

# **WATER 'WARS' OR WATER 'WOES'?: WATER MANAGEMENT AS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**GEOFF DABELKO**

**ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND SECURITY PROGRAM**

**WOODROW WILSON CENTER**

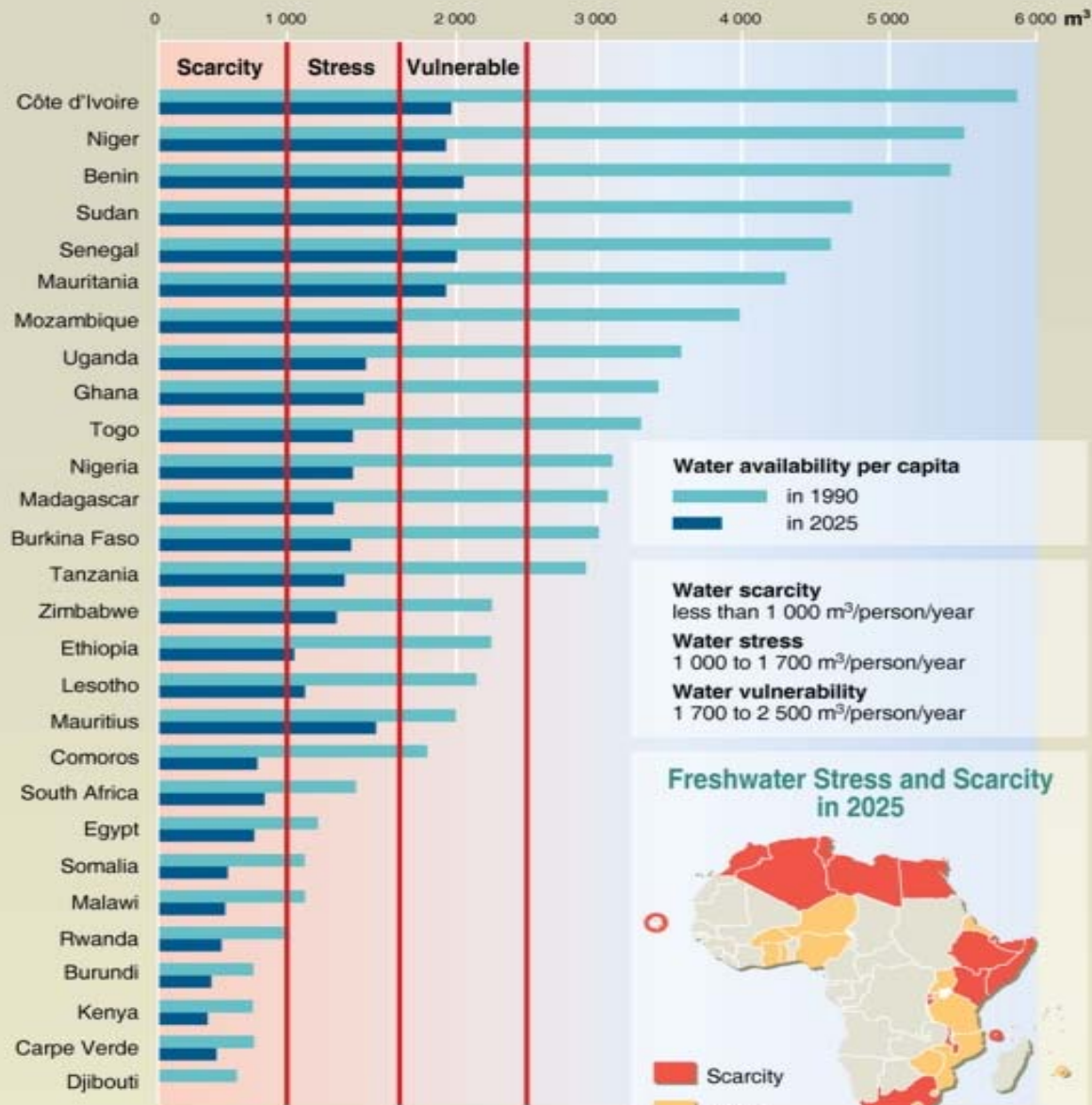
# The World's Water

- 97% of world's water is salty or brackish
- Of the remaining 3% that is freshwater, 99% is in inaccessible polar ice caps, glaciers, or deep aquifers
- 0.03% of total is easily accessible freshwater





# Water Availability



**1.2 billion without access  
to clean water**

**•2.6 billion without  
access to sanitation**

**Results:**

**•2.2 million deaths from  
diarrheas and other  
water-sanitation  
associated diseases**

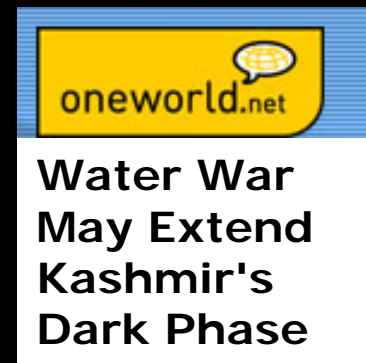
Source: *UN World Water Development Report 2003*





A black and white photograph showing two hands cupped together, holding water. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with water splashing around them. The background is dark, making the hands and water stand out. The image is split vertically by a thin white line.

**WATER WARS ARE COMING!**





"The next war in the Middle East will be fought over water, not politics."

- Boutros Boutros Ghali



" Wars of the next century will be over water, not oil"  
– Ismail Serageldin



# 263









## Nile Basin Initiative





## 1,800+ State-to-State Water Interactions in Transboundary Basins, 1946-1999



Source: Adapted from Wolf et al. 2003 in *Water Policy*

A close-up photograph of two hands cupped together under a running faucet. Water is dripping from the palms of the hands into a pool of water below. The image is split vertically by a thin white line. The text "THE REALITY OF WATER VIOLENCE" is overlaid in the center.

# **THE REALITY OF WATER VIOLENCE**



Irrigation and agricultural use

Vs.

Industrial Use

Vs.

Household Use



# Environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and climate change as underlying causes of conflict in dryland Sudan- including Darfur

- A 50 to 200 km southward shift of the boundary between desert and semi-desert has occurred since the 1930s
- Rainfall in Northern Darfur has dropped over 30% over 50 years
- Climate change and crop models forecast a drop of 20-70% in food production capacity in parts of the Sahel Belt by 2030





A black and white photograph showing two hands cupped together, holding water. The hands are positioned under a faucet, and water is visible splashing and flowing around them. The image is split vertically by a thin white line.

# **PRIVATIZATION AND ACCESS**








A close-up photograph of two hands, palms up, holding a small amount of water. The hands are positioned on either side of a vertical white line that runs down the center of the frame. The water is being held in the palms and is beginning to spill over the edges. The background is dark and out of focus.

**DAMS**





A black and white photograph showing two pairs of hands, likely belonging to children, cupping water. The hands are positioned symmetrically on either side of a central vertical line. Water is being held in the palms and is splashing slightly at the bottom. The background is dark, making the light-colored hands and water stand out.

# **THE PROMISE OF WATER PEACE**

# Water Management as Lifeline in Times of Conflict and Tension



- “Picnic Table” talks
- Good Water Makes Good Neighbors
- Nile Basin Initiative



# Environment as Essential Ingredient to Achieving Peace

Water didn't get you into this mess, but...

- Palestine-Israel
- India-Pakistan



Indus River

# Thanks and for More Information



Woodrow Wilson Center Web Page  
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp>

New Security Beat Blog  
<http://newsecuritybeat.blogspot.com>