



Water value Contrasting the Travel Industry

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Introduction

Every year on the 22nd of March 2018, the United Nations celebrate World Water Day to highlight the importance of freshwater and the need to manage water resources sustainably. Recent trends of increasing intensity of agricultural production, rapid development and urbanization have resulted in increased withdrawal of freshwater resources, with mounting risks of water stress. Globally, domestic water use alone has grown on average by 2.2% every year for the last 60 years. Since 1995, this growth has been driven to a considerable extent by increased consumption in Asia and Africa. Asia, in particular, is considered a hot spot for future water supply, because of continuous population growth, which means that about two billion extra people will require water resources by 2050. Research from Northern China highlights how increased demand, coupled with decreased precipitation and run off, triggered large scale investments into water engineering and, more recently, water transfer projects.

While agriculture in the three main basins of Huai, Hai and Hunang is still the main user of water, industrial and municipal water uses are increasing rapidly. Cai reported that local authorities place higher priority on industrial or domestic end uses compared

with agricultural use, which has led to reduced water availability for farmers, especially in the hinterland of large city destinations such as Beijing.

Urban–rural water conflicts are the result, with questions about social equity being raised where the most vulnerable groups, such as the socio-economically disadvantaged from the countryside, are most exposed to water stress or scarcity. The fourth edition of the World Water Development Report recognized the urgent need to bring water challenges to the center of societal and economic decision making. It argued that “robust governance mechanisms are required to protect water resources and ensure sustainable development and equitable distribution of water-derived benefit. The report further highlighted the need to involve industry and its unsustainable use of freshwater resources. Tourism is a major global industry that is known to be a substantial contributor to local water demand.

The existence of tourism means that an additional number of people require freshwater for a widerange of end-uses, including drinking, hygiene, cleaning, food provision, recreation, aesthetics, and other support services. In some destinations, this additional demand may lead to stress. Water stressor scarcity can be measured in different ways, depending on scientific or political emphases. When conceptualised as a physical supply problem water stress has been related to a threshold that isreached when annual fresh water supplies drop below 1700 kl per person water scarcity means that less than 1000 kl per person (or 2740 l per day) are available. Moreover, in some circumstances water may be available.

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