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FACTSHEET WATER

Facts and Figures

Water is a human right! In July 2010, the United Nations added the right to clean water to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Out of 163 member states who participated in the General Assembly, 122 voted for the resolution that had been presented by Bolivia and supported by 33 other states. 41 states abstained from the voting. On 22nd March of every year, the World Water Day regularly reminds us of the importance of water as a basis for life of human kind.

Availability of water

The amount of water on earth is estimated to be around 1.4 billion km³. It consists of 97.5% salt water, 2.5% fresh water (35 million km³). Of these 2.5%, 68.75% are kept in glaciers and snow - inaccessible for humans. 30% are ground water, 0.98% soil moisture, permafrost, swamp water and only 0.27% belong to rivers and lakes. [UN-Water]

The amount of water available will be reduced in the future. This also has a direct impact on the availability of food. According to UN estimations, even today 24 billion tons of fertile land are eliminated each year due to desertification, deserts and deterioration of farmland (degradation). 1.5 billion people are affected. [UN-Water.org]

Access to water

At present, 5.2 billion people (71% of the global population) can use sustainable safe and clean toilets at their homes. 1.3 billion people have at least access to a basic water source which means they can reach an improved drinking water source within a 30 minutes' walk (roundtrip including queuing). But the number of those without access to any of those improved premises is still very high: 844 million people. [UN World Water Report 2019]

90% of the disadvantaged people live in rural areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, it is a fact that more than 42% of the population did not gain an improved access to drinking water, and mainly women and girls spend 40 billion hours per year to carry home water. Today, 4 billion people, which is almost half of the world's population, live in areas where they are affected by water scarcity at least one month a year. UN estimates count with 5.7 billion people by 2015. [WHO JMP, 2015/ UNICEF; World Water Report 2017/2018/2019]

Consumption of water

According to the latest estimations, the world's population will grow up to 2 to 3 billion people until halfway through this century. At the same time there is an increase in the worldwide food requirements with up to 60%. In the developing countries even a 100% increase is expected. With 69%, agriculture (irrigated) is already the world's leading consumer of water: 43% of all ground water resources are used for agricultural

production. The United Nations estimate that until 2050 the agricultural production will use 20% more water (including rainwater). The irrigation of lands will rise to 11%. While in the last 100 years the global water consumption has increased by a factor of six, estimates for the future count with an increase of 1% every year.

The second largest consumers of water are industry and energy suppliers with 19%, followed by households with 11%. Around 20% of the global water consumption is taken from the ground water. The largest supplier of drinking water is rainwater. United Nations expect an increase of global water needs of 20-30%. [UN-World Water Development Report 2019]

The concrete need of water (virtual water) is: to produce the daily food ratio for one person between 2.000 and 5000 liters of water are needed. To produce one kilogram bread one needs 1.000 liters, to produce one kilo rice around 3.500 liters, for a kilo beef (cereal feeding) even up to 15.00 liters and for a cup of coffee around 140 liters of water. [CAP-Net, 2015]

The World Health Organization recommends that every individual should have at least 7.5 liters of water per day for basic needs like drinking and cooking. A minimum of 50 liters is needed for hygiene and the cleaning of food. [UN-World Water Report 2015]

Water and health

Water is vital for human health. In fact, the human body can live without food for weeks, but only some days without water. Safe and clean water is most important for our health and physical development. About 4.3 billion people cannot use a toilet at their home from where sewage water is safely cleaned. Of these 4.3 billion, about 892 million people have to live with open defecation. But contaminated water can cause diseases like diarrhea, cholera, Typhus, Polio and others.

Every year about 780,000 people die from diarrhea diseases due to the consumption of contaminated drinking water as well as due to inadequate hygiene and sanitation conditions. Suitable actions in the field of water supply and disposal, besides health and hygiene consulting could prevent these deaths and most of all the death of 361,000 children under the age of five every year.

However, only 15% of the population in Sub-Sahara have access to water and soap to wash their hands while in West-Asia and North-Africa about 76% do have access. [WHO, 2018 / UN World Water Report 2019]

Welthungerhilfe and water

Together with its international partners, Welthungerhilfe establishes sustainable drinking water and sanitation supply for all users; equally and permanently available and accessible. Moreover, it supports its target group to protect their health by improving the hygiene behavior.

Every year, Welthungerhilfe grants about 25 new WASH projects (in the field of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) with an average volume of 800,000 Euro. Around 50,000 people benefit from these activities. Regional key areas are rural areas in Africa, South of the Sahara, and South-East Asia. Normally the duration of the projects is 24 months.

Sources:

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- **UN World Water Report 2019 :** https://www.unesco.de/sites/default/files/2019-03/UN-Weltwasserbericht_2019_WWDR_Englisch.pdf

Please find more information on our website www.welthungerhilfe.de

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