

Water Diplomacy

International Parliamentarian Union
Science for Peace Schools
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GENEVA
**WATER
HUB**

Centre of Competence on
Water for Peace



Water: Spare it. Share it. for Peace.



Summary

Topics covered

1. Understanding water

2. Understanding water & conflict for diplomacy

3. Water diplomacy

Messages for parliamentarians

- ✧ It is simple to deny water to others
- ✧ Policy responses are best (diplomacy)
- ✧ Social science can help:
 - ✧ Unfair water-sharing causes great harm;
 - ✧ Understanding power asymmetry can help water diplomacy;
 - ✧ National and International Water Law is a useful guide.

1. Understanding Water

2. How much water do you use for:

1. Where does your water come from?

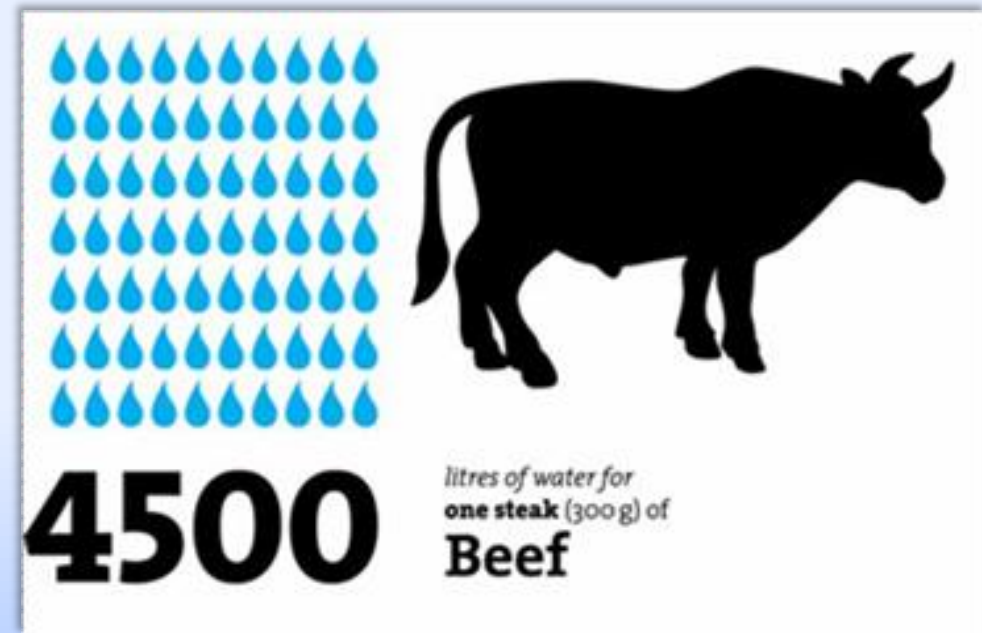
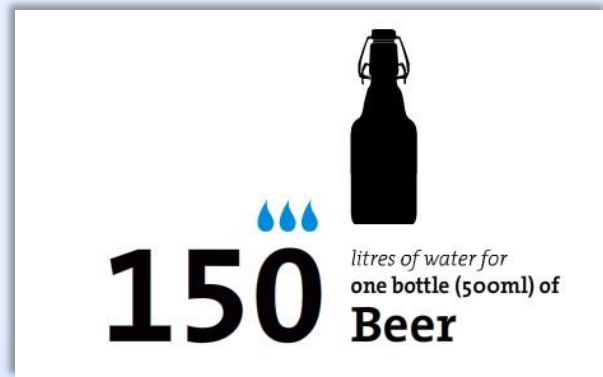
[m3 per person per year]

1
100
1,000

Drinking?
At Home?
for Food?

1-5
10,000

your livelihood (parliamentarian)?
(farmer)



Who's to blame? climate change... or policy?



Aral Sea (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/4/100402-aral-sea-story/>

'Man is a strange thing. He makes deserts bloom, and lakes die' - Gil Stern

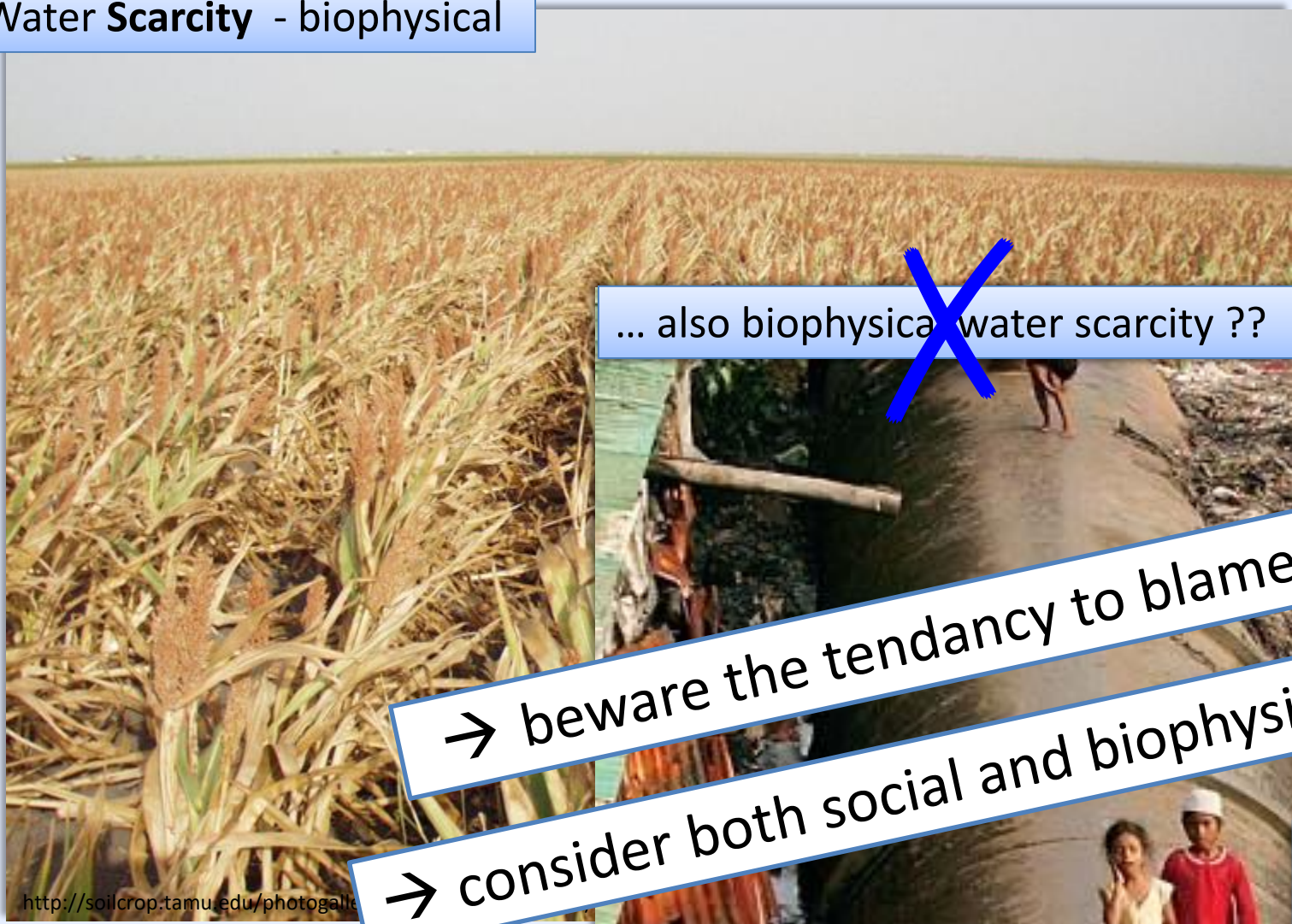


Lake Urmia (Iran)

<http://www.silkroadartgallery.com/portfolios/the-lake-on-its-last-legs/>



Dead Sea (Jordan, West Bank, Israel)



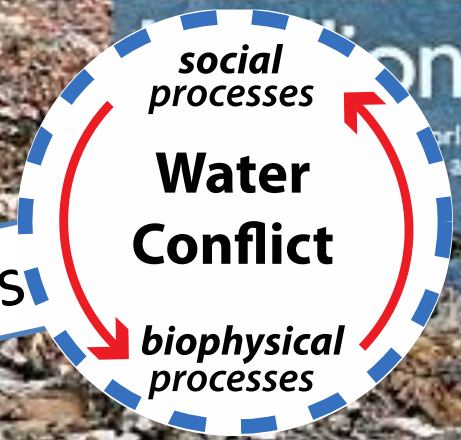
... also biophysical water scarcity ??



Social water scarcity

→ beware the tendency to blame nature

→ consider both social and biophysical elements

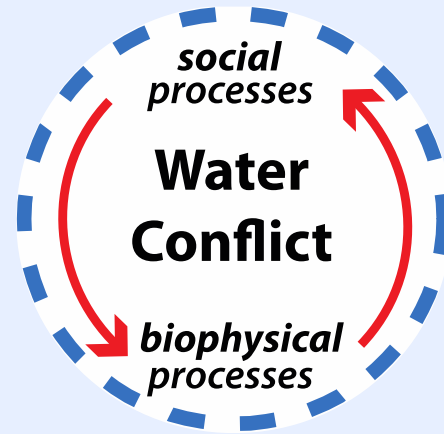


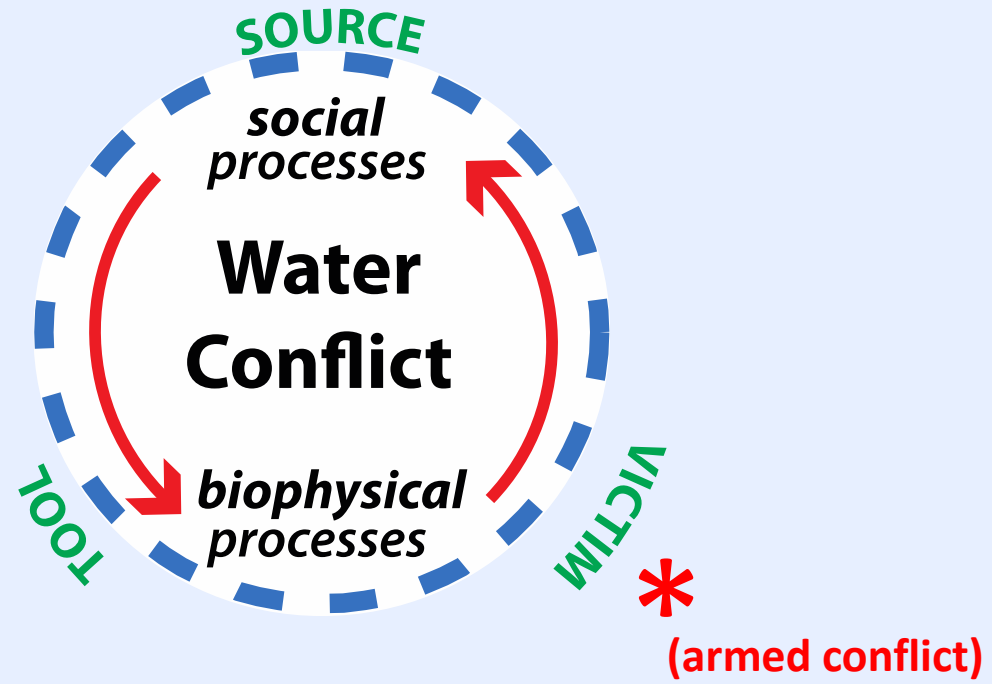
Discrimination based on wealth / caste / religion / nationality



<http://soilcrop.tamu.edu/photogallery>

2. Understanding Water & Conflict





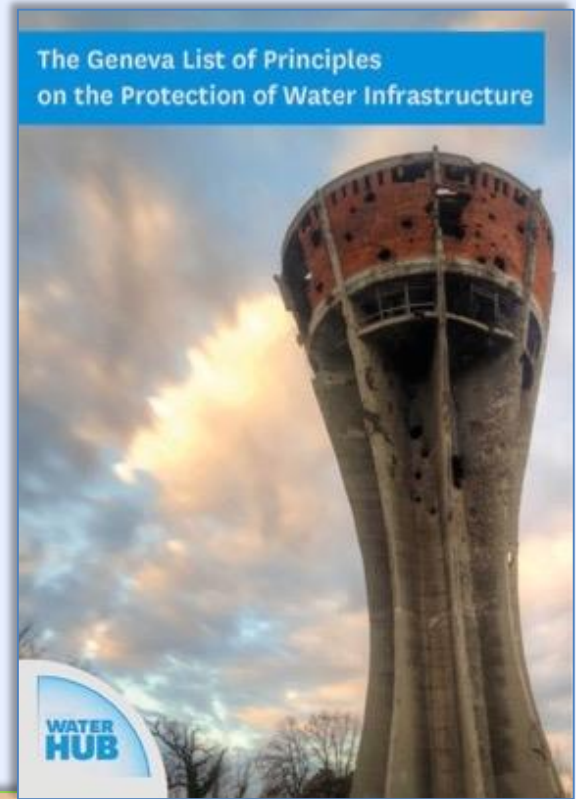
Water as **victim** of armed conflict



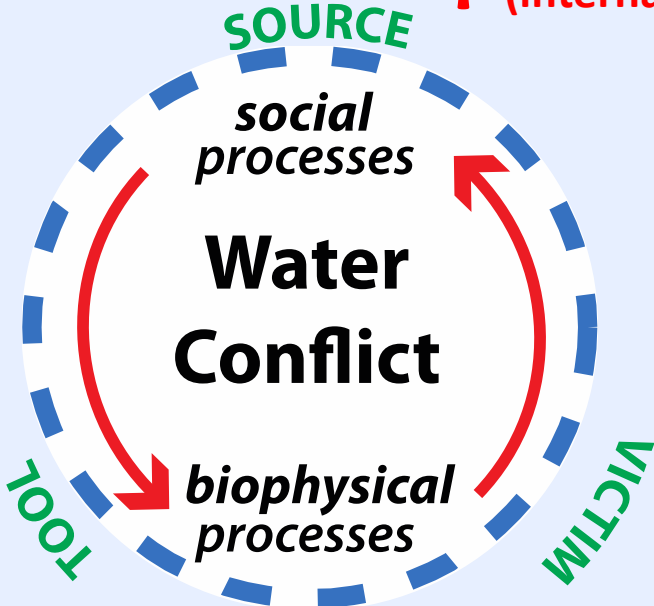
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Yser



Tom Stoddart/
Getty Images



* (international water conflicts)



Tigris / Euphrates

Jordan

Agreements skewed, outdated
Diplomacy partial
IWL pushed away
Who suffers

Agreements missing
Little diplomacy
IWL ?
Who suffers

Nile

Agreements skewed, outdated
Diplomacy patchy
IWL informs
Who suffers

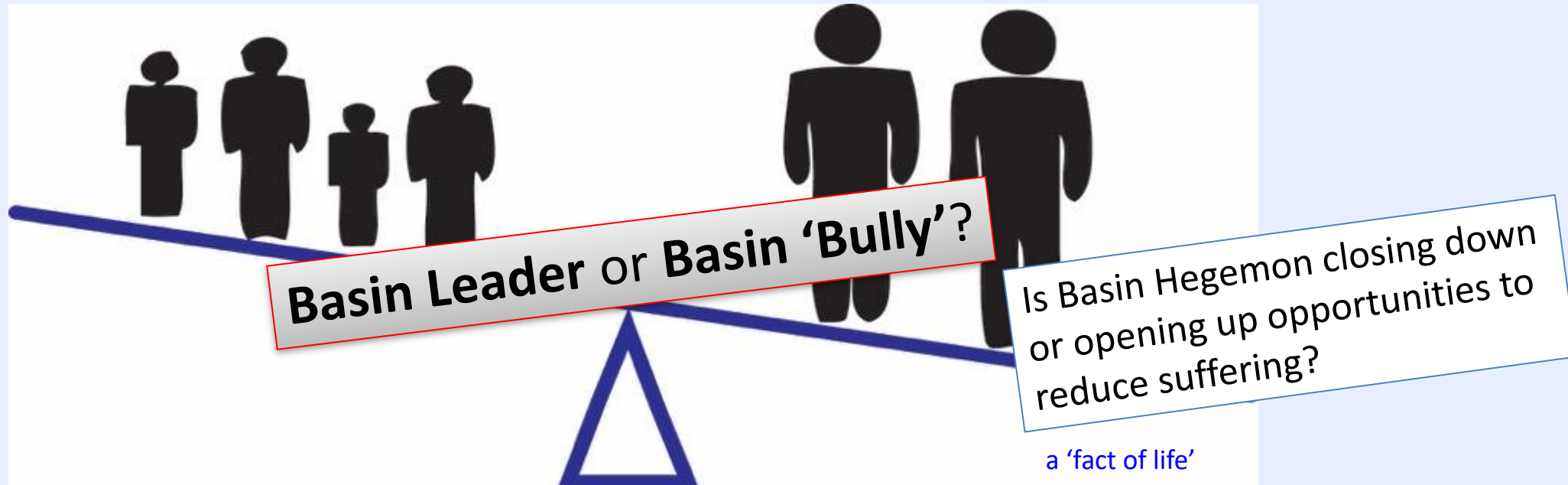
TBW Arrangements reflect
power asymmetry.



3. Water Diplomacy

Power asymmetry is a fact of life...

... but the river hegemon can choose to *lead* or to *dominate*.



[Forms of Power:

Hard Power (upstream position, military, economy)

Soft Power (ideology, allies, agenda-setting, discourse, etc)]

→ ***Level the players***

e.g. **Capacity-building**

→ especially *negotiations* and *lawyers*
(not just techno-managerial capacity)

→ ***Level the playing field***

Objective standards / Norms

e.g. **Human Right to Water,
International Water Law**

→ 1997 UN Watercourses Convention
'no significant harm';
'prior notification';
'equitable and reasonable use'



A. Support of 1997 UNWConvention / 1992 Helsinki Convention

entry into force 2014

Austria	18 Mar 1992	25 Jul 1996
Azerbaijan		3 Aug 2000 a
Belarus		29 May 2003 a
Belgium	18 Mar 1992	8 Nov 2000
Bosnia and Herzegovina		3 Dec 2009 a
Bulgaria	18 Mar 1992	28 Oct 2003
Chad		22 Feb 2018 a
Croatia		8 Jul 1996 a
Czech Republic		12 Jun 2000 a
Denmark ²	18 Mar 1992	28 May 1997 AA
Estonia	18 Mar 1992	16 Jun 1995
European Union	18 Mar 1992	14 Sep 1995 AA
Finland	18 Mar 1992	21 Feb 1996 A
France ³	18 Mar 1992	30 Jun 1998 AA
Germany	18 Mar 1992	30 Jan 1995
Ghana		22 Jun 2020 a
Greece	18 Mar 1992	6 Sep 1996
Guinea-Bissau		14 Jun 2021 a
Hungary	18 Mar 1992	2 Sep 1994 AA
Italy	18 Mar 1992	23 May 1996
Kazakhstan		11 Jan 2001 a
Latvia	18 Mar 1992	10 Dec 1996
Liechtenstein		19 Nov 1997 a
Lithuania	18 Mar 1992	28 Apr 2000
Luxembourg	20 May 1992	7 Jun 1994
Montenegro		23 Jun 2014 a
Netherlands ⁴	18 Mar 1992	14 Mar 1995 A
North Macedonia		28 Jul 2015 a
Norway	18 Sep 1992	1 Apr 1993 AA
Poland	18 Mar 1992	15 Mar 2000
Portugal ⁵	9 Jun 1992	9 Dec 1994
Republic of Moldova		4 Jan 1994 a
Romania	18 Mar 1992	31 May 1995
Russian Federation	18 Mar 1992	2 Nov 1993 A
Senegal		31 Aug 2018 a
Serbia		27 Aug 2010 a
Slovakia		7 Jul 1999 a
Slovenia		13 Apr 1999 a
Spain	18 Mar 1992	16 Feb 2000
Sweden	18 Mar 1992	5 Aug 1993
Switzerland	18 Mar 1992	23 May 1995
Togo		28 Sep 2021 a
Turkmenistan		29 Aug 2012 a
Ukraine		8 Oct 1999 a

B. Lack of interest (stuck in government)

C. Opposition / downplaying IWL (who benefits from status quo)

International (water) law is imperfect.
 But in absence of agreed standards and principles,
 space for conflict resolution is **closed down**.
 IWL may be the least worst way forward!
 + Coherence with national law crucial.



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Thank-you.

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