

The global call to action for sustainable and fair water footprints: A COP 26 Initiative

To **win the race to resilience** and to **harness the transformative power of water** for: education, health and wellbeing; livelihoods, jobs, and inclusive growth; climate adaptation and clean energy; biodiversity and nature-based solutions join our **call to action** and **global effort for sustainable and fair water footprints by 2030**, within which there is:

- 💧 **No pollution:** Pollution of water and the aquatic environment is eliminated through effective wastewater reduction, treatment, and pollution control.
- 💧 **Sustainable water withdrawal:** Abstraction and use is within the limits of sustainability and prioritises needs for human health, livelihoods, and ecosystems.
- 💧 **Protection of nature:** Ecosystems and landscapes are valued, protected and well-managed, and nature-based solutions are secured.
- 💧 **Access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene:** The needs of the workforce are met, and effective action is underway to reach communities in need.
- 💧 **Resilience to drought, floods and water conflict:** via appropriate plans, policies, governance, investment, collaboration, and legal compliance.

The **water footprint of humanity** connects our globalised economy to the global water crisis and climate emergency. It **connects the consumption of embedded water in products and services** – from food, clothes, cars, to computers – **to water and climate impacts in sometimes distant places of production**. It can also be **the key to positive change and the delivery of effective, inclusive, and nature-based solutions**.

Where water is used sustainably, **our water footprints can be a force for progress, supporting jobs, growth and resilience** to disease and climate shocks. Where water is used irresponsibly, our water footprints increase water stress, biodiversity loss and make millions of people more vulnerable through degradation and depletion of river basins, lakes, wetlands and aquifers and undermining of the human right to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Responsible stewardship of water can ensure that our water footprints are sustainable, resilient and fair, and that they contribute to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals. Credible water stewardship by companies, factories and farms is stimulating action for climate resilience and water security in cities, communities and catchments across the world. **But the scale and pace of uptake is inadequate** - far too much of our water footprint remains unsustainable. **That needs to change.**

This global call to action is a rallying cry to all water uses, decision makers and stakeholders in governments, businesses, investors, civil society and citizens. Over the coming months - towards and beyond COP26, we invite you to join us, to **come together, to plan and to act decisively to transform the way water is used throughout our globalised economy**, for good. Join our call, be the change.