

## Life with Water

Water has been connected to life since the dawn of time. It is one of our planet's vital elements.

The waters of the oceans – which cover 70% of the Earth's surface – play an important role as an ecosystem and food source. The oceans not only house fish stocks but also act as a balancing factor for the climate.

Fresh water is abundant despite accounting for less than 3% of the planet's total supply. But water is very poorly distributed. Our rivers and streams represent a vast web that nourishes the planet's territories, yet too much of the land is forgotten. Today, more than 660 million people do not have safe drinking water and 2.4 billion live without access to proper sanitation.

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Water falls from the heavens, runs into streams, flows into groundwater, feeds lakes, then evaporates. It fuels biodiversity, sustains our crops and animals, helps generate energy and supports our towns and villages. Its scarcity affects people's daily lives, even if we tend to forget this all too often in the developed world, as water treatment and distribution investment have brought us water on demand – though not always drinkable – through taps in our homes.

We now effectively use water to feed ourselves, as most water (around 69%) is used by agriculture. The irrigation of 20% of farming land makes it possible to produce 40% of our food. Household water use represents just 12% of total consumption.