

## U. N. report released on World Water Day says more people die from polluted water than from wars

Rich Heffern | Mar. 22, 2010 NCR Today

Dirty water is killing more people than wars and other violence, the United Nations announced on World Water Day.

Almost all dirty water produced in homes, businesses, farms, and factories in developing countries washes into rivers and seas without being decontaminated.

What's more, over half of water supplies that have been purified to the point that they are potable are lost through leaky pipes and ill-maintained sewage networks, according to a report released today. Saving half of these lost supplies could give clean water to 90 million people without the need for costly new infrastructure, says the U. N. report.

"The sheer scale of dirty water means more people now die from contaminated and polluted water than from all forms of violence including wars," the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said.

This includes 2.2 million people whose deaths are attributed to diarrhea, mostly from dirty water, and 1.8 million children aged under five who succumb to water-borne diseases. This equates to one infant every 20 seconds.

The findings were presented during a three-day conference held in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, to coincide with the annual focus on clean and sustained water supplies for a human population expected to grow by 50 percent in the next four decades.

"If the world is to survive on a planet of six billion people heading to over 9 billion by 2050, we need to get smarter about how we manage wastewaters," Achim Steiner, UNEP's director, said in a press release. "Wastewater is quite literally killing people."

Just \$20 million could pay for drip-irrigation and tread pumps to draw water from wells, which could lift 100 million poor farming families out of extreme poverty, according to the report.

For more information the report go to the U. N. Environmental Programme's [press release on World Water Day](#).  
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