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**Water conflicts: a risk for
international and internal peace**

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in collaboration with



“Conflict” is a natural part of human existence.....

SOMETHING ABOUT “CONFLICT”

What is “conflict”?

- A common definition of conflict comes from Lewis Coser, a sociologist, who defines social conflict as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources” (Coser, 1956, p.8). This definition highlights possible causes of conflict (values, beliefs, power, scarce status or resources).
- Another definition of conflict (Mitchell, 1981, p.17) refers to “any situation in which two or more social entities or ‘parties’ ... perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals.”

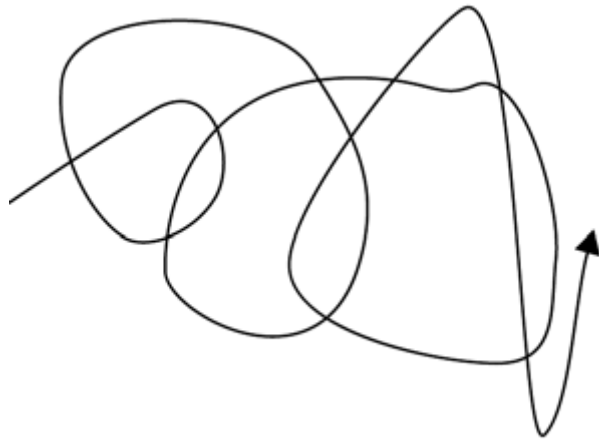
Negative or “natural”?

- Most people associate negative words or ideas with conflict – war, violence, anger, or hurt feelings.
- **Conflict is a natural part of human existence, and that the goal is to transform the destructive ways we deal with conflict to lead to more constructive outcomes.** Associating conflict with constructive outcomes generally changes our perspective to a more positive one when thinking about conflict.

Levels of conflict

- To begin with, we can understand conflicts at a number of *levels*. *Four levels are identified below*
- **1) Intra-personal conflict** refers to conflicts occurring within a person. Usually people need to work on their own inner struggles and issues in order to be constructive in social conflicts
- **2) Interpersonal conflict** refers to conflicts occurring between individuals or small groups of people.
- **3) Intra-group conflict** refers to those conflicts that happen within a particular group, whether it is a religious, ethnic, political or other type of identity group. It is important to be able to manage the conflicts within your own group, and be able to communicate with others within your group in order to build support for long-term peace processes.
- **4) Inter-group conflict** refers to conflicts occurring between large organised social or identity groups.

Conflict complexity...



- Conflicts involve many actors in processes that are usually not very straightforward.
- Sometimes conflicts escalate in intensity and violence, sometimes they de-escalate and we seem to make progress towards peace, and then often we fall back into violence before making a bit more progress towards peace

Water conflicts...in general

- “The wars of the next century will be about water” - Ismail Serageldin, World Bank Vice President in 1995

“My nation will never go to war again, except to protect its water resources”
- Egyptian President Anwar Sadat after signing the 1979 peace treaty with Israel



- “Water is the only reason that might lead me to war with the Jewish state” - King Hussein of Jordan
- Former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warned bluntly that the next war in the area will be over water.

Water conflicts...in general

"People generally regard 5 June 1967 as the day the Six-day war began. That is the official date. But, in reality, it started two-and-a-half years earlier, on the day Israel decided to act against the diversion of the Jordan."

- Ariel Sharon



Water conflicts...in general

- How is the use of water regulated in international law?

Water is a sovereign resource and therefore can be used and abused at will within your territory

– the Harmon Doctrine e.g. Turkey

Water conflicts...in general

“Neither Syria nor Iraq can lay claim to Turkey’s rivers, any more than Ankara could claim their oil...”

- former President of Turkey

Suleyman

Water conflicts...in general

- The 1966 International Law Association Helsinki Rules and the International Law Commission of the United Nations - we can draw some principles of Equitable Utilisation in international law:
 - **each riparian state in a shared basin is entitled to an equitable and reasonable share of the water in the region. Equitable does not mean equal.**
 - **Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas : use your property without injuring others**
 - **Notify and inform**

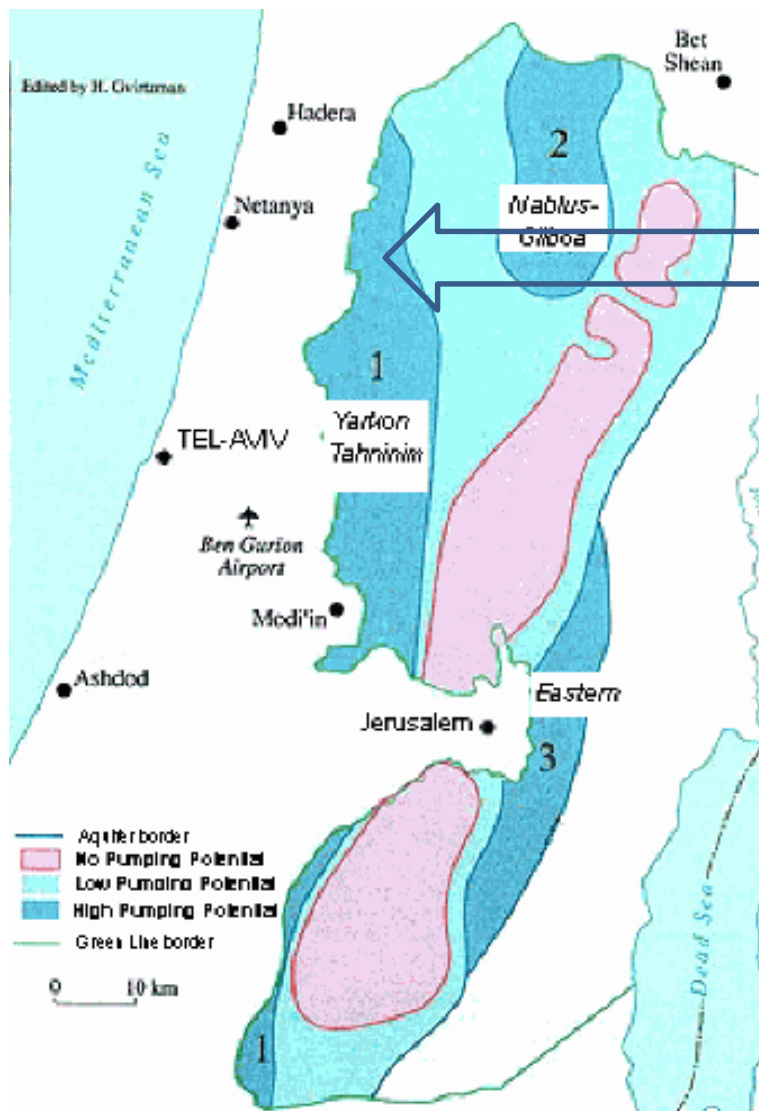
Water conflicts...in general

International law is inadequate in defining and regulating the use of shared water resources and is dependent on bilateral or regional agreements.

“The case of West Bank”

- Water was the hidden agenda for past conflicts and one major obstacle to reach a lasting and final settlement in a region.
- Many a time Palestine-Israel negotiations and the now frozen negotiations with Syria have stumbled over the issue of sharing water.

What about water resources



This map shows valuable water resources in the Israeli occupied West bank with the three principal underground aquifers of the region marked in dark blue lying largely in the West Bank. The **Yarkon-Tanninim Aquifer (1)** supplies Israel with about 340 million cubic meters of water annually, which are used by the Jerusalem-Tel-Aviv area. Palestinians use about 20 million cubic meters a year. It is considered vital to Israeli water needs. The **Nablus-Gilboa Aquifer (2)** supplies Israel with about 115 million cubic meters a year while the **The Eastern Aquifer (3)** supplies about 40 million cubic meters annually to the Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley, and about 60 million cubic meters to the Palestinians. Israel's water supply always came from these Aquifers, both during mandate times and when the land was held by Jordan.

(Adapted from H. Gvirtman: <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/publications/maps/map3.jpg> found at <http://www.mideastweb.org/westbankwater.htm>)

It is “an equitable and reasonable share of the water in the region” ?

- Per capita water consumption in the West Bank for domestic, urban, and industrial use is only 22 cubic meters a year, which translates into 60 litres per person per day. WHO and US AID recommend 100 litres of water per person per day as the minimum quantity for basic consumption
- The average Israeli four and a half times as much: consumes for domestic and urban use approximately 104 cubic meters a year, or 280 litres per person per day.
- If you also take into account industrial water consumption in Israel, per capita use per year reaches 120 cubic meters - 330 litres per person a day - or five and a half times Palestinian per capita consumption.

(source: B'TSELEM - The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories - established in 1989 by a group of prominent academics, attorneys, journalists, and Knesset members).

Water conflict and Africa

Parts extracted from

Peter J: Ashton

CSIR – Natural Resources and the Environment – South Africa

Water availability: a difficult situation

- The populations of most African countries have grown rapidly during the past century and these trends are likely to continue
- Based on current population trends and patterns of change in water use, more African countries will exceed the limits of their economically usable, land-based water resources before 2025

What about “water conflicts”?

- In its simplest sense, the term "water conflict" describes any **disagreement or dispute over or about water, where external social, economic, legal, political or military intervention is needed to resolve the problem.** This broad definition spans a wide continuum of possible circumstances and situations, that could range from a relatively low-intensity dispute over stock watering rights between two adjacent landowners, to an armed confrontation between the governments of two countries that dispute each others "rights" to a particular proportion of the flow in a shared river basin

Aspects that could influence conflicts

At a strategic level, five key geographical and geo-political characteristics influence the ease with which water can become a source of strategic rivalry or confrontation between neighbouring states (Gleick 1998; Ashton 2002):

- The degree of water scarcity that already exists in the region;
- The extent to which a water supply is shared by one or more states or regions;
- The relative power relationships that exist between water-sharing states;
- The availability of alternative water sources and their accessibility; and
- The degree or extent to which a particular country's international boundaries are aligned with, or located along, shared river systems.

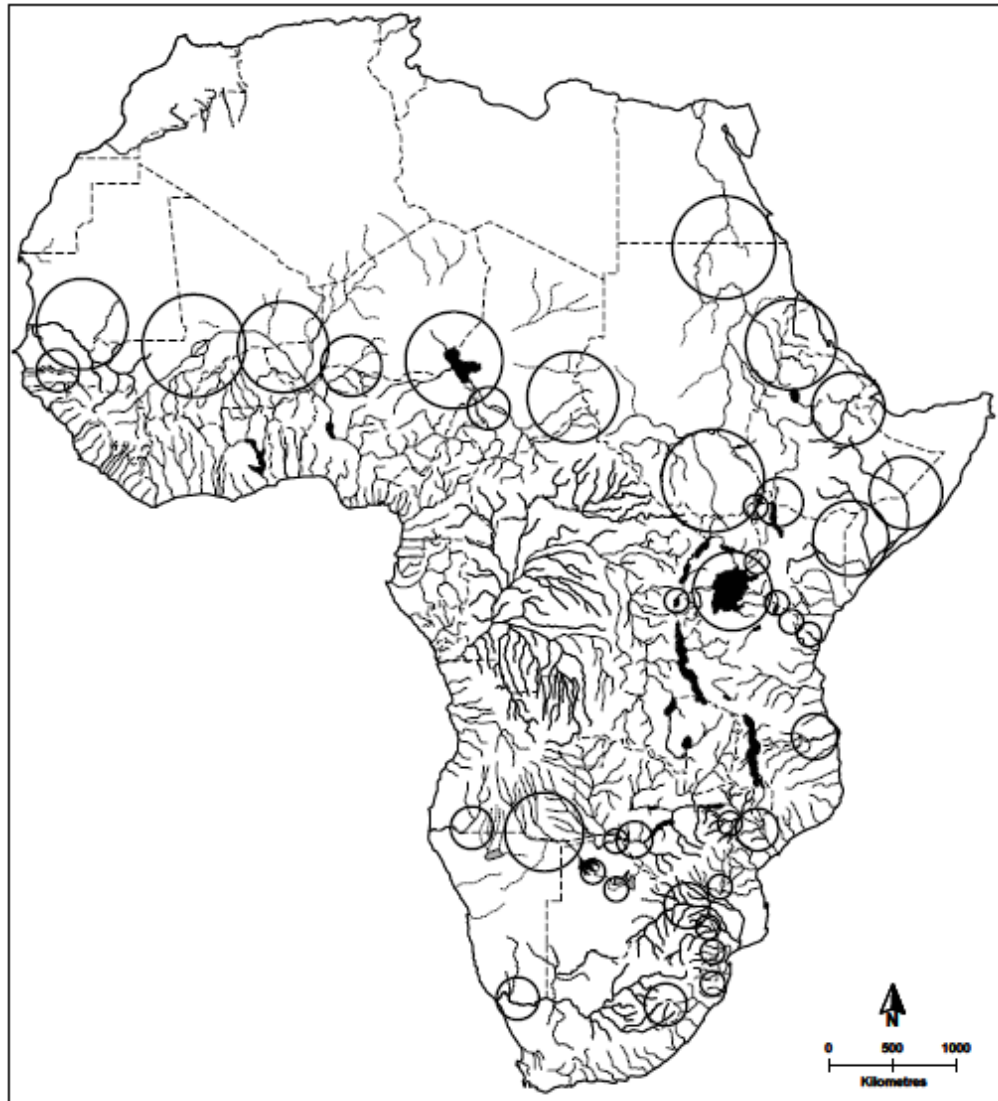
Some conflict's root

- Water is a classical case of a "fugitive" resource that moves naturally from one area to another, is transformed rapidly from one state to another and, while water is widely seen to be a "renewable resource", the available evidence indicates that **Africa's freshwater resources are finite.**
- Water is also extraordinarily vulnerable to human activities and both ground water and surface waters are easily polluted when effluent is discharged. This degrades the integrity of the receiving (aquatic) system and limits the degree to which other water users might use the water. **The adverse effects of such incidents can persist for decades** in the case of groundwater and are extremely difficult to reverse or remediate
- It is almost impossible to define the ownership of water and water is now universally recognized as a "common good" that should not be privately owned; **instead, governments should act as custodians of their national water resources**

Some conflict's root

- Because very few rivers, other than relatively small systems, are contained within the borders of a single country, access to water increasingly becomes a source of potential conflict whenever a river crosses an international boundary
- An additional complication arises where a river system forms the boundary between neighbouring states. Seasonal patterns of flow alter the shape and position of a river channel within a river valley, causing year-to-year changes in the geographical position of a boundary. Where specific activities are associated with the "original" river channel (for example: traditional grazing rights on islands or the dredging of riverine mineral deposits), any alteration in the position of the river and an associated international boundary can lead to disputes over ownership.

Map of Africa, showing major rivers and lakes as well as sites where disputes over water have occurred (circles). Note the size of a circle reflects the relative spatial extent influenced by the dispute.



Internal water conflicts

- A wide variety of more local, inter- and intra-community conflicts over water that occur within the boundaries of a single community or country can be added to these international dimensions of the causes of disputes over water in Africa.
- Perhaps the most frequently encountered of these smaller-scale conflicts relates to **water quality problems that result from upstream activities within a single country**, followed in importance by disputed **local access to a single water source during critical periods** such as droughts.
- An additional source of dispute at both local and national scales can occur where **insufficient provision** is made to engage members of the public in decision-making processes around water-related issues that affect their lives and livelihoods. Failure to provide opportunities for appropriate levels of public participation has led to several instances where the general public have openly expressed their dissatisfaction and, in some cases, rejected proposals for water infrastructure projects.

- A local-scale conflict between two adjacent landowners over access to water requires far less strategic (government-level) intervention than another water access problem that may be confounded by a dispute between countries over the precise location of an international boundary
- Nevertheless, **the smaller, local-scale conflicts can escalate very rapidly and require appropriately rapid responses**. In contrast, most larger-scale or "international" conflicts tend to develop more slowly or gradually, and responses to these situations should also be appropriate to the scale of the problem confronted

Conflicts levels

- **Within community**, where conflict of some aspect of water may occur over a very small area between members of the same community;
- **Between community**, representing a slightly larger scale, where the individuals within each community present a united front in their dispute or conflict with a neighbouring community;
- **National**, where groups of communities or authorities within a single country may dispute the rights of a neighbouring communities or authorities in the same country to water that is not located within their geographical area of jurisdiction. This is typical of inter-basin water transfers, where "donor" catchments are seldom compensated adequately, and "recipient" catchments reap almost all of the benefits;
- **International**, where one country may contest the rights of a neighbouring country to use water from an aquatic system that it shares. Typical examples of this type would include so-called riparian rights to rivers that are located on international boundaries, and the situations where a river crosses an international boundary and gives rise to disputes between "upstream" and "downstream" countries.

“Water use” conflicts



Water – environmental- social conflicts



Something obliged...and something depending on our capacity

- Role of international community
- Role of planning
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Damn compensation

SOMETHING ABOUT THE SKILL TO OPERATE AS “PEACEBUILDER”

Conflict handling Skills

ACCOMODATING

People who accommodate are unassertive and very cooperative. They neglect their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of others. They often give in during a conflict and acknowledge they made a mistake or decide it is no big deal. Accommodating is the opposite style of competing. People who accommodate may be selflessly generous or charitable, they may also obey another person when they would prefer not to, or yield to another's point of view. Usually people who accommodate put relationships first, ignore the issues and try to keep peace at any price.

Conflict handling Skills

COMPETING OR FORCING

People who approach conflict in a competitive way assert themselves and do not cooperate as they pursue their own concerns at other people's expense. To compete, people take a power orientation and use whatever power seems appropriate to win. This may include arguing, pulling rank, or instigating economic sanctions. Competing may mean standing up and defending a position believed to be correct, or simply trying to win. Forcing is another way of viewing competition. For people using a forcing style, usually the conflict is obvious, and some people are right and others are wrong.

Conflict handling skills

AVOIDING

People who avoid conflict are generally unassertive and uncooperative. They do not immediately pursue their own concerns or those of the other person, but rather they avoid the conflict entirely or delay their response. To do so, they may diplomatically sidestep or postpone discussion until a better time, withdraw from the threatening situation or divert attention. They perceive conflict as hopeless and therefore something to be avoided. Differences are overlooked and they accept disagreement

Conflict handling skills

COLLABORATING

Unlike avoiders, collaborators are both assertive and cooperative. They assert their own views while also listening to other views and welcome differences. They attempt to work with others to find solutions that fully satisfy the concerns of both parties. This approach involves identifying the concerns that underlie the conflict by exploring the disagreement from both sides of the conflict, learning from each other's insights, and creatively coming up with solutions that address the concerns of both. People using this style often recognise there are tensions in relationships and contrasting viewpoints but want to work through conflicts.

Conflict handling skills

COMPROMISING

Compromisers are moderately assertive and moderately cooperative. They try to find fast, mutually acceptable solutions to conflicts that partially satisfy both parties.

Compromisers give up less than accommodators but more than competitors. They explore issues more than avoiders, but less than collaborators. Their solutions often involve “splitting the difference” or exchanging concessions. Conflict is mutual difference best resolved by cooperation and compromise.

The methods

Problem solving	Problem solving is a technique that encourages individuals in conflict to jointly define the conflict or problem, analyses its causes, suggest various options for solving the conflict, and then select and implement the preferred solution
Negotiations	Negotiation is a basic way of getting what you want from someone else, usually using verbal communication. We all negotiate every day – with a vendor at the market, with our friends or relatives in deciding what to eat or where and how to travel . ACTORS ARE DIRECTLY THE INVOLVED PARTIES
Mediation	Mediation is sometimes referred to as assisted negotiation. The main difference is that mediation involves a third party whose role is to help the parties reach a mutually agreeable solution to the problem or conflict or disagreement. Mediation is a voluntary process
Arbitration	When a third party is called to keep a decision. The involved parties must accept!

Le domande per una strategia

OBIETTIVI	Che cosa penso di ottenere da questo negoziato? Cosa credo che vorrebbe l'altro?
SCAMBI	Che cosa abbiamo da scambiare io e la controparte? Che cosa ha ognuno di noi che l'altro può volere? Che cosa siamo disposti a cedere?
ALTERNATIVE	Se non raggiungiamo un accordo, che alternative abbiamo? E che alternative ha la controparte? Sono buone o cattive? Quanto sarebbe grave non raggiungere un accordo? Un fallimento del negoziato potrebbe essere un ostacolo anche per opportunità future?
RELAZIONE	Qual è la storia della relazione tra noi e la controparte? E' una storia che potrebbe avere un impatto sul negoziato? Potrebbero esserci questioni nascoste che influenzano il negoziato?
RISULTATI	Che ci aspettiamo da questo negoziato? Quali sono stati – se ce ne sono stati – i risultati in passato e che precedenti hanno prodotto?
CONSEGUENZE	Quali conseguenze potrebbe avere per noi vincere o perdere il negoziato? E per la controparte?
LEVERAGE	Chi ha più potere tra noi e la controparte? L'altra parte è in grado di mantenere gli impegni?
POSSIBILI SOLUZIONI	C'è spazio per un compromesso? Sino a che punto?