

# GLASGOW DECLARATION FOR FAIR WATER FOOTPRINTS

## KEY MESSAGES



**Our water footprints – the water used to produce the food, clothes and goods we consume – shape water and climate security for millions of people across the globe.**

- ✦ Over 40% of Europe's water footprint lies outside its borders and 50% of the UK's footprint is from unsustainable sources.
- ✦ Your glass of morning orange juice uses 200 litres of water to produce, a pair of jeans takes 8,000 litres, and a mobile phone needs a staggering 12,000 litres

**We all have an urgent obligation and opportunity to harness our water footprints so that they 'do no harm', and 'do good' for people, ecosystems, and climate resilience.**

- ✦ Too often our economic activity, global supply chains and consumption patterns make things worse. Evidence shows how agribusiness is sucking water-tables dry to irrigate crops, while textile factories and mines pollute the water sources that sustain communities.<sup>1</sup>
- ✦ The multinational companies and investors behind them influence as much as 70% of the world's water use and employ one in five of the global workforce. Much of this takes place in the catchments, communities and cities which face the greatest water and climate challenges on earth.

**The Glasgow Declaration for Fair Water Footprints is a ground-breaking, urgent and a vitally important milestone which can transform how water is used in our global economy for good.**

- ✦ The Declaration has been developed in a unique partnership comprised of governments from the global north and south, the private sector, financial institutions and civil society.
- ✦ Simply reducing our water footprint isn't always the answer. Where water is used responsibly, we create much needed jobs and economic opportunity.
- ✦ The priority is to ensure a fair water footprint which builds local resilience by ensuring: zero pollution; sustainable water withdrawals; full access to water supply, sanitation, and hygiene; protection and working with nature; and effective planning for drought and floods
- ✦ The Declaration will help deliver SDG6 by 2030, enabling millions of people to become more water secure and climate resilient, and importantly, it will demonstrate the leadership and create the pathways for systemic change that others will follow.

**Declaration signatories will be accountable for decisive and specific action to improve water management and to secure a fair water footprint by 2030.**

- ✦ Companies will demonstrate no negative water impacts and maximise their positive influence on water within and around the farms, factories and facilities which supply them.
- ✦ Investors and banks will target financial support for responsible water use and will cease investment for activities which pollute or abuse the water environment.
- ✦ Governments will take action to incentivise responsible water use in the economy, and to make good water stewardship by business and within investor portfolios mandatory.

<sup>1</sup> For example see: <https://waterwitness.org/news-events/2021/7/12/how-fair-is-fashion-water-footprint> and <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5baa3175bfba3e44386d68a5/t/5c0fad5e40ec9ab15f9b7f8e/1544531311504/Drop+by+Drop.pdf>

- ✦ NGOs, researchers, and civil society will track, support and hold water users to account for responsible water use.
- ✦ Citizens will be able to demand and expect a fair water footprint for their families, their communities, cities and countries.

### **Transformative action is already in motion. Many of the tools, systems and best practise needed to deliver a fair water footprint are already in place.**

- ✦ Standards to ensure good water stewardship and respect for the human right to water at farms and factories are available, as are financial disclosure and reporting mechanisms.
- ✦ Detailed plans and accountability mechanisms to turn the Declaration into action on the ground and system change will be published in early 2022.

### **All interested parties are invited to join this COP26 initiative and to mobilise the leadership and partnership needed to shape a more resilient, just and water-secure world.**

- ✦ **Founding signatories to the Declaration include:** the governments of the United Kingdom, Malawi, Finland, Peru, Panama and Madagascar, companies including Danone, Diageo, Unilever, Sainsbury's, investment banks Actiam and Edentree, and NGO's including Water Witness, CDP, WaterAid, Africa's Civil Society Network for Water and Sanitation, Water Integrity Network, Water Footprint Network, CEPES and Baseflow, together with the Global Water Partnership, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and Sanitation and Water for All.

#### **THE UNEQUIVOCAL CASE FOR ACTION:**

- ✦ Continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, global monsoon precipitation, and the severity of wet and dry events.<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ Effects of climate change have increased the risks of disasters like droughts and floods, as well as serious food insecurity and malnutrition primarily impacting children and the most vulnerable.<sup>2</sup>
- ✦ Human activity is destroying natural freshwater and marine ecosystems, with inland waters, wetlands, and freshwater ecosystems showing the greatest and most rapidly accelerating rates of decline.<sup>3</sup>
- ✦ Clean water and sanitation are the first line of defence for a successful Covid-19 response and recovery plans need to be resilient, green, and inclusive.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ Progress towards water-related SDGs and targets is severely off-track and efforts need to quadruple if universal access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene are to be achieved.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ The financial gap to reach SDG 6 to 'Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030' will require a tripling of investment, or an additional US\$1.7 trillion, requiring a whole-of-society partnership between governments and diverse stakeholders, international cooperation, high-level political commitment, multi-stakeholder platforms, and people-centred solutions.

<sup>2</sup> IPCC (2021) 'Climate Change 2021. The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change', Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Brondizio, E.S.; Settele, J.; Díaz, S. and Ngo, H.T. (eds) (2019) Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,

<sup>4</sup> United Nations (2021) 'Letter summary of the High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the Water-Related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda', New York.