

On World Water Day, we ask: “why waste water?”



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As World Water Day is observed across the world on 22 March, Prof. Jesse N.K. Mugambi reflects: “The great challenge is how to reduce the cost of treating wastewater, especially in the equatorial and tropical zones.”

If the cost of treating wastewater exceeds the benefit, there must be other justifications for such expenditures, continues Mugambi. “Under such circumstances, reducing the use of fresh water to the bare minimum is a prudent policy.”

While the World Health Organisation recommends a bare minimum of 20 litres per capita consumption of water, some developed countries use up to 400 litres per capita.

World Water Day - designated by the United Nations - is observed by governments, non-governmental organisations, communities, churches and individuals who want to call attention to the global water crisis. All the rivers and lakes of the world comprise only 0.3 percent of the fresh water available on our planet for human consumption. The remaining 99.7 percent is found in the oceans, soils, icecaps, and floating in the atmosphere.

As part of its ongoing pilgrimage of justice and peace, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been communicating the message that the global water crisis is not only an issue of scarcity but an issue of justice. The WCC Ecumenical Water Network has been engaged in a Lenten campaign called “Seven Weeks for Water,” which this year is focusing on Africa.

As part of the campaign, seven theological reflections on water justice have been written by African theologians and academicians. About half of the world's population without access to safe drinking water and about one-third of world's population without access to adequate sanitation facilities come from sub-Saharan Africa.

[World Water Day 2017](#)

[Reflection on ‘Why waste water?’](#)

[Seven Weeks for Water](#)