

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

FOOD, PEOPLE, PLANET: A GLOBAL OUTLOOK

RELEASE 3/2017

JULY - SEPTEMBER



FOCUS ON

BILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD HAVE INADEQUATE WATER SUPPLY. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?



This summer was one of the hottest, driest and sunniest since statistical records on climate began in 1880, almost one and a half centuries ago. It also brought with it extreme weather events, particularly in the Caribbean and in Asia, where thousands of people died as a result of the flooding caused by [monsoons](#), while some areas of North and Central America suffered billions of dollars' worth of damage due to violent [hurricanes](#).

As illustrated in the [Analysis](#), the debate sparked by these events focused on what appears to have been their main cause, namely climate change, a topic featured in the majority of website articles under all the four areas examined: MEDIA, LEGISLATION, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES & NGOs, and RESEARCH.

A significant part of the international debate, however, addressed a more specific and even more challenging aspect, namely the issue of water, and specifically the relationship between water and the populations of some poor regions of the planet.

As an example, during World Water Week held in Stockholm from August 27 to September 1, the World Bank presented a study titled "[Reducing Inequalities in Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene in the Era of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)". Introducing the study, Senior Director of the Water Global Practice of the World Bank Guangzhe Chen said: "Millions are currently trapped in poverty by poor water supply and sanitation, which contributes to childhood stunting and debilitating diseases such as diarrhea. To give everyone an equal chance at reaching their full potential, more resources, targeted to areas of high vulnerability and low access, are needed to close the gaps and improve poor water and sanitation services. This report provides a roadmap for closing that gap."

THE CHALLENGE OF WATER SCARCITY AFFECTS BILLIONS OF PEOPLE

Water and Migration - In order to measure the level of awareness of and attention paid to this topic, we investigated the matching of two specific key words, "water" and "migration", to see how many times they featured in the panel of websites reviewed by our platform. The words were found to be mentioned together in 197 cases. As shown below, International Agencies and NGOs paid the greatest attention to the issue.

Topics	Volume
Migration and Water / International Agencies & NGOs	90
Migration and Water / Media	67
Migration and Water / Research	29
Migration and Water / Legislation	11

Studies on the interconnection between the two phenomena notably include Working Paper 27 "[Water, migration and how they are interlinked](#)", published by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). The paper introduces the subjects as follows: "The world is witnessing some of the largest refugee flows since the Second World War. Meanwhile, water crises are highlighted as one of the most pressing global challenges. In this context, migration and refugee flows are increasingly explained in terms of water scarcity – perpetuated by climate change." The publication is of particular interest since it examines, among other things, the relationship between Water Scarcity and Migration in Syria, the theatre of vast internal and external migration flows, generally attributed to the ongoing drawn-out and bitter civil war, which have so far seen the displacement of some 11 million individuals (<https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis>).

Water Scarcity - The findings of the analysis confirm above all that the issue of water scarcity affects huge numbers of people on the planet. A recent and very authoritative study on this subject is "[Four billion people facing severe water scarcity](#)", by Mesfin M. Mekonnen and Arjen Y. Hoekstra, published in the February 2016 issue of Science Magazine. The authors write: "We find that two-thirds of the global population (4.0 billion people) live under conditions of severe water scarcity at least 1 month of the year. Nearly half of those people live in India and China. Half a billion people in the world face severe water scarcity all year round. Putting caps to water consumption by river basin, increasing water-use efficiencies, and better sharing of the limited freshwater resources will be key in reducing the threat posed by water scarcity on biodiversity and human welfare."



Looking more closely at the details, the analysis clearly shows what social phenomena "Water Scarcity" is linked to (Conflict-Affected), the geographical regions most affected by it (East and North Africa), and the consequences it leads to (Drought, Soil Degradation).

There is no shortage of suggested solutions (Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development) and goals that these solutions are expected to achieve, including to Prevent Famine and the Goal of Zero Hunger.

