

READING PASSAGE 2

Questions 14 - 27

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14 – 27 which are based on Reading Passage 2 on the following pages.

PROBLEMS WITH WATER

Nearly half the world's population will experience critical water shortages by 2025, according to the United Nations (UN). Wars over access to water are a rising possibility in this century and the main conflicts in Africa during the next 25 years could be over this most precious of commodities, as countries fight for access to scarce resources. "Potential water wars are likely in areas where rivers and lakes are shared by more than one country," says Mark Evans a UN worker. Evans predicts that "population growth and economic development will lead to nearly one in two people in Africa living in countries facing water scarcity or what is known as 'water stress' within 25 years." Water scarcity is defined as less than 1,000 cubic metres of water available per person per year, while water stress means less than 1,500 cubic metres of water is available per person per year. The report says that by 2025, 12 more African countries will join the 13 that already suffer from water stress or water scarcity. What makes the water issue even more urgent is that demand for water will grow increasingly fast as larger areas are placed under crops and economic development. Evans adds that "the strong possibility that the world is experiencing climate change also adds to this urgency."

How to deal with water shortages is in the forefront of the battle between environmental activists on the one hand and governments and construction firms on the other. At the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg activists continued their campaign to halt dam construction, while many governments were outraged about a vocal minority thwarting their plans.

One of the UN's eight millennium development goals is to halve the proportion of people without "sustainable" access to safe drinking water by 2015. How to ensure this happens was one of the big issues of the summit. Much of the text on this was already agreed, but one of the unresolved issues in the implementation plan was whether the goal on water would be extended to cover sanitation. The risks posed by water-borne diseases in the absence of sanitation facilities means the two goals are closely related. Only US negotiators have been resisting the extension of goals to include sanitation due to the financial commitment this would entail. However, Evans says the US is about to agree to this extension. This agreement could give the UN a chance to show that in one key area the world development agenda was advanced in Johannesburg.

But the UN has said Johannesburg was not about words alone, but implementation. A number of projects and funding initiatives were unveiled at the summit. But implementation is always harder, as South Africa has experienced in its water programme. Graham Bennetts, a water official in the South African government explains: "Since the 1994 elections government has provided easy access to water to 7 million people, but extending this to a further 7 million and ensuring this progress is sustainable is one of South Africa's foremost implementation challenges." In South Africa, access to water is defined as 25 litres a person daily, within a distance of 200m from where they live. "Although South Africa's feat far exceeds the UN millennium goal on water supply, severe constraints on local government capacity make a more rapid expansion difficult," says Bennetts.

For some of those who have only recently been given ready access to water, their gains are under threat as the number of cut-offs by municipalities for non-payment rise, says Liane Greef of the Environmental Monitoring Group. Greef is programme manager for Water

Justice in southern Africa. Those who have their water supply cut off also automatically forfeit their right to 6000 free litres of water for a family a month under South Africa's "water for all" policy. In the face of continued increases in unemployment, payment for water and other utilities has the potential to fast undo government's high profile feats in delivery since 1994.

It is also the way of ensuring sufficient water supply and its management that will increasingly become a political battleground in South Africa. Water Affairs director-general Mike Muller says South Africa is near the end of its dam-building programme. However, there are big projects proposed elsewhere in southern Africa that could possibly be halted by activists who could bring pressure on funding agencies such as the World Bank. Greef says her group will campaign during the summit against the proposed Skuifraam Dam, which would be built near Franschhoek to supply additional water to Cape Town.

Rather than rely on new dam construction, the city should ensure that water is used wisely at all times rather than only in dry spells, Greef says. Another battleground for her group is over the privatisation of water supply, she says. Water supply, she insists, is best handled in the public interest by accountable government.

There is increasing hope from advances in technology to deal with water shortages. It is agricultural production which takes up about 90% of water consumed for human purposes, says the UN. To lower agricultural demand for water the Sri Lanka-based International Water Management Institute is researching ways of obtaining "more crop per drop" through the development of drought resistant crops, as well as through better water management techniques. One of the institute's research sites is the Limpopo River basin. According to the institute's director-general, Frank Rijsbereman, rice growers in China use a quarter of the water a ton of produce to those in South Africa. The institute hopes the "green revolution" in crop productivity will soon be matched by the "blue revolution" in improving water utilisation in agriculture.

Questions 14 – 21

Match the views (25 – 32) with the people listed below.

- 14 Water needs to be utilised more prudently by some people.
- 15 South Africa has almost completed its plans for building dams.
- 16 Local government has excluded some South African households from getting free water for not meeting their bills.
- 17 The World Summit in Johannesburg will soon have its aims on hygiene agreed among all participants.
- 18 Faster development of water supply in South Africa is limited by the facilities of community administrations.
- 19 Water use is more efficient than in South Africa in some foreign food production.

- 20 Government should be answerable for water delivery and not private companies.
- 21 The water question's importance has been increased due to the risk of global weather temperature rises.

MM	Mike Muller
FR	Frank Rijsbereman
ME	Mark Evans
LG	Liane Greef
GB	Graham Bennetts

Questions 22 - 27

Read the passage about problems with water again and look at the statements below.

In boxes **22 - 27** on your answer sheet write:

TRUE	<i>if the statement is true</i>
FALSE	<i>if the statement is false</i>
NOT GIVEN	<i>if the information is not given in the passage</i>

- 22 Some African countries are currently at war over water resources.
- 23 A recent report says by 2025 that 25 African countries will suffer from water scarcity alone.
- 24 Vocal environment activists were arrested at the World Summit.
- 25 Questions at the World Summit over including water sanitation have not yet been agreed.
- 26 The World Summit had many good ideas but had little contribution on how to put the ideas into practice.
- 27 Plants are being introduced that can flourish with little water.