



World Union for Peace Human Rights and the Rights of People

NGO associated to the Un Department of Public Information

NEWSLETTER

From Un to Citizen International News



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Thanks for the kind cooperation to UNRIC - United Nations - Regional Information Centre in Brussels - and the Desk Office for Italy, San Marino, Malta and the Holy See

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Special Edition

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 17 Goals to transform our world

Water Action Decade 2018-2028

The United Nations has long been addressing the global crisis caused by unsafe water and sanitation and growing demands on the world's water resources to meet human, economic and environmental needs.

In December 2017 UN Member States adopted United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/222 on an International Decade for Action on 'Water for Sustainable Development' 2018-2028.

In response to the ambitious 2030 Agenda, the Water Action Decade will accelerate efforts towards meeting water-related challenges, including limited access to safe water and sanitation, increasing pressure on water resources and ecosystems, and an exacerbated risk of droughts and floods.

World Water Development Report 2018

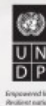
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NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR WATER



WWDR 2018



The global demand for water has been increasing at a rate of about 1% per year over the past decades as a function of population growth, economic development and changing consumption patterns, among other factors, and it will continue to grow significantly over the foreseeable future. Industrial and domestic demand for water will increase much faster than agricultural demand, although agriculture will remain the largest user overall. The vast majority of the growth in demand for water will occur in countries with developing or emerging economies. At the same time, the global water cycle is intensifying due to climate change, with wetter regions generally becoming wetter and drier regions becoming even drier. Other global changes (e.g., urbanisation, de-forestation, intensification of agriculture) add to these challenges.

The **United Nations World Water Development Report, Nature-based Solutions for Water**, launched 19 March 2018 during the 8th World Water Forum, and in conjunction to the World Water Day, demonstrates how nature-based solutions (NBS) offer a vital means of moving beyond business-as-usual to address many of the world's water challenges while simultaneously delivering additional benefits vital to all aspects of sustainable development. NBS use or mimic natural processes to enhance water availability (e.g., soil moisture retention, groundwater recharge), improve water quality (e.g., natural and constructed wetlands, riparian buffer strips), and reduce risks associated with water-related disasters and climate change (e.g., floodplain restoration, green roofs). Currently, water management remains heavily dominated by traditional, human-built (i.e. 'grey') infrastructure and the enormous potential for NBS remains under-utilized. NBS include green infrastructure that can substitute, augment or work in parallel with grey infrastructure in a cost-effective manner. The goal is to find the most appropriate blend of green and grey investments to maximize benefits and system efficiency while minimizing costs and trade-offs.

World Water Development Report

The WWDR is an annual and thematic report that focuses on different strategic water issues each year and aims to provide decision-makers with the tools to implement sustainable use of our water resources. It also includes regional aspects, hotspots, examples and stories, making the report relevant to a broad range of readers, at different levels and in different geographical areas. The development of the WWDR, coordinated by the [World Water Assessment Programme \(WWAP\)](#), is a joint effort of the UN agencies and entities which make up UN-Water, working in partnership with governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. The WWDR was originally a triennial report and the first four editions were launched in conjunction with the World Water Forum in 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. The triennial version provided an overall picture of the state, uses and management of the world's freshwater resources. In 2012, the decision was taken to revise the scope of the report and improve its format in order to better meet the needs of its readers with an annual, more concise publication that is increasingly facts-based and has a more specific thematic focus.

European Union

AGRICULTURE

Organic food: MEPs tighten EU rules to match consumer expectations

New rules to ensure that only high-quality organic food is sold in the EU and to boost organic production were approved by the European Parliament.

MEPs gave the go-ahead to the new EU law on organic production and labelling, as agreed by Parliament's negotiators and EU ministers on 28 June 2017, by 466 votes in favour to 124 against, with 50 abstentions.

The main features include:

Ensure high quality of organic food

- **Strict, risk-based checks will take place along the supply chain.** Thanks to Parliament's insistence, checks will be carried out on-site and for all operators, at least annually or once every two years if no fraud has been found in the last three years.
- **Imports will have to comply with EU standards.** Current "equivalence" rules, requiring non-EU countries to comply with similar but not identical standards, will be phased out within five years.

Boost EU organic food production

- **Increasing supply of organic seeds and animals** to meet the needs of organic farmers: derogations allowing the use of conventional seeds and animals in organic production should expire in 2035.
- **Mixed farms, to encourage conversion:** farms producing both conventional and organic food would be allowed, on condition that the two farming activities are clearly and effectively separated.
- **Easier certification for small farmers:** group certification would save small farmers time and money when turning organic.

Avoid contamination from chemical pesticides or synthetic fertilisers

- **Precautionary measures:** farmers and other operators in the food supply chain will be obliged to apply a set of new measures to avoid contamination; if a non-authorized pesticide or fertiliser is suspected to be present, the final product should not bear the organic label until further investigation; if contamination was deliberate or the operator failed to apply precautionary measures, the product will lose its organic status.
- Member states that currently apply **thresholds for non-authorized substances** in organic food, such as pesticides, could continue to do so, if they allow other EU countries' organic foodstuffs complying with EU rules to access their markets.

Four years after entry into force of this regulation, the Commission would report back on how efficient the EU anti-contamination rules and national thresholds are and, if need be, come up with a draft law to harmonise them.

Next steps

The agreed text still needs to be formally approved by the Council of EU ministers before it can enter into force. It shall apply from 1 January 2021.

ENVIRONMENT

Circular economy: More recycling of household waste, less landfilling

Parliament backs ambitious recycling targets, under legislation on waste and the circular economy.

Improving waste management will not only benefit the environment, climate, and human health. The four pieces of legislation are also part of a shift in EU policy towards a circular economy, i.e. a system where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible.

By 2025, at least 55% of municipal waste (from households and businesses) should be recycled, says the text, as agreed with Council of Ministers. The target will rise to 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035. 65% of packaging materials will have to be recycled by 2025, and 70% by 2030. Separate targets are set for specific packaging materials, such as paper and cardboard, plastics, glass, metal and wood.

Landfilling to become an exception

The draft law also limits the share of municipal waste being landfilled to a maximum of 10% by 2035. In 2014, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden sent virtually no municipal waste to landfill, whereas Cyprus, Croatia, Greece, Latvia and Malta still landfill more than three quarters of their municipal waste.

Textiles and hazardous waste from households will have to be collected separately by 2025. By 2024, biodegradable waste will also have to be either collected separately or recycled at home through composting.

Reduce food waste by 50 %

In line with the UN sustainable development goals, member states should aim to reduce food waste by 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030. In order to prevent food waste, member states should provide incentives for the collection of unsold food products and their safe redistribution. Consumer awareness of the meaning of "use by" and "best before" label dates should also be improved, say MEPs.

Next steps

The text now goes back to Council for formal approval before publication in the Official Journal of the EU, the official record of all EU legal acts.

MEPs highlight health risks of falling vaccination rates in the EU

Waning public confidence in vaccination is a major challenge that is already affecting health.

Epidemiological data show significant gaps in vaccines being accepted and coverage rates that are too low to ensure the public is properly protected against vaccine-preventable diseases, MEPs note with concern in a resolution voted.

Widespread and growing vaccine hesitancy is already having consequences such as avoidable measles outbreaks in a number of countries, they add.

MEPs point out that vaccines are rigorously tested in multiple-stage trials and are regularly reassessed. They also welcome the forthcoming launch of a Joint Action, co-funded by the EU Health Programme, to boost the number of people who have been vaccinated. They also urge the European Commission step up its support for national vaccination efforts.

MEPs advocate strengthening the EU legal basis for immunisation coverage, and call on the EU Commission to facilitate a more harmonised and better-aligned schedule for vaccination across the EU.

Restore confidence through greater transparency

MEPs call for greater transparency in the production and evaluation of vaccines and their adjuvants, in the funding of independent research programmes and about the possible side-effects of vaccines, so as to help restore trust in vaccination.

They also point out that researchers must declare any conflict of interests and say that those who have them should be excluded from evaluation panels. The confidentiality of the deliberations of the European Medicines Agency's (EMA) evaluation panel should also be lifted, and scientific and clinical data be made public, they add.

MEPs also advocate opening a factual and science-based dialogue with civil society, in order to combat unreliable, misleading and unscientific information on vaccination.

Joint procurement of vaccines

MEPs say it is unjustifiable that the cost of a full vaccines package for one child was 68 times more expensive in 2014 than in 2001. They support an existing agreement allowing vaccines to be jointly procured, thus pooling the purchasing power of member states.

INSTITUTIONS

European elections: MEPs back voting dates for 2019

The next EU elections will be held on 23-26 May 2019. MEPs backed this Council proposal.

The consultation procedure for approving the EU election dates was prepared by Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee, who backed the report.

The election dates were approved in plenary session on Wednesday, by 492 votes to 14, with 24 abstentions.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

To shed light on the true owners of letterbox companies, any citizen will, in future, be able to access data about the beneficial owners of firms operating in the EU.

MEPs supported a December agreement reached with the Council, which also proposed closer regulation for virtual currencies, like Bitcoin, to prevent them being used for money laundering and terrorism financing.

The agreement represents the fifth and latest update to the EU's Anti-money laundering Directive and is partly a response to the terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016 in Paris and Brussels, as well as the Panama Papers leaks.

Public access to information on real owners of firms

The reforms giving citizens the right to access information on the beneficial owners of firms which operate in the EU, could help quash the corrupt use of letterbox companies created to launder money, hide wealth and avoid paying taxes - a practice which received widespread attention in the wake of the Panama Papers.

An additional measure would also open up data on beneficial owners of trusts and similar arrangements to those who can demonstrate a "legitimate interest". This would make information on trusts available to investigative journalists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Member states will also retain the right to provide broader access to information, in accordance with their national law.

Customer verification for virtual currencies

The new measures also address risks linked to prepaid cards and virtual currencies. In a bid to end the anonymity associated with virtual currencies, virtual currency exchange platforms and custodian wallet providers will, like banks, have to apply customer due diligence controls, including customer verification requirements.

These platforms and providers will also have to be registered, as will currency exchanges and cheque cashing offices, and trust or company services providers.

Lower threshold on prepaid cards

Other measures agreed as part of the update include:

- .a reduction in the threshold for identifying the holders of prepaid cards from currently €250 to €150;
- .tougher criteria for assessing whether non-EU countries pose an increased risk of money laundering and closer scrutiny of transactions involving nationals from risky countries (including the possibility of sanctions);
- .protection for whistleblowers who report money laundering (including the right to anonymity);
- .an extension of the Directive to cover all forms of tax advisory services, letting agents, art dealers, as well as electronic wallet providers and virtual currency exchange service providers.

Next steps

The updated directive will enter into force three days after its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union. Member states will then have 18 months to transpose the new rules into national law.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

International Women's Day

(8 March 2018)

Following are UN Secretary-General António Guterres' remarks at the International Women's Day observance:

We live in a male-dominated world with a male-dominated culture. And this is true in Governments, public administrations, the private sector, but also in international organizations like the United Nations.

And so, the central question for gender equality is a question of power. And that is why the empowerment of women is our most important objective.

To make that empowerment [a] reality in the United Nations, I made parity our central reform objective. We have already reached parity in the Senior Management Group, the top level of the administration of the United Nations. And we will soon reach it at the level of the country leaders of the United Nations.

But, our aim is to have parity across the board in the whole of the United Nations and this will be a key instrument for us to be able to fight sexual exploitation and abuse with zero tolerance, to fight sexual harassment and to make sure that we create an Organization in which women and men can work together in full equality and contribute to a world in which women and men can also be in full equality.

International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members

(25 March 2018)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message on the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members,:

The International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members reminds us of the perils United Nations personnel often face while serving the peoples of the world.

Today, 29 United Nations civilian personnel are in detention. Eight are being held without known or clear charges or without the Organization being given any reasons for their arrests. We will continue to monitor these cases and pursue the release of our colleagues.

I call on all countries to support the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, as well as the 2005 Optional Protocol to the Convention, which extends protection to personnel delivering humanitarian, political or development assistance. Only 92 States are party to the 1994 Convention and only 32 are party to the Protocol. I urge all countries that have not joined these instruments to promptly do so.

Whether in their countries of origin or far from their families and homes, United Nations personnel work tirelessly to help the world's most vulnerable. The safety they need to carry out this vital mission should be our priority.

On this International Day, let us strengthen our resolve and our means to protect United Nations staff as they work tirelessly for peace, sustainable development and human rights for all.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

(25 March 2018)

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General António Guterres' video message for the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, observed on 25 March:

The epically shameful transatlantic slave trade was the largest forced and legally sanctioned migration in human history. More than 15 million men, women and children from Africa were enslaved.

This Day of Remembrance was established to acknowledge a brutal chapter in human history, and to raise awareness of the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

As we mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, let us honour those who perished or suffered under slavery. Let us celebrate the gains of people of African descent. And let us press, every day and everywhere, to defend the dignity of every human being.

International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

(4 April 2018)

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General António Guterres' video message for the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, observed today:

An unprecedented volume of landmines and unexploded weapons contaminates rural and urban war zones, maiming and killing innocent civilians long after conflict has ended.

Mine action is vital. Roads cleared of explosive devices enable peacekeepers to patrol and protect civilians. And when fields are cleared and schools and hospitals are made safe, normal life can resume.

I urge all Governments to provide political and financial support to enable mine action work to continue, wherever it is needed. In our turbulent world, mine action is a concrete step towards peace.

Unipax

Global Revolution for New Humanism

Multimedia Project

UNITED PEACERS - WORLD COMMUNITY FOR A NEW HUMANISM

The Author of this project is Orazio Parisotto (Past President and Founder member of UNIPAX), thanks also to the essential contribute of the Master Silvio Amelio, weighty sculptor and humanist responsible of the "Artists for the Peace" Department of the Unipax and also its Ambassador at UN.

Orazio Parisotto and Silvio Amelio launch an important social-cultural and ethical initiative, with the cooperation of the UNIPAX, that involves more than 100.000 associations, institutions, famous bloggers and opinion leaders from all the Countries.

This social-cultural initiative draws attention to the problems and the emergencies of the humanity, also thanks to the young people, worried about them future, who ideally address their requests to the Head of Government of all world.

The main work of this project consists in a interactive book named "The Global Revolution for a New Humanism".

The book is also available in e-book size. Unipax backs the promotion of the book, trough the collection of the adhesions, sharing and participations to the proposals and initiatives launched towards the Book. The aim of the book is to provide incentives in order that a peaceful revolution (Gandhi style) could be launched trough a general project that prefigures a "New Democratic Institutional Architecture", a "New International Ethical Economy" and a "Worldwide Regulation for the Civil Cohabitation" at the international level, specifying the "Ways Out" from the global crisis.

The general project aims to involve about 100.000 NGO and other organisms committed in the safeguard of the human rights and of the peace at international level, the project will be presented to the Head of the Government with a maxi petition (developed in 10 points).

The aim of the maxi petition is to ask concrete answers to cope with the problems that trouble the humanity and in particular the problems connected with the environmental safeguard, the social justice, the crazy arms race, the dangers produced by the use of the new technologies, the promotion of the culture.

The achievement of the "Artistic Cultural Current of the New Humanism" is part integrant of this project. The artists, the men of culture and the leaders of the associations of the social utility (that with their commitment are already contributing, as peacemakers, for change) will arrange this Document. Together with the young people, they can define a "Artistic cultural Decalogue of the New Humanism" that if properly widespread may launch the creative imagination of the men of good will from all over the World and from every culture.

It's a multimedia global project which aims to provide to the citizens and specially to the young people, the "ways out" from the current difficulties and new hopes for a better future demanding also their direct cooperation.

The entire project will be promoted with a multimedia advertisement during 3 minutes and will be backed by a Documentary-movie during about 30 minutes.

All will be carried out in two languages (Italian and English).

The international project **UNITED PEACERS - WORLD COMMUNITY FOR A NEW HUMANISM** is underway, which aims to foster collaboration between all those citizens and those associations that form the huge army of peacekeepers committed to respect the fundamental rights of the man and peoples on all continents.