

INTERNATIONAL DESALINATION ASSOCIATION

IDA STATEMENT SUBMITTED TO THE UN 2023 WATER CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT 24 OCTOBER 2022

According to the UN report "Unconventional water resources" [1], water scarcity is recognized as a critical challenge to sustainable development and as a potential cause of social unrest and conflict within and between countries. As stated in the report, conventional water provisioning approaches that rely on snowfall, rainfall, river runoff, and easily accessible groundwater are insufficient to meet growing freshwater demand in arid and semi-arid areas.

Water-scarce countries need a radical rethinking of water resource planning and management that includes the creative exploitation of a growing set of viable but unconventional water resources for food production, livelihoods, ecosystems, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development and conservation.

A steadily downward trend of desalination costs coupled with increasing costs of conventional water treatment and water reuse driven by more stringent regulatory requirements are expected to accelerate the current trend of reliance on the oceans as an attractive and competitive water source. These trends will likely continue and further establish seawater desalination as a reliable drought-proof alternative for coastal communities worldwide in the next 15 years.

Utilizing unconventional water resources is an emerging opportunity to narrow the water demand-supply gap. In the "UN World Water Development Report 2021: Valuing water"[2], desalination is presented as "one of the technological options that can provide an additional source of fresh water for irrigation, especially in water-stressed coastal areas, underlying how thanks to decreasing costs, the supply of desalinated water for agriculture is most likely to be cost-effective in a tightly controlled environment, using agricultural practices with the most efficient water use, crops with high productivity, and renewable energies". In particular, seawater desalination provides a climate-independent and steady supply of high-quality water.

International Desalination Association (IDA, a non-profit organization associated with the Un system) can support United Nations in developing these technologies through research and development, capacity building, and better integration of desalination into existing IWRM systems.

Submitted on behalf of:

The International Desalination Association and its affiliated associations:

- 1. European Desalination Association
- 2. American Membrane Technology Association
- 3. Latin American Desalination Association
- 4. Caribbean Desalination Association
- 5. Australia Water Association
- 6. Spanish Desalination Association



INTERNATIONAL DESALINATION ASSOCIATION

- 7. Levant Desalination Association
- 8. Asia Pacific Desalination Association
- 9. Japanese Desalination Association
- 10. Water Science and Technology Association of the GCC
- 11. Pakistan Desalination Association
- 12. Indian Desalination Association
- 13. The Membrane Industry Association of China (MIAC)
- 14. Korea Desalination Plant Association
- 15. Singapore Water Association

ABOUT IDA

ESTABLISHED IN 1973, IDA IS An NGO with recognized consultative status by the United Nations ECOSOC and is a member of the UN Special Framework for Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) hosted by the UN FAO Land and Water Division.