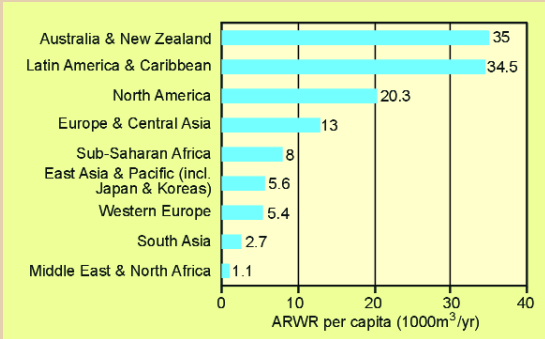


# Water Poverty in Dry Areas

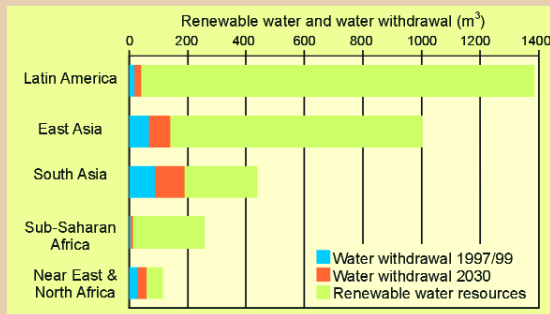
Most countries in the dry areas are facing increasing water scarcity. In some cases, such as Jordan, per capita availability of fresh water has already dropped to 170 m<sup>3</sup>/yr, well below the internationally recognized water scarcity standard of 500 m<sup>3</sup>/yr. The Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa are the world's most water-scarce regions.



## Actual renewable water resources per capita by region

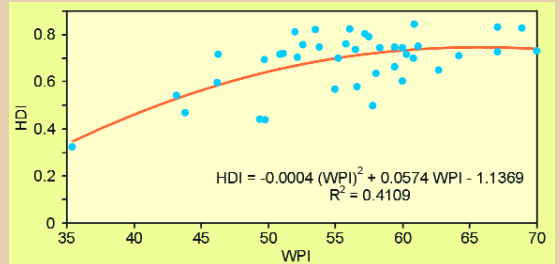
Source: FAO/Aquastat data for 1998-2002

Future projections of population growth indicate a further decrease in per capita water resources. In the Middle East and North Africa, for example, current per capita renewable water resources (1100 m<sup>3</sup>/yr) are projected to drop to 550 m<sup>3</sup>/yr by 2050, which will trigger a higher water withdrawal rate with both ecological and human livelihood implications.



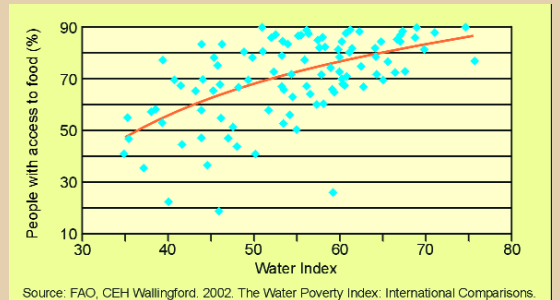
## Irrigation and water resources per capita, 1997-99 to 2030

The Water Poverty Index (WPI) is a reflection of the fact that in a number of countries water resources are misused and not managed sustainably, contributing to scarcity. The positive association between the WPI and the Human Development Index (HDI) suggests that water poverty contributes greatly to the low HDI of poor countries in dry areas.



## Scatter diagram of Water Poverty Index (WPI) and HDI for non-tropical dry-area countries

Water scarcity and quality are potentially serious threats to food security and health in dry areas. There is a direct relationship between access to water and access to food and feed security. The proportion of the population without access to reliable, uncontaminated water is as high as 78%.



## Access to water and food in developing countries and countries in transition

Source: FAO, CEH Wallingford, 2002

Irrigation accounts for 80–90% of all water used in dry areas. However, increasing competition for water among various sectors will likely reduce the share for agriculture to about 50% by 2050.