

WORLD WATER DAY – 2021

VALUING WATER



2021 Valuing water

Humanity, and life in general, thrive on the face of the planet due to fresh water, and from the beginning of the story we must remember that this represents only a tiny part of the total water resource of the Earth. It is important to understand that “water means different things to different people” all around the world. In different societies water will have very different values and from here starts the story of this day.

Every year on 22 March we celebrate the World Water Day, this is the 28th edition, we do this hoping to bring awareness on a global level regarding the problems that are faced by various people on the planet because of water.

Starting from the period of the Roman Empire, Europe valued clean waters for its everyday use, remember the aqueducts. Christianity -by the holy water - and modern society in general, treasures the water’s cleaning power and relies on the water’s power to transport our waste out of our cities. We could say generally that “We value water!”

Water is a very peculiar liquid, it is odorless, transparent, we can find it in all three states of matter, and it also has autocleaning power (As hearsay says, it is clean after only flowing over three rocks ...), it can be found in the highest part of the atmosphere and in the deepest tranches of the ocean, it is part of all living things. In history, wars have been lost and others have been fought because of it.

We have to understand that our society is crossing cross roads in the water resources question. We must congratulate modern society for its water consumption decline (USA water use /capita 2200 m³/year in 80’s and around only 1300 m³/year in 2017), but the global differences (India water use /capita 630 m³/year in 80’s and around only 560 m³/year in 2017) are still too high, and on the rise, still there are many countries in the world where the yearly water use /capita is measured in tens of cubic meters not thousands (AQUASTAT).

Modern societies are somehow shielded by this problem, but I remember not so long ago in my childhood, when I had to make a two-km hike for drinking water, I valued that water differently. Our society and life developed very quickly, but we should not forget that “the average distance that women and children walk for water in Africa and Asia is six kilometers” (Water for the Ages), we need to let the others catch up. Human society development can be measured by the way it uses its water, it” can mean health, hygiene, dignity and productivity”.

There are five perspectives regarding this year “World Water Day” theme, valuing water:

1. Valuing water sources – natural water resources and ecosystems

2. Valuing water infrastructure – storage, treatment and supply
3. Valuing water services – drinking water, sanitation and health services.
4. Valuing water as an input to production and socio-economic activity – food and agriculture, energy and industry, business and employment.
5. Valuing socio-cultural aspects of water – recreational, cultural and spiritual attributes.

Water is essential for the survival and productivity of all life and ecosystems. The world is currently off-track to meeting the targets of Sustainable Development Goal SDG 6, and with only 10 years to go to achieve the 2030 SDGs, we need an immediate and integrated global response to rapidly improve progress (www.unwater.org). Globally, water resources are under great pressure due to the growing population, increasing demands of agriculture and industry, and the worsening impacts of climate change. Valuing water correctly is key to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We have to understand that we are living a global water crisis of which we are not aware! However, there is still hope! But only if human society gets around and works together, governments, businesses, universities, and citizens around the world must wake up to this water challenge and begin to take action.

Treasuring water!

Csaba HORVÁTH, PhD. Lecturer