
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Analysis for water transformation.

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