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**Press release**

**Upgraded Water Footprint Assessment Tool launched to help solve  
global water problems**

**Free to use on [www.waterfootprint.org/tool](http://www.waterfootprint.org/tool)**

**London:** Steps to reduce our unsustainable, global water footprint (1) are set to pick up a pace with the online launch today of the Water Footprint Network's new, improved version (1.1) of the Water Footprint Assessment Tool, one of the world's most advanced tools for understanding global water problems and devising the best plans to alleviate them.

The Water Footprint Assessment Tool is a free online web application that measures and analyses the sustainability of the fresh water used to make the goods and services we consume or produce, then prioritises where to reduce use to make our water footprint more sustainable. It has garnered international support from major companies, policy makers, NGOs and scientists as a world-class tool in the drive toward sustainable, efficient and smart water use (2).

The new version 1.1 is a major improvement over its predecessor. Key new features include: (3)

- a host of new functions, such as Water Pollution Level maps that enable users to see the sustainability of grey water footprints in major river basins around the world;
- greater user control and flexibility improve navigation and make it easier to get the results. For example, users can control which units will be used in the analysis.

“With global water supplies stretched beyond earth's limit, interest in averting a looming crisis by fathoming how we use water is at an all time high. Our new, upgraded Water Footprint Assessment Tool takes us a step closer to global water sustainability and security by equipping everyone -- consumers, producers, investors, suppliers and regulators - with the most advanced, accurate information available.

Now we can all see with greater ease and depth how the water footprints of our food, clothes and other items span the globe and get a clearer picture of what each and every one of us must do to make our footprints more sustainable,” said Ashok Chapagain, Science Director, Water Footprint Network.

Demand for fresh water increased six-fold over the past century, putting tremendous pressure on our global supply as our population and economy grow. Today, more than 2.7 billion people in over 200 river basins are affected by water

scarcity for at least one month each year (4) and it is widely regarded as one of the greatest risks to our ecosystems, health and global economy.

“Improving the way we use our limited water supply has become a matter of extreme urgency. We aim to accelerate this by providing the most effective, advanced tools possible, free of charge, to help consumers make the right choices, companies reduce water use where it is most wasteful and governments to improve water management to ensure that the world’s people and natural ecosystems have the fresh water we all need to thrive,” said Ruth Mathews, Executive Director, Water Footprint Network.

*The Water Footprint Network is an international, non-profit foundation that promotes and inspires strategic action towards sustainable, efficient and equitable water use worldwide.*

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

(1) Footprints indicate human pressure on the environment and show us the changes and impacts we have on land, water, air and other resources. The water footprint of common products can be surprising. For example, it takes on average 132 litres of water to produce a cup of coffee and 4,625 litres of water to produce one steak (300 gram).

(2) The Water Footprint Assessment Tool uses peer reviewed scientific methods and best available data by bringing together the internationally recognized Global Water Footprint Standard and the most comprehensive water footprint database, [WaterStat](http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/WaterStat), (<http://www.waterfootprint.org/?page=files/WaterStat>).

(3) For a full list of new features see the [Water Footprint Assessment Tool version 1.1 briefing](#).

(4) See <http://www.waterfootprint.org/Reports/Hoekstra-et-al-2012-GlobalMonthlyWaterScarcity.pdf>