



water & sanitation

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Poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact on food security

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Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact on food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world. Drought afflicts some of the world's poorest countries, worsening hunger and malnutrition.

According to the United Nations (UN), by 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water. The question is: clean water and dignified sanitation - why do they matter?

The UN points out that while over 2.6 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, 663 million people are still without access to the resource. At least 1.8 billion people globally use a source of drinking water that is contaminated.

Between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the global population using an improved drinking water source has increased from 76% to 91%, but water scarcity affects more than 40% of the global population and is projected to rise. At the same time, over 1.7 billion people are currently living in river basins where water use exceeds recharge.

More than 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services, such as toilets or latrines; while more than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any pollution removal. Each day, nearly 1,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation-related diarrhoeal diseases.

Meanwhile, three out of four jobs worldwide are water-dependent. Water shortages and lack of access may limit economic growth in the overall universe and this problem needs urgent recourse. Businesses show the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) support with new #WASHforWork initiative, introduced by about 11 of the world's leading organizations and aimed at mobilizing greater business action to address water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) challenges in the workplace, communities where workers live and across supply chains.

In terms of the global agenda, the sustainable development agenda and tackling Climate Change are a need, but investing in the future tops the list.

The UN wants Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to facilitate the speedy attainment of these first six goals, namely: poverty alleviation, hunger and food security, health, education, gender equality and women's empowerment and most importantly, access to water and decent sanitation.

Ike Motsapi