

Physical vs. Economic water scarcity



Physical access to water is limited. When the demand outstrips the land's ability to provide the needed water you have physical scarcity.



Economic water scarcity exists when a population does not have the necessary monetary means to utilize an adequate source of water. Economic water scarcity is about a unequal distribution of resources for many reasons, including political and ethnic conflict.

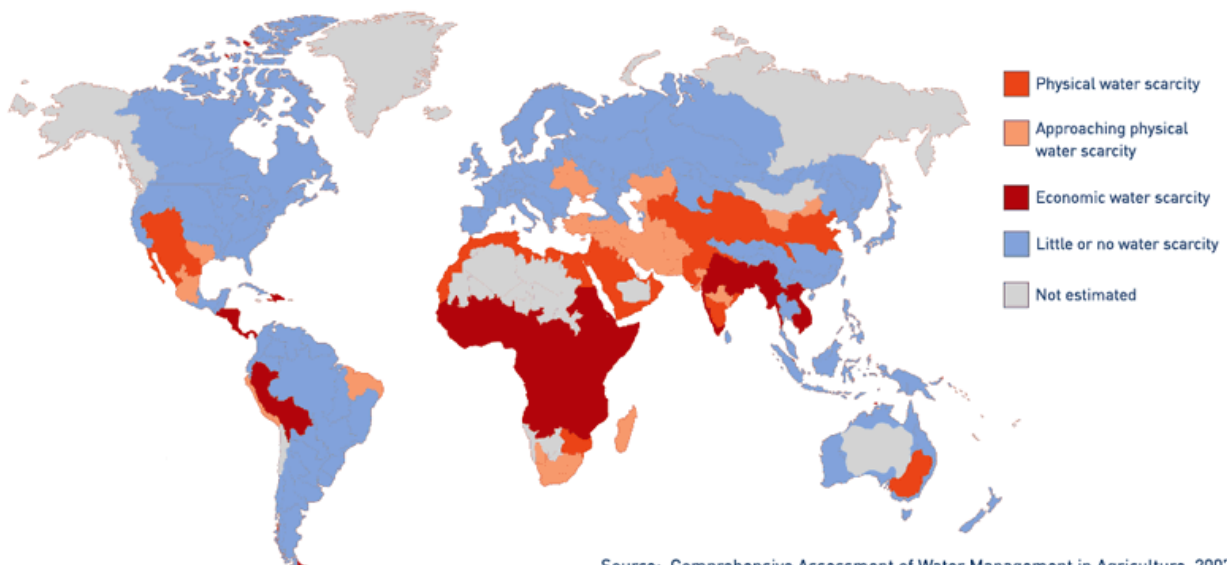
AREAS OF PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC WATER SCARCITY

Physical water scarcity
water resources development is approaching or has exceeded sustainable limits). More than 75% of the river flows are withdrawn for agriculture, industry, and domestic purposes (accounting for recycling of return flows). This definition—relating water availability to water demand—implies that dry areas are not necessarily water scarce.

Approaching physical water scarcity. More than 60% of river flows are withdrawn. These basins will experience physical water scarcity in the near future.

Economic water scarcity
(human, institutional, and financial capital limit access to water even though water in nature is available locally to meet human demands). Water resources are abundant relative to water use, with less than 25% of water from rivers withdrawn for human purposes, but malnutrition exists.

Little or no water scarcity.
Abundant water resources relative to use, with less than 25% of water from rivers withdrawn for human purposes.



Source: Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture, 2007