



World Water Day and World Meteorological Day 2020

Joint message

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This year, World Water Day and World Meteorological Day share the same theme: “Water and Climate Change”.

The two are inextricably linked. We feel the effects of climate change mostly through water: more floods, more droughts, and more pollution. At the same time, we can tackle climate change through water: protecting wetlands reduces greenhouse gas emissions, ensuring small-scale farmers have access to water improves their resilience to climate change, and safe reuse of wastewater reduces demand for more freshwater. As the need for solutions increases, so do the economic opportunities to develop new approaches, technologies and industries.

Turning a risk into an opportunity requires putting water at the heart of climate action plans and coordinating across borders. All sectors of society must mobilize, and everyone has a role to play.

This year’s World Water Day and World Meteorological Day, on 22 and 23 March respectively, will be celebrated under extraordinary circumstances. The UN family has come together to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, with each institution playing its part. It is also our responsibility to highlight the importance of following international and national authorities’ guidelines to prevent the virus from spreading.

One of the most effective ways to slow down transmission is to wash or sanitize our hands. However, globally three billion people do not have access to even basic hand washing facilities at home. Lack of access to clean water affects vulnerability to disease and ill health. It is especially acute among those living in extreme poverty in rural areas, as well as in informal urban settlements.

Access to safe water is an essential component of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation.

It is for this reason that UN-Water Members and Partners are committing to the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, which will unify the international community and deliver fast results in countries at an increased scale as part of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030. WMO is working to deliver this through a water and climate coalition that focuses on finances, data and information, governance, capacity development, and innovation.

This World Water Day and World Meteorological Day, as we focus on responsibility, safety and solidarity in the light of the pandemic, we want to recognize the countries, people and businesses that are taking action on climate change, water and sanitation. They prove that dramatic gains can be achieved in just a few years. We call on every sector of society to join them. Together, we can accelerate progress in an area that will allow humans and the planet to thrive for many generations to come.