

World Water Day 2020: Toolkit

Need some facts about World Water Day 2020? Want some messages to share or adapt for your networks? This is where you'll find them.

What is World Water Day?

World Water Day, held on 22 March every year since 1993, is an annual United Nations Observance focusing on the importance of freshwater.

What is the aim of World Water Day?

World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Who organizes World Water Day?

Every year, UN-Water — the UN's coordination mechanism on water and sanitation — sets the theme for World Water Day. In 2020 the focus is climate change, in 2021 valuing water and in 2022 groundwater. Previous themes can be found here:

<https://www.worldwaterday.org/2020-home/archive/>

What happens on World Water Day?

Ahead of the day, UN-Water launches a global public campaign via www.worldwaterday.org and on social media, giving people and organizations the tools to promote the campaign with their own audiences. Governments, organizations, companies, schools and many other actors also organize World Water Day activities.

The *UN World Water Development Report* is released on World Water Day, focusing on the same topic as the campaign and recommending policy direction to decision-makers.

What is World Water Day 2020 about?

World Water Day 2020 is about water and climate change – and how the two are inextricably linked. The campaign shows how our use of water will help reduce floods, droughts, scarcity and pollution, and will help fight climate change itself.

By adapting to the water effects of climate change, we will protect health and save lives. And, by using water more efficiently, we will reduce greenhouse gases.

What can I do to help?

Look below and you will find messages to use or adapt so you can promote the campaign among your networks.

What are the key campaign messages?

- We cannot afford to wait. Climate policy makers must put water at the heart of action plans.
- Water can help fight climate change. There are sustainable, affordable and scalable water and sanitation solutions.
- Everyone has a role to play. In our daily lives, there are surprisingly easy steps we can all take to address climate change.

Do you have social media-friendly messages I can use?

Yes! Please use the messages below, ideally alongside these short videos:
www.worldwaterday.org/2020-home/share/social-media-resources

We cannot afford to wait.

Climate policy makers must put water at the heart of action plans.
Water flows across sectors & borders. Working together to manage water more efficiently fights climate change, protects communities & business.

#WorldWaterDay www.worldwaterday.org

Water can help fight climate change.

- ◊ Wetlands soak up carbon dioxide from the air.
- ◊ Vegetation protects against flooding and erosion.
- ◊ Rainwater can be stored for dry periods.
- ◊ Wastewater can be reused.
- ◊ Climate-smart agriculture.

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Everyone can do something to fight climate change.

Choose one thing today:

- ◊ Take a five minute shower.
- ◊ Choose a plant-based meal.
- ◊ Turn off sleeping tech.
- ◊ Don't throw away edible food.
- ◊ Shop sustainably.

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What is the rationale behind the key campaign messages?

- **“We cannot afford to wait. Climate policy makers must put water at the heart of action plans.”**

Acting now. Uncertainty about the future cannot be an excuse for inaction today; if the world is to limit global temperature increases to well below 2°C, we must act immediately.¹

¹ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

Considering water as part of the solution. Improved water management is an essential component of successful climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.²

Improving water management practices can help increase climate resilience, improve ecosystem health, and reduce the risk of water-related disasters.³

Ensuring transboundary cooperation in adaptation is needed to address climate impacts that cross national boundaries and to improve regional cooperation.⁴

Rethinking financing. Climate finance for water resource management supports community climate resilience, job creation and helps to improve sustainable development outcomes.⁵

Find out more: [UN-Water Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water](#).

- **“Water can help fight climate change. There are sustainable, affordable and scalable water and sanitation solutions.”**

Improving carbon storage. Peatlands cover about 3% of the world’s land surface but store at least twice as much carbon as all of Earth’s forests. Mangrove soils can sequester up to three or four times more carbon than terrestrial soils. Protecting and expanding these types of environments can have a major impact on climate change.⁶

Protecting natural buffers. Coastal mangroves and wetlands are effective and inexpensive natural barriers to flooding, extreme weather events and erosion.⁷

Harvesting rainwater. Rainwater capture is particularly useful in regions with uneven rainfall distribution to build resilience to shocks and ensure supplies for dry periods.⁸

Adopting climate-smart agriculture Practising conservation agriculture to improve soil organic matter (needed for the soil to retain water), reducing post-harvest losses and food waste, and transforming waste into a source of nutrients or biofuels/biogas can address both food security and climate change.⁹

Reusing wastewater. Unconventional water resources, such as regulated treated wastewater, can be used for irrigation and industrial and municipal purposes.¹⁰

Find out more about ongoing projects and initiatives: www.worldwaterday.org/2020-home/learn

² UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

³ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁴ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁵ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁶ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁷ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁸ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

⁹ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

¹⁰ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

- “Everyone has a role to play. It is surprising how many water actions anyone, anywhere can take to address climate change.”

Hundreds of thousands of people are taking individual action on climate change as part of the UN’s #ActNow campaign. Here are five changes we can all make today:

Take five minute showers: Water scarcity already affects four out of ten people. With 80% of wastewater never being treated, taking shorter showers is a great way to save this precious resource.¹¹

Eat more plant-based meals: Dietary changes, featuring plant-based foods and sustainable animal-sourced food, could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 8.0 gigatonnes a year of carbon dioxide equivalent.¹²

Don’t throw away edible food: An estimated 1/3 of all food produced globally is lost or goes to waste.¹³ Reducing your food wastage reduces demand on agriculture which is one of the biggest water consumers.

Turn off tech: Currently 90% of power generation is water-intensive.¹⁴ By powering down our devices when we’re not using them, the less energy needs to be produced.

Shop sustainably: A typical pair of jeans takes 10,000 litres of water to produce, equal to what a person drinks in 10 years.¹⁵ Sourcing our goods from responsible sources can have a big impact on the consumption of water and other essential resources.

Discover lots more simple ways to make a difference to climate change:

www.un.org/en/actnow

Some more facts

- Today, 1 in 3 people – around 2.2 billion – live without safe drinking water. (WHO/UNICEF 2019)¹⁶
- By 2050, up to 5.7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce for at least one month a year, creating unprecedented competition for water. (UNESCO 2018)¹⁷
- Climate-resilient water supply and sanitation could save the lives of more than 360,000 infants every year. (UN 2018)¹⁸

¹¹ ActNow – UN campaign: www.un.org/en/actnow

¹² IPCC (2019), *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report*: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srcccl/>

¹³ FAO (2011): <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/en/>

¹⁴ UNESCO (2014), *UN World Water Development Report: Water and Energy*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2014-water-energy/>

¹⁵ ActNow – UN campaign: www.un.org/en/actnow

¹⁶ WHO/UNICEF (2019): Joint Monitoring Programme 2019 update report: *Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene*: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-report-2019/en/

¹⁷ UNESCO (2018), *UN World Water Development Report 2018: Nature-based Solutions for Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2018/>

¹⁸ UN Secretary-General’s remarks on climate change, September 2018, New York: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-10/secretary-generals-remarks-climate-change-delivered>

- If we limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, compared to 2°C, we could cut climate-induced water stress by up to 50%. (UN-Water 2019)¹⁹
- Extreme weather – expected to increase in frequency and intensity because of climate change – has caused more than 90% of major disasters over the last decade. (UNDRR 2015)²⁰
- By 2040, global energy demand is projected to increase by over 25% and water demand is expected to increase by more than 50%, primarily from manufacturing, electricity generation and households. (International Energy Agency 2018/UNESCO 2018)^{21,22}

Where can I find out more?

- World Water Day 2020 website: <https://www.worldwaterday.org>
- UN World Water Development Report 2020, from 23 March: https://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/world-water-development-report/
- UN-Water Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

¹⁹ UN-Water (2019): *Policy Brief on Climate Change and Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-policy-brief-on-climate-change-and-water/>

²⁰ UNDRR (2015), *The Human Cost of Weather-Related Disasters, 1995-2015*: https://www.unisdr.org/2015/docs/climatechange/COP21_WeatherDisastersReport_2015_FINAL.pdf

²¹ International Energy Agency (2018), *World Energy Outlook 2018*: <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2018>

²² UNESCO (2018), *UN World Water Development Report 2018: Nature-based Solutions for Water*: <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2018/>