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**Research Report**

# *World Water Demand and Supply, 1990 to 2025: Scenarios and Issues*

**David Seckler, Upali Amarasinghe David Molden, Radhika de Silva and Randolph Barker**

*International Water Management Institute*

#### Research Reports

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**Research Report 19**

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The International Irrigation Management Institute, one of sixteen centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in Sri Lanka. The Act is currently under amendment to read as In ternational Water Management Institute (IWMI).

Responsibility for the contents of this publication rests with the authors.

# *Contents*





# *Summary*

It is widely recognized that many countries are enter ing an era of severe water shortage. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) has a long-term research program to determine the extent and depth of this problem, its consequences to individual coun tries, and what can be done about it. This study is the first step in that program. We hope that water re source experts from around the world will help us by contributing their comments on this report and shar ing their knowledge and data with the research pro gram.

The study began as what we thought would be a rather straightforward exercise of projecting water demand and supply for the major countries in the world over the 1990 to 2025 period. But as the study progressed, we discovered increasingly severe data problems and conceptual and methodological issues in this field. We therefore created a simulation model that is based on a conceptual and methodological structure that we believe is valid and on various es timates and assumptions about key parameters when data are either missing or subject to a high degree of error and misinterpretation.

The model is in a spreadsheet format and is made as simple and transparent as possible so that others can use it to test their own ideas and data (and we would like to see the results). One of the strengths of this model is that it includes a submodel on the irri gation sector that is much more thorough than any used to date in this context. Since irrigation uses over 70 percent of the world's supplies of developed wa ter, getting this component right is extremely impor tant. The full model, with a guide, can be downloaded on IWMI's home page (http://www.cgiar.org/iimi).

Most of the discussion in this report is devoted to explaining why this simulation model is needed and how it works. Once this is done, two alternative scenarios of water supply and demand over the 1990 to 2025 period are produced, and indicators of water

scarcity are developed for each country and for the world as whole.

Part I of the report describes the water balance approach which provides the conceptual framework for this study. The water balance framework is used to derive estimates of water supply and demand for countries. These estimates are adjusted to take explicit account of return flows and water recycling whose importance is often neglected in studies of water scar city.

Part II presents the data for the spreadsheet model of water supply and demand for 118 countries that include 93 percent of the world's 1990 population. Following a discussion of the 1990 data, two sce narios of world water supply and demand are pre sented. Both make the same assumptions regarding the domestic and industrial sectors. And both sce narios assume that the per capita irrigated areas will be the same in 2025 as in 1990. The difference be tween the scenarios is due to different assumptions about the effectiveness of the utilization of water in irrigating crops—the "crop per drop" (Keller, Keller, and Seckler 1996). Irrigation effectiveness includes water recycling within the irrigation sector. The first is a base case, or "business as usual," scenario. The second scenario assumes a high, but not unrealistic, degree of effectiveness in the utilization of irrigation water, with the consequent savings of irrigation water being used to meet the future water needs of all the sectors.

It is found that the growth in world requirements for the development of additional water supplies varies between 57 percent in the first scenario to 25 per cent in the second scenario. The truth perhaps lies somewhere between. Thus increasing irrigation effec tiveness reduces the need for development of addi tional water supplies for all the sectors in 2025 by roughly one-half. This is a substantial amount, but development of additional water supplies through

small and large dams, conjunctive use of aquifers and, in some countries, desalinization plants will still be needed.

Also, these world figures disguise enormous dif ferences among countries (and among regions within countries). Many of the most water-scarce countries already have highly effective irrigation systems, so this will not substantially reduce their needs for de velopment of additional water supplies. On the other hand, most of the world's gain in irrigation effective ness would be in countries with a high percentage of rice irrigation. It is not clear how much basin irriga tion effectiveness can be practically increased in rice irrigation. Also, rice irrigation tends to occur in areas with high rainfall where water supply is not a major problem. The fact that South China has a lot of water to be saved through improved irrigation effectiveness is small consolation to a farmer in Senegal who hardly has any—or for that matter to a farmer in the arid north of China (unless there are interbasin trans fers from south to north). Partly for these reasons, one-half of the world's total estimated water savings from increased irrigation effectiveness is in India and China. This illustrates why the country data—and, ultimately, the data for regions within countries—are much more important than world data.

Part III presents two basic criteria of water scarcity that together comprise the overall IWMI indicator of water scarcity for countries. Using the high irriga tion effectiveness scenario, these criteria are (i) the percent increase in water "withdrawals" over the 1990 to 2025 period and (ii) water withdrawals in 2025 as a percent of the "Annual Water Resources" (AWR) of the country. Because of their enormous populations and water use, combined with extreme variations be tween wet and dry regions within the countries, India and China are considered separately. The 116 remain ing countries are classified into 5 groups according to these criteria (figure 1).

**Group 1** consists of countries that are water-scarce by both criteria. These countries, which have 8 percent of the population of the countries studied, are mainly in West Asia and North Africa. For countries in this group, water scarcity will be a major constraint on

food production, human health, and environmental quality. Many will have to divert water from irriga tion to supply their domestic and industrial needs and will need to import more food.

The countries in the four remaining groups have sufficient water resources (AWR) to satisfy their 2025 requirements. However, variations in seasonal, interannual, and regional water supplies may cause underestimation of the severity of their water problems based on average and national water data. A major concern for many of these countries will be developing the large financial, technical, and managerial wherewithal needed to develop their water resources.

**Group 2** countries, which contain 7 percent of the study population and are mainly in sub-Saharan Af rica, must develop more than twice the amount of water they currently use to meet reasonable future requirements.

**Group 3** countries, which contain 16 percent of the population and are scattered throughout the develop ing world, need to increase withdrawals by between 25 percent and 100 percent, with an average of 48 percent.

**Group 4** countries, with 16 percent of the population, need to increase withdrawals, but by less than 25 percent.

**Group 5** countries, with 12 percent of the population, require no additional withdrawals in 2025 and most will require even less water than in 1990.

We believe that the methodology used in this re port may serve as a model for future studies. The analysis reveals serious problems in the international database, and much work needs to be done before the methodology can be used as a detailed planning tool. However, the work to date highlights the national and regional disparities in water resources and pro vides a basis from which we can begin to assess the future supply and demand for this vital natural re source.

FIGURE 1. IWMI indicator of relative water scarcity.





# **World Water Demand and Supply, 1990 to 2025: Scenarios and Issues**

**David Seckler, Upali Amarasinghe, David Molden, Radhika de Silva, and Randolph Barker**

# *Introduction*

It is widely recognized that many countries are entering an era of severe water shortage. Several studies (referenced below) have at tempted to quantify the extent of this prob lem so that appropriate policies and projects can be implemented. But there are formi dable conceptual and empirical problems in this field. To address these problems, the In ternational Water Management Institute (IWMI) has launched a long-term research program to improve the conceptual and empirical basis for analysis of water in ma jor countries of the world. This study is the first step in that research program.

What do we mean when we say that one country is facing water scarcity while another country is not? At first, this might seem to be a simple question to answer. But the more one attempts actually to answer it, much less to create quantitative indicators of scarcity, the more one appreciates what a difficult question it really is. Water scarcity can be defined either in terms of the exist ing and potential supply of water, or in terms of the present and future demands or needs for water, or both.

For example, in their pioneering study of water scarcity, Falkenmark, Lundqvist, and Widstrand (1989) take a "supply-side" approach by ranking countries according to the per capita amount of "Annual Water Resources" (AWR), as we call it, in the country. (This and other technical terms are discussed in Part I). They define 1,700 cubic meters  $(m<sup>3</sup>)$  per capita per year as the level

of water supply above which shortages will be local and rare. Below  $1,000 \text{ m}^3$  per capita per year, water supply begins to hamper health, economic development, and human well-being. At less than 500  $m<sup>3</sup>$  per capita per year, water availability is a primary constraint to life. We shall refer to this as the "Standard" indicator of water scarcity among countries since it is by far the most widely used and referenced indicator (e.g., Engelman and Leroy 1993).

Another supply-side approach is taken in a study commissioned by the UN Com mission on Sustainable Development (Raskin et al. 1997). This study defines wa ter scarcity in terms of **the total amount of annual withdrawals as a percent ofAWR.** We refer to this as the "UN" indicator. Accord ing to this criterion, if total withdrawals are greater than 40 percent of AWR, the country is considered to be water-scarce.

One of the problems with the supplyside approach is that the criterion for water scarcity is based on a country's AWR with out reference to present and future **demand or needs** for water. To take an extreme ex ample, as shown in table 1, Zaire has a very high level of AWR per capita and a very low percentage of withdrawals in relation to AWR. Thus Zaire does not rank as waterscarce by either the Standard or the UN in dicators. But the people of Zaire do not presently have enough water withdrawals to satisfy any reasonable standard of water needs. Zaire must **develop** large amounts of

additional water supplies to meet the present, let alone future, needs of its popu lation. The people of Zaire, like the Ancient Mariner, have "water, water everywhere, but nor any drop to drink."

This study attempts to resolve these problems by simulating the demand for water in relation to the supply of water over the period 1990 to 2025. Two scenarios are presented. Both make the same assump tions regarding the domestic and industrial sectors. The difference between the sce narios is due to different assumptions about the effectiveness of the irrigation sector. The first scenario presents a "business as usual" base case; the second scenario assumes a high, but not unrealistic, degree of effective ness of the irrigation sector. This enables us to estimate how much of the increase in de mand for water could be met by **more** effec tive **use** of existing water supplies in irriga

tion and how much would have to be met by the **development ofadditional water supplies.** We then compare these estimates with the AWR for each country to determine if there are sufficient water resources in the coun tries to meet their needs for additional wa ter development.

This report is divided into three parts. Part I discusses **water balance analysis,** which provides the conceptual framework under lying our estimates of water demand and supply. Part II discusses the simulation model and applies it to 118 countries con taining 93 percent of the world's popula tion. (The remainder is largely in the former Soviet Union.) Part III presents the rationale and methodology for grouping countries into five groups based on degrees of water scarcity and discusses the implications of the analysis for national and global food se curity.

# *PART I:—Water Balance Analysis*

The conceptual framework of the analysis in this section is based on previous studies (Seckler 1992, 1993, 1996; J. Keller 1992; Keller, Keller, and Seckler 1996; Perry 1996; Molden 1997; and the references in these re ports). It reflects what is sometimes referred to as the "IWMI Paradigm" of integrated water resource systems, which explicitly in cludes water recycling in the analysis of ir rigation and other water sectors. In this sec tion, we apply this basic paradigm to coun try-level analysis of water resource systems.

As the discussion shows, this is not an easy task because in water resources, as in many other fields, the meaning of data and functional relationships is highly dependent on the **scale** of the analysis. Thus when the analysis proceeds from the micro, through the meso, to the macro scale, care must be

taken to keep the concepts and words in the appropriate context. Most of the data used in this report are from the World Re sources Institute 1996, Data Table 13.1; henceforth simply "WRI." As noted below, the WRI data have some major areas of am biguity.

#### **The Global Water Balance**

We begin the discussion with a brief view of the water balance at the ultimate scale of the globe, as illustrated in figure 2. (This section is adapted from Seckler 1993, Postel, Daily, and Ehrlich 1996, and WRI 1996).

Water is difficult to create or destroy un der most natural conditions. Thus as it re cycles globally through its three states of liq-

FIGURE 2.



Note: All numbers are in thousands of cubic kilometers of water per year. **Source:** Seckler 1993.

Winrock International, 1993

uid, solid, and vapor, virtually none is gained or lost. Indeed, the total amount of water on earth today is nearly the same as it was mil lions of years ago at the beginning of the earth—with the possible exception of the re cent discovery of "imports" of significant amounts of water from outer space by "cos mic snowballs" (reported in Sawyer 1997).

Over 97 percent of the world's water resources is in the oceans and seas and is too salty for most productive uses. Twothirds of the remainder is locked up in ice caps, glaciers, permafrost, swamps, and deep aquifers. About 108,000 cubic kilome ters  $(km<sup>3</sup>)$  precipitate annually on the earth's surface (figure 2). About 60 percent  $(61,000 \text{ km}^3)$  evaporates directly back into the atmosphere, leaving  $47,000 \text{ km}^3$  flowing toward the sea. If this amount were evenly distributed, it would be approximately 9,000 m<sup>3</sup> per person per year. However, much of the flow occurs in seasonal floods. It is es timated that only 9,000  $km<sup>3</sup>$  to 14,000  $km<sup>3</sup>$ may ultimately be controlled. At present, only  $3,400 \text{ km}^3$  are withdrawn for use (table 1, column 4).

## **Country Water Balances**

Figure 3 illustrates the water balance frame work and nomenclature that form the basis for the country-level water balances (also see Molden 1997). The cubic kilometer amounts for certain categories link figure 2 to figure 3.

There are four **sources** of water:

- Net flow of water into a country is water inflow from rivers and aquifers minus outflows.
- **Changes in storage** are interannual changes in the amounts of water stored in snow and ice, reservoirs, lakes, aquifers, and soil-moisture. Decreasing stor age levels indicate an unsustainable amount of supply from these sources, and increasing levels indicate the po tential for additional annual water sup plies.
- **Runoffis** the surface and subsurface flow of water. It is equal to annual precipita tion minus **in situ** evaporation. Water

#### *FIGURE 3.* Water balance analysis.



that infiltrates into soil is sometimes also subtracted for short-term analysis (e.g., floods) but infiltration eventually ends up in evaporation, storage, or runoff. Because of water recycling in the system, runoff is almost impossible to measure directly on a large scale. It is usually es timated through climatological data and simulation models.

**Desalinization** is from seawater or brack ish water, but it is a limited and costly source.

The Annual Water Resources (AWR) of a country constitute the average annual amount of water provided by the above sources on a sustainable basis. (AWR are equal to theWRI columns: "Annual Internal Renewable Water Resources" minus "An nual River Flows to Other Countries.") Thus, for example, depletion of aquifers is not considered part of AWR because it is not sus tainable. This is why certain countries in the WRI database are shown to divert more wa ter than AWR. Another problem is that while WRI provides data on the outflow from one country to another, it does not provide data on the outflow from a country to sinks, like the oceans. This would bias estimates of AWR upward for countries with uncontrol-

lable outflows to sinks, as noted directly be low. Last, there are major errors in the out flow figures to other countries in the WRI data. According to these data, for example, Ethiopia, has no outflow while all of Canada's AWR flow to some other country! These errors are corrected wherever possible, as indicated in the notes to table 1.

Part of the AWR is **nonutilizable.** The amount of nonutilizable AWR depends on whether or not the water is available and can be controlled for use at the time and place in which it is needed. This problem is particularly important in regions that have pronounced differences in seasonal precipi tation, such as monsoon-typhoon Asia. In India, for example, about 70 percent of the total annual precipitation occurs in the three summer months of the monsoon, most of which floods out to the sea.

The **potentially utilizable water resource** (PUWR) is the amount of the AWR that is potentially utilizable with technically, socially, environmentally, and economically feasible water development programs. Since most countries have not fully developed their PUWR, part of this amount of water is not actually utilized at a given point in time and goes to outflow. Unfortunately, there are no estimates of PUWR in WRI. In defining PUWR, it is important to consider the reliability of the annual supply of water. Because of climatological variations there is a large amount of interannual and seasonal variation in flows. The PUWR needs to be defined in terms of the reliability of a minimally acceptable flow in the lowest flow season of the lowest flow year. Thus only a fraction of the average AWR can be considered to be PUWR for most countries. One exception is Egypt, where fully 3 years' total AWR (about  $160 \text{ km}^3$ !) can be stored in the High Aswan Dam and released at will.

The **developed water resource** (DWR) is the amount of water from PUWR that is controlled and becomes the first, or pri mary, inflow of unused or "virgin" water to the supply system. Except in a few coun tries like Egypt, where nearly all the DWR flows from a single, easily measured point—the discharge of the High Aswan Dam—it is very difficult to measure DWR because it is difficult to know what part of the water being measured is recycled, not "virgin" water.

The **outflow** from a river basin or coun try may be divided into two parts (Molden 1997). The **committed** outflow is the amount of water formally or informally committed to downstream users and uses. While these users may be other countries, which have rights to certain inflows, the uses may be outflows necessary to protect coastal areas and ports, and provide wildlife habitats and the like. The **uncommitted** outflow is surplus to any of the above uses and simply flows out of the basin or country into "sinks," mainly to the oceans and seas, where it can not be used for most purposes.

Of course, since water is a highly fun gible—or, one might even say, a highly "liq uid"—resource, with many different pos sible uses, statements about the "usability" of water must be treated cautiously. For ex ample, highly polluted water is still usable for navigation. Salt sinks, like the Aral or Salton Seas, are considered to be valuable environmental resources. And we now un derstand the crucial role of swamps, wet lands, and estuaries in the ecological chain. Ultimately, the usefulness of water must be assessed through more sophisticated terms of economic, environmental, and social evaluation analyses.

7/**the amount ofwater in the outflow (and internal sinks) were known, the best indicator of physical water scarcity in river basins or coun tries could be constructed.** *There are two kinds* of river basins (Seckler *1992, 19%): "open"* systems, where *there is* a *reliable outflow of*

usable water to sinks (or uncommitted flows to other countries) in the dry season (0), and "closed" systems, where there is no such dry season outflow of usable water. In open systems, additional amounts of wa ter can be diverted for use without decreas ing the physical supply available to any other user in the system. In closed systems, additional withdrawal by one user de creases the amount of withdrawal by other users: it is a zero-sum game. Thus, in terms of figure 3, the degree of scarcity (S) of river basin would be indicated by the equation:  $S = O/DWR$ .

Of course, closed systems can be opened by increasing DWR through such water development activities as additional storage of wet season flows for release in the dry season and desalinization. But the distinction indicates whether, from a purely physical point of view, additional water de mand can be met from existing supplies (DWR) or requires development of addi tional supplies.

It would be even better if the monthly (or weekly) outflow were known. This could be compared to monthly demands for water, including committed outflows, to create a complete estimate of water scarcity in river basins. Information on the outflow of major river basins to other countries and to sinks has been compiled by the Global Runoff Data Centre (1989) and others. (Just as this report was going to press, we received a very interesting monograph by Alcamo et al.1997, which has an approach that is highly compatible with our own and includes hydrological simulations of the major river basins of the world.) There is also information on the committed amounts of the outflow. In future research, these data will be collected and used as the indicator of physical water scarcity, but for the present, less accurate indicators must be used.

#### *Effective Water Supply and Distribution*

As shown in figure 3, flows from DWR be come part of *the* **effective water supply (EWS).** The other part of EWS is provided by **return flows** (RF) from the water used by the sec  $t$  tors. EWS is the amount of water actually deliv**ered toand received by the water-using sectors.**

We have emphasized this definition of EWS because one of the most difficult prob lems *in the WRI data is* **knowing precisely what their "withdrawals" mean.** *Specifically,* are they the "withdrawals" from PUWR and thus equal to DWR? Or are they the "withdrawals" from EWS received by the sectors? The difference, of course, is the amount of return flows in the system, which can be a substantial amount. We have searched the WRI definitions and notes and cannot find a clear answer to this important question.

Clearly, this problem of the definition of withdrawals is another task on the re search agenda. But for the present, we shall proceed on the basis of the assumption that **withdrawals are equal to DWR.** *Therefore,* if there are substantial amounts of return flow in the system, withdrawals are **substantially less than EWS,** *that is,* **the amounts of water received by the users in the sectors.**

#### *Sectors*

There are four sectors shown in figure 3: **ir rigation, domestic, industrial,** *and* **environmen tal.** Unfortunately, no comprehensive data are available on environmental uses of wa ter, even though it is rapidly becoming one of the largest sectors, with high evaporation losses and flows of rivers to sinks (Seckler 1993), and it is not considered further in our analysis.

Other important sectors that should be explicitly included in a more complete ana-

lysis are the hydropower and thermal sec tors (which probably account for a large part of the high per capita water withdraw als in the industrial sector of countries like the USA and Canada shown in table 1). These sectors are especially important be cause they have very low evaporation losses, with low pollution rates, and thus can contribute large amounts of water to recycling. Another important sector is what may be called the "waste disposal" sector: the use of water for flushing salts, sewage, and other pollutants out of the system. The importance of this sector becomes apparent when one attempts to remove pollutants by other means.

In each of the four sectors, the water is divided into **depletion factors** and **return flows.** The percentages in figure 3 show illustra tive values of these components.

- **Evaporation** (EVAP) includes the evapotranspiration of plants. This amount of water is assumed to be lost to the sys tem—although in large-scale systems, such as countries, part of EVAP recycles to the system through precipitation. Here is another important area for fu ture research. As more water is used and evaporated, more water returns from precipitation. That much is cer tain. But **where** is it available, and **when?**
- **Sinks,** as discussed before, represent flows of water to such areas as deep or saline aquifers, inland seas, or oceans where water is not economically recov erable for general uses. Sinks may be internal, within a country's or river basin's salt ponds or seas, for example,

or they may be external, as in the case of oceans. Also, as in the case of EWS, some of the water from **within** the dis tribution system may enter outflow—as in the disposal of saline water, or through temporary spills of water due to mismatches between water demand and supply.

**Return flow (RF)** is the drainage water from a particular withdrawal that flows back into the system where it can be captured and reused, or recycled within the system. The drainage water may either be recycled within the sector or flow into rivers and aquifers to be re captured and reused by other sectors. For example, in rice irrigation much of the water applied to one field drains to a downstream field where it provides irrigation to that field. Or, in the domestic sector, sewage water (hope fully, treated) returns to the river where it becomes a supply of water for other downstream domestic users, or it may be utilized for irrigation. The amount of return flow also depends on the geographic location of water utilization in the system. In Egypt, for example, most of the water utilized near Cairo drains back into the Nile and is recycled downstream, but most of the water utilized near Alexandria drains directly to the sea and cannot be recycled. Return flow creates the extremely important, although largely neglected, "water multiplier effect" in water balance analysis (Seckler 1992, 1993), which is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

# *PART II:—Projecting Supply and Demand*

In this section, we provide an overview of the basic data and results of the simulation model of water supply and demand for the 118 countries of the study. Following a brief introduction to the database, the 1990 data and the assumptions for projecting the 2025 data are discussed in detail.

Much of the discussion in this part con cerns the detailed computation process for the model and, therefore may not be of in terest to many readers. We urge such read ers to rapidly skim through this part to the section "Two Irrigation Scenarios," read it; again skim the section "Domestic and In dustrial Projections" and then read "Growth of Total Water Withdrawals to 2025" at the end of Part II.

#### **Introduction to the Database**

The water data for most of the countries are from WRI 1996. As the authors of that pub lication note, many data are out of date and of questionable validity. We have chosen the 1990 date arbitrarily, since the data for indi vidual countries are for different dates. FAO (1995, 1997 a, b) has provided more recent data for some countries in Africa and West Asia. These data have been used where available as indicated by the references to footnote 1 against the country names in table 1. Shiklomanov 1997 provides other data for some other countries, but this study has only been released electronically, and the full text has not yet been published. In the future, we plan to improve the data set by working with local experts in the major countries.

One of the advantages of a model is that it clearly indicates the kinds of data that are needed to estimate important pa rameters for which data may be lacking. In

these cases, we have used assumed and es timated values. These values are explained in the text and clearly indicated in the full spreadsheet.

The full model, with a guide, can be downloaded on IWMI's home page (http:/ / www.cgiar.org/iimi). It is designed so that it can easily be manipulated by others to test their own assumptions and data. We wel come observations on the model by users and contributions of better data from those who have detailed knowledge of the specific countries.

Table 1 presents a summary of the basic data and analysis of the model. The intro duction to table 1 provides an alphabetical listing of countries with their identification numbers so they can easily be looked up in the table. It also defines each of the col umns, the data input, and the calculations. References in the text to the columns are made as "CI" for column 1, etc.

The first page of table 1 provides world and group summaries, the remaining pages show the data and results for the 118 coun tries individually. The countries, with the exception of China and India, have been ordered into five groups according to their estimated degree of relative water scarcity in 2025. The criteria used in this ordering are discussed in Part III. For now, it is suf ficient to note that the group numbers indi cate a decreasing order of projected water scarcity taking into consideration both de mand and supply.

#### **1990 Data**

The first set of columns shows the 1990 population and the UN 1994 "medium" growth projection to 2025 (UN 1994). It should be noted that Seckler and Rock

(1995, 1997) contend that the UN "low" pro jection is the best projection of future popu lation growth. While the low population projection would lower 2025 water de mands somewhat, its major significance is after 2025, when population is projected to stabilize by 2040 at about 8 billion, whereas in the medium projection it continues to in crease.

The annual water resources is shown in C3. The next set of columns shows total withdrawals (WITH) in cubic kilometers (C4) and per capita withdrawals in cubic meters for the domestic, industrial, and irri gation sectors. (Note, all the group averages are obtained by dividing the sum of the country values, thus achieving a weighted, not a simple, average.)

#### **Irrigation**

The next set of data concerns irrigation. Column 8 shows the 1990 **net irrigated area,** which is the amount of land equipped for irrigation for at least one crop per year. The total 1990 withdrawals for irrigation are shown in C9. The estimated **annual irrigation intensity,** which represents the degree of multiple cropping on the net irrigated area each year, is given in C10. Since there is no international data on irrigation intensity, this parameter is estimated, as explained in Appendix B, and is subject to significant er rors. The **gross irrigated area,** which is not shown in table 1, is obtained by multiplying C8 by C10.

The **withdrawals** of water per hectare of gross irrigated area per year (Cll) are shown in terms of the depth of irrigation applied to fields (m/ha). The estimated crop water requirements are shown in C12, also in m/ha. These estimates are discussed in more detail in Appendix B. For now, it is sufficient to say that the crop water requirement is based first on estimates of the refer

ence evapotranspiration rates (ETo) of the irrigated areas in each country during the entire crop season (see Appendix B). Once this is obtained, precipitation during the crop seasons (at the 75 percent exceedence level of probability—at least 3 out of every 4 years this amount of precipitation is ob tained) is subtracted from ETo to obtain the "net evapotranspiration" (NET) require ments of the crops. This is used as an indi cator of the amount of irrigation water that crops need to obtain their full yield poten tial.

It is notable that the average NET for Group 1 is substantially higher than that of the other groups. This means, other things being equal, that substantially more water is required to irrigate a unit of land in the hot and dry countries in this group than in the other groups. However, because radiation increases both evapotranspiration and yield potential, yields on irrigated lands are likely to also be higher—so the "crop per drop" may be similar between these groups.

Column 13 shows the results of dividing the 1990 NET (C12) values by the total irri gation withdrawals (Cll). Assuming, as noted above, that withdrawals in WRI are equal to DWR in figure 3, this is the "effec tiveness" of the irrigation sector for the coun tries (this is close to what Molden [1997] calls the "depleted fraction for irrigated agricul ture" and Keller and Keller [1996] refer to as the "effective efficiency of irrigation").

The range of variation of irrigation ef fectiveness among the countries is enor mous. Several countries have an irrigation effectiveness of 70 percent (which is the highest possible in this model due to the way cropping intensities are estimated, as discussed in Appendix B). But many are exceptionally low. For example, Germany (no. 107) has only an 11 percent irrigation effectiveness—even though most of the irri gation in Germany is with sprinkler irrigation! Such large anomalies are undoubtedly due to errors in the data on withdrawals and need to be revised.

#### **Two irrigation scenarios**

We have constructed two irrigation sce narios for this study. In both we assume that the **per capita gross irrigated area will be the same** in 2025 as it was in 1990 (or, more precisely, that the per capita NET will be the same). The implications of this assump tion are discussed below and in Part III. Thus the differences between these sce narios depend exclusively on assumptions about the change in basin irrigation efficien cies over the 1990 to 2025 period.

The first, or "business as usual," sce nario (SI) assumes that the effectiveness of irrigation in 2025 will be the **same** as in 1990 (C13). Thus the 2025 projection of irrigation withdrawals in this scenario is obtained simply by multiplying the 1990 irrigation withdrawals (C9) by the population growth (C2) for each country. The amount of 2025 irrigation withdrawals under this scenario is 3,376  $km<sup>3</sup>$  (C15), which is equal to the 62 percent growth of population over the pe riod.

The second, "high effectiveness" sce nario (S2) assumes that most countries will achieve an irrigation effectiveness of 70 per cent on their total gross irrigated area by 2025. This is the default value shown in C14. However, we have entered override values for some of the countries based on two kinds of considerations. First, we have imposed an upper limit on the increase in irrigation effectiveness of 100 percent over the 1990 to 2025 period. This has been done both in the interests of realism and to re duce the influence of data errors (e.g., Ger many) on the results. Second, we have made personal judgments—based on imper fect knowledge about the hydrology, crop systems, water salinity, and technical and managerial capabilities of the countries about the upper limits to irrigation effec tiveness in certain countries. For example, for reasons explained in Appendix B, rice irrigation will generally have lower basin efficiencies, because of high drainage and mismatches of return flow, than other crops; Pakistan requires more drainage water to leach salts to sinks; and small islands are more likely to lose drainage water to the oceans. Users can, of course, change these default values as they wish to generate dif ferent results.

The 2025 projection of irrigation with drawals for the second scenario is obtained by first multiplying the net irrigated area (C8) by the irrigation intensity (C10) to ob tain the gross irrigated area (GIA). The GIA is then multiplied by NET (C12) and the population growth (C2). Dividing this prod uct by 100 gives the 2025 total crop water requirements in km<sup>3</sup>. Dividing this amount by the assumed basin irrigation efficiencies in C14 gives the total irrigation withdrawals required to meet the crop water require ments under this scenario (C16):

#### C16 =((C8 x C10 x C12 x C2) /100)/ C14

Most of the countries in Group 5 are projected to decrease irrigation withdrawals from 1990 to 2025 because of gains in irri gation effectiveness. This causes a problem in summing total withdrawals at the allcountry level because water surpluses in one country rarely help solve water short ages in another country. Thus in computing the total for the countries, the 1990 with drawals for countries in group 5 are used to maintain comparability. In any case, it is not clear that these countries would want to in vest in high irrigation effectiveness (see Appendix A).

Even with this adjustment, the growth of world irrigation withdrawals in the second scenario is only 17 percent (C17), whereas in the first scenario it is equal to population growth, or 62 percent. As shown in C19, the difference in the amount of total water withdrawals for irrigation between the two scenarios is  $944 \text{ km}^3$ . This represents a 28 percent reduction in the amount of total 2025 withdrawals (C18) in the sec ond scenario compared to the first. As shown in Part III, this amount of water could theoretically be used to meet about one-half of the increased demand for addi tional water supplies over the 1990 to 2025 period.

It should be emphasized that the in crease to high irrigation effectiveness in the second scenario would require fundamental changes in the infrastructure and irrigation management institutions in most countries • and would therefore be enormously difficult and expensive. In some of these countries, it may be easier simply to develop additional water resources than to attempt to achieve high irrigation effectiveness. Which of these alternatives is best is a question which only a detailed analysis within the countries can address.

Several other aspects of these irrigation scenarios should be briefly discussed:

The scenarios do not directly allow for increased per capita food production from irrigation. But, with essentially the same per capita irrigation capacity in 2025, considerable increases in per capita food production would be ex pected due to "exogenous" increases in yield from the irrigated area because of better seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation management practices. Indeed, one of the nice things about irrigation is that once a field is adequately watered, it can support any amount of increased yield without the need for any additional wa ter (NET for the crop is constant). Thus, the **productivity** of irrigation water—the value of the "crop per drop"—would be substantially increased.

- Most authorities would agree that irri gation must play a greater proportion ate role in meeting future food needs than it has played in the past. The rea sons are that most of the best rain-fed areas are either already developed or have economically and environmentally prohibitive costs of development and that the potential for rapid growth of yields in marginal rain-fed areas is low. Thus even with higher yields on irri gated land, perhaps more per capita ir rigation will be needed in 2025 than in 1990.
- The projections do not provide for ex cess irrigation supplies for times of drought.
- The country-level analysis ignores re gional differences within countries. It is small consolation to a farmer in the north of China to know that the south is very wet—unless a river basin transfer is feasible, as in this case, it might be.
- The analysis ignores trade in food and the opportunity for some water-short countries to reduce irrigation, import food instead, and transfer water out of irrigation to the domestic and agricul ture sectors. As noted below, some of the most water-scarce countries are al ready doing this, and they will un doubtedly do more in the future. But here one runs into a composition prob lem: not all of the countries in the world can do this. So the question is, if some countries are to import more food, which countries are to export more—and, will this require more irri gation in those countries?

Obviously, all of these are important aspects of the problem requiring future re search. But they cannot be adequately ad dressed here. This analysis does, however, provide the framework in which such ques tions can be properly addressed.

#### **Domestic and industrial projections**

We have made projections for the domestic and industrial sectors in terms of a combi nation of criteria relating to water as a ba sic need and as subject to economic de mand or "willingness to pay" (Perry, Rock, and Seckler 1997).

In terms of basic needs, Gleick 1996 es timates that the minimum annual per capita requirement for domestic use is about 20  $m<sup>3</sup>$ ; we assume an equal amount for industrial use for a total per capita diversion of 40 m<sup>3</sup>. As shown in table 1 (C5 and C6) many countries, especially in Africa, are far below this amount. For countries below 10  $m<sup>3</sup>$  per capita for the domestic or the industrial sectors in 1990, we have only doubled the per capita amount for each sector in 2025. This avoids unrealistically high per centage increases for these sectors in very poor countries over the period. However, for some countries, we suspect that the per capita domestic withdrawals are greatly underestimated. In some countries, the data may be only for developed water supplies, not including the use of rivers and lakes for domestic water. Also, since we assume that withdrawals are equal to DWR, not to the utilization of water by the sectors, with drawals exclude recycled water and are, therefore, likely to underestimate actual per capita utilization in these sectors.

For countries above 10  $m<sup>3</sup>$  per capita for domestic or industrial sectors in 1990, we project 2025 demands for these sectors on the basis of the relationship between per capita GDP (provided for this study by

Mark Rosegrant of the International Food Policy Research Institute [IFPRI]) and the per capita water withdrawals shown in fig ure 4.

Because of variations of individual countries around the regression lines in figure 4, this procedure results in some complications that have been handled as follows. For those countries whose pro jections for 2025 are below 20  $m<sup>3</sup>$  per capita, we assume 20  $m<sup>3</sup>$  or the 1990 per capita level, whichever is higher. For those countries with 1990 withdrawals greater than the projected 2025 level, we assume their 1990 level. However, for countries with 2025 projections twice the 1990 level or greater, we assume only twice the 1990 level. Countries with very high per capita domestic and industrial consumption are likely to be able to make better use of their water by 2025. Accordingly, we have placed a ceiling on per capita withdrawals for these sectors. This ceiling is set at 1990 levels of per capita withdrawals for all countries at or above the level of US\$17,500, and it is set at the projected withdrawals up to this amount for countries whose 1990 per capita GDP is below this amount. The per capita projections for domestic and industrial sectors in 2025 are shown in C20 and C21. These may be compared with the corresponding figures for 1990 in C5 and C6. The total 2025 withdrawals to these sectors are  $1,193$  km<sup>3</sup> (C22), representing an increase of 45 percent over 1990 (C23). Since this is less than population growth, the reductions in per capita use of water by the high water-consuming countries thus more than offset the per capita increases by the low water-consuming countries at the world level.

It should be noted that recycling water from the domestic and industrial sectors has not been included in the projections. The major reason for this is that with high effec-

*FIGURE 4.* Per capita domestic and industrial withdrawals.



tiveness in the irrigation sector, the amount of committed outflows from the system and the environmental needs for water within the system could be reduced to unaccept able levels for many countries. This needs further research.

# **Growth of Total Water Withdrawals to 2025**

In the second, high irrigation effectiveness scenario, total water withdrawals by all the sectors in 2025 are  $3,625$  km<sup>3</sup> (C24). This is an increase of 720  $km<sup>3</sup>$  (C25) or 25 percent (C28). Under the first, "business as usual" scenario, the withdrawals would increase by 57 percent, or by  $1,664$  km<sup>3</sup>. The truth perhaps lies somewhere between these two scenarios. If so, increased irrigation effec tiveness would reduce the need for devel opment of additional water resources (DWR) by about one-half.

However, these world figures must be interpreted with care. For example, exactly one-half of the gains in irrigation due to high effectiveness occur in China and India (see the percentage figures in C19), and only a few more countries would account for most of the balance. Also, the most wa ter-scarce countries tend to have the highest irrigation effectiveness and, therefore, the least potential for gains in effectiveness. Part III provides a more accurate view of these matters on a group- and country-wise basis.

# *Part III:—Country Groups*

In this part, we explain how the countries can be grouped to reflect different kinds and degrees of water scarcity. We then discuss the alternatives measures for increasing the pro ductivity of water and the problems associ ated with developing new water resources. We conclude by indicating the implications of our analysis for global food security.

### **Country Grouping**

Two basic indicators are used to group countries in terms of relative water scarcity under the second, high irrigation effective ness scenario. These are (i) the projected percentage increase in total withdrawals from 1990 to 2025 (C28) and (ii) the total withdrawals in 2025 as a percentage of the AWR (C29). The latter is conceptually the same as the UN indicator, but because of the importance of recycling we consider only those countries with a value greater than 50 percent to be water-scarce, based on this indicator. The logic behind these two indicators is that, other things being equal, the **marginal cost of a percentage increase in withdrawals** rapidly increases after with drawals as the percentage of AWR (C29) exceeds 50 percent. For example, at 50 per cent or below it may be one unit of cost per percentage increase, but at 70 percent it may be three units of cost per percentage increase. If we knew what the cost curve is, we could have only one, continuous, scar city indicator that would be calculated by multiplying the percentage increase in with drawals for each country times the relevant points on the cost curve. But we do not, hence the division between Group I and the other groups.

For purposes of comparison with the IWMI indicators, we have also shown the

2025 values of the Standard indicator (C26), but this is not used here.

Group 1 countries consist of all those countries for which the withdrawals as per centage of annual water resources are greater than 50. Belgium (no. 94) presents a curious anomaly. Withdrawals as a percent of AWR are 73, thus Belgium should be in Group 1. But its growth in withdrawals is very small, at .4 percent. Thus, we have put it in Group 4!

The remaining four groups have suffi cient water resources that presumably can be developed at reasonable cost to supply the projected demand. Thus, excluding countries that are already in Group 1, the countries are grouped according to their percentage increase in withdrawals.

Group 2 countries are those with an in crease in projected 2025 water withdrawals of 100 percent or more. Group 3 countries are those with an increase in projected wa ter withdrawals in the range of 25 percent to 99 percent. Group 4 countries are those with an increase in projected water with drawals below 25 percent, and Group 5 are countries those with no, or negative, in crease in projected water withdrawals. The situations of these countries may be briefly described as follows.

**Group 1** consists of countries that are waterscarce by both criteria. They contain 8 per cent of the population of the 118 countries studied. Their 2025 withdrawals are 191 percent of 1990 withdrawals and 91 percent of AWR. Short of desalinization, many of these countries either have reached or will reach the absolute limit in the development of their water supplies—with some already drawing down limited groundwater sup plies. It can be expected that cereal grain imports will increase in most of these countries as growing domestic and industrial water needs are met by reducing withdraw als to irrigation.

**Group 2** countries account for 7 percent of the study population. These countries are principally in sub-Saharan Africa where conditions are often unfavorable for crop production. In the development of water resources, emphasis must be given to ex panding small-scale irrigation and increas ing the productivity of rain-fed agriculture with supplemental irrigation.

**Group** 3 countries account for 16 percent of the population and are scattered throughout the developing world.

**Group 4** countries are mainly developed and have 16 percent of the total study popula tion. Future water demands are modest, and available water resources appear to be adequate. This group contains two of the world's largest food grain exporters, USA and Canada. If import demands were to rise significantly in the other groups, one might expect to see an expansion of irri gated agriculture in Group 4 countries to meet the growing export demand.

In light of its massive per capita water withdrawals for the industrial sector (pre sumably for hydropower and cooling water for thermal energy), we reclassified Canada from Group 3 to Group 4 on grounds that reasonable demand management and water conservation techniques should reduce fu ture water demands for these purposes.

**Group 5** countries account for 12 percent of the study population. With increased irriga tion effectiveness, these countries require no more water than they used in 1990 and most, indeed, require less. But it is doubtful if they would make heavy investments in increased irrigation effectiveness under these conditions—except, possibly, for envi ronmental purposes.

We have considered India and China separately from the five groups. Together they contain 41 percent of the study popu lation. In countries such as these, which have both wet and dry areas, national sta tistics underestimate the degree of water scarcity and thus can be very misleading. Cereal grain is now being produced in wa ter-deficit areas where withdrawals exceed recharge and water tables are falling. For example, northern China has approximately half of China's population but only 20 per cent of China's water resources (World Bank 1997). Growing demand for water in the north will be met with some combina tion of the following options: further devel opment of water resources and water stor age facilities; increased productivity of ex isting water supplies (e.g., through wider adoption of technologies such as trickle irri gation); regional diversion of water (e.g., south to north China); and increase in food imports. The capacity of India and China to efficiently develop and manage water re sources, especially on a regional basis, is likely to be one of the key determinants of global food security as we enter the next century.

## **Increasing the Productivity of Irrigation Water**

The degree to which the increased demand for water in 2025 is projected to be met bv increasing water productivity in agriculture, as opposed to developing more water sup plies, varies among countries. But as oppor tunities for development of new water re sources diminish and costs rise, increasing the productivity of existing water resources, both irrigation and rainwater, becomes a more attractive alternative.

The productivity of irrigation water can be increased in essentially four ways: (i) in creasing the productivity per unit of evapo transpiration (or, more precisely, transpira tion) by reducing evaporation losses; (ii) re ducing flows of usable water to sinks; (iii) controlling salinity and pollution; and (iv) reallocating water from lower-valued to higher-valued crops. There is a wide range of irrigation practices and technologies available to increase irrigation water pro ductivity ranging from the conjunctive use of aquifers and better management of water in canal systems, to the use of basin-level sprinkler and drip irrigation systems. The suitability of any given technology or prac tice will vary according to the particular physical, institutional, and economic envi ronment.

In addition, water productivity in irri gated and rain-fed areas can be increased by genetic improvements that would lead to increases in yield per unit of water. This would include increases in crop yields due to development of crop varieties with better tolerance for drought, cool seasons (which reduce evapotranspiration), or saline condi tions.

# **Developing More Water Supplies** —Environmental **Concerns**

The benefits of irrigation have resulted in lower food prices, higher employment and more rapid agricultural and economic de velopment. But irrigation and water re source development can also cause social and environmental problems. These include soil degradation through salinity, pollution of aquifers by increased use of agricultural chemicals, loss of wildlife habitats, and the enforced resettlement of those previously living in areas submerged by reservoirs. The result has been a growing conflict be tween those who see the potential benefits of further water resource development and those who view it as a threat to the environ ment.

Environmentalists have focused their attack on large dam projects such as the Narmada Project in India and the Three Gorges Dam in China. There are valid argu ments to support the views of both the pro moters and detractors. The long-term di verse and complex nature of the effects of water development makes it especially hard to balance these views within a simple costbenefit framework. In our view, however, those who oppose development of all me dium and large dams overlook the benefits to human welfare that in some instances may outweigh the costs severalfold. On the other hand, the water development commu nity has often committed social and eco nomic crimes in their passion for construc tion works. Rational alternatives to both ex tremes exist and must be adopted.

#### **Global Food Security**

For most of modern history, the world's ir rigated area grew faster than population, but since 1980 the irrigated area per person has declined and per capita cereal grain production has stagnated. The debate re garding the world's capacity to feed a growing population, brought to the fore in the writings of Malthus two centuries ago, continues. But the growing scarcity and competition for water add a new element to this debate over food security.

In a growing number of countries and regions of the world, **water has become the single most important constraint to increased food production.** The rapid growth in food production during the green revolution from the mid-1960s to the present was ac complished in large part on irrigated land.

Most authorities would agree that irrigation must continue to play even a greater pro portionate role in meeting future food needs than it has played in the past.

Our projections ignore international trade in food and the opportunity for some water-short countries to reduce irrigation, import food instead, and transfer water out of irrigation to the domestic and agriculture sectors. But as noted above, some of the water-scarce countries are already doing this and undoubtedly they will do more in the future. The question seems to be, which countries will import more food and which countries will export more? The exporters are likely to require more irrigation. IWMI and IFPRI are collaborating in research on this problem.

# *Conclusions*

Many countries are entering a period of severe water shortage. None of the global food projection models such as those of the World Bank, FAO, and IFPRI have explicitly incorporated water as a constraint. There will be an increasing number of waterdeficit countries and regions including not only West Asia and North Africa but also some of the major breadbaskets of the world such as the Indian Punjab and the central plain of China. There are likely to be some major shifts in world cereal grain trade as a result.

One of the most important conclusions from our analysis is that around 50 percent of the increase in demand for water by the year 2025 can be met by increasing the ef fectiveness of irrigation. While some of the remaining water development needs can be met by small dams and conjunctive use of aquifers, medium and large dams will al most certainly also be needed.

We believe that the methodology used in this report is appropriate and, with re finements, may serve as a model for future studies. However, the analysis reveals seri ous problems with the international data base. Furthermore, the dependency on na tional-level data for our analysis tends to underestimate scarcity problems associated with regional, intra-annual, and seasonal variations in water supplies. Much work needs to be done before the methodology can be used as a basin planning tool. In the future, we plan to update and improve the data set using information from special sur veys, studies of the special countries, and other information. The database has been designed so that it can easily be manipu lated by others to test their own assump tions. We welcome observations on the model by users and especially contributions of better data from those who have detailed knowledge of specific countries.

# **Recycling, the Water Multiplier, and Irrigation Effectiveness**

When water is diverted for a particular use it is almost never wholly "used up." Rather, most of that water from the particular use drains away and it can be captured and re used by others. As water recycles through the system, a "water multiplier effect" (Seckler 1992; Keller, Keller, and Seckler 1996) develops where **the sum ofall the with drawals in the system can exceed the amount of the "initial water withdrawals" (DWR) to the system bya substantial amount.**

**A** numerical example may help make this important concept clear in the context of figure 3. Assume that there is no water pollution, that all the drainage water in the system is recycled and, for simplicity, that the percentage of evaporation losses from each diversion is constant. Then, out of a given amount of DWR, the effective water supply (EWS) could be as high as:

 $EWS = DWR \times (1/E)$ ,

where,  $E =$  the percentage evaporation losses of all the withdrawals.

For example, if  $E = 0.25$ , the water multiplier would be 4.00; and four times the DWR could be diverted for use. Appendix table Al provides a simple illustration of the water multiplier. The recycling process starts with an initial diversion of water that has a pollution concentration of 1,000 parts per million or 0.1 percent. It is assumed that 20 percent of the water is evaporated in each cycle and that each use in the cycle adds 0.1 percent of pollution to the drain age water. Because of additional pollutants and the concentration of past pollutants in the water due to evaporation losses, the pollution load of the water increases rap idly. By the fifth cycle, it may be too high for most uses and the drainage would be either diluted with additional initial water supplies or discharged into sinks. At this point, the water multiplier would be 2.4. But assuming that the cycle runs its course through 10 recyclings, EWS would increase to 3,199 units, over three times the DWR.

There are three major implications of the water multiplier effect. The first is that where recycling is possible, **pollution control is one of the most basic ways of increasing wa ter supply.** With the notable exception of sa linity in the case of irrigation water, most pollutants can be economically removed from drainage water. In areas of extreme water scarcity, where water for urban and industrial uses is high-valued, even salinity can be removed by desalinization processes.

The second major implication is that in sofar as recycling processes are not ac counted for in the estimates of the water sup ply for countries, it is likely that **the amount ofactual water supply ina system willbe under estimated.** It should be noted that most of the recycling occurs naturally—that it is built into the system, so to speak—by flows of drainage water to rivers and aquifers where it reenters the supply system. As noted in the text, it appears to us that all the international data sets on the water supply of countries, on which all the indicators of water scarcity are based, ignore water recycling effects. It is **simply assumed that once water is withdrawn it is lost to further use.** Insofar as this is true, the international data sets and the indictors based on these data seriously underestimate the amount of water actually available for withdrawals in most countries.





Third, of course, recycling does not create water. If the first withdrawal of 1,000 units were applied with 100 percent effectiveness (EVAP = 100 percent), the **same irrigation needs would be met,** with no return flow, and the multiplier would be 1.00.

Clearly, there are two distinct paths to increasing irrigation effectiveness (or any other kind of water use effectiveness). The first is by increasing the effectiveness of the specific application of water to a use, as in the example of 100 percent effectiveness di rectly above, which **reduces return flow.** The second is by **increasing return flows** by recy cling drainage water that would otherwise flow to sinks. Theoretically, there is an op timal combination of these two paths of ap plication effectiveness and recycling effec tiveness, as they may be called, that leads to optimal effectiveness in the irrigation sector as a whole.

Which of these paths is optimal depends on complex hydrological, managerial, and economic considerations. For example, high application effectiveness may increase the productivity of water by providing more precise management of plant, fertilizer, and water relationships. On the other hand, high recycling effectiveness may be better when part of the objective is to recharge aquifers. An important research task that IWMI is now undertaking, is to specify what combination of these paths, under which conditions, optimally leads to high irrigation sector effectiveness.

## **Estimating Irrigation Requirements**

The task of estimating requirements for irri gated agriculture has been one of the most difficult parts of this study. The reason is that much of the basic data needed for this task is either not available or is not com piled in a readily accessible form. One of the future tasks of IWMI's long-term re search program is to solve this data prob lem through the World Water and Climatic Atlas (IIMI and Utah State University 1997), remote sensing, and by special studies of the countries. But in the meantime, approxi mations of the important variables are made.

Appendix table B2 presents the data for this section. Column 1 shows the net re ported irrigated area of the countries (FAO 1994). This is the area that is irrigated at least once per year. Column 2 shows total withdrawals for irrigation in 1990. Dividing agricultural withdrawal by net irrigated area, one obtains the depth of irrigation water applied (C3) to net irrigated areanot considering losses of water in the distri bution system.

To estimate the need for water in irriga tion, we begin with Hargreaves and Samani 1986, which provides basic climatic data for most of the countries of the world. An ex ample from Mali is shown in table Bl. This table shows precipitation (P) at the 95, 75, 50, and 5 percent probability levels; mean precipitation (PM); temperature; potential evapotranspiration (ETP) for a reference crop (grass); and net evapotranspiration (NET), which is ETP minus precipitation at the 75 percent exceedence level of probabil ity (here we do not adjust for "basin pre cipitation"). The irrigation requirement of the crop (IR) is defined as NET divided by the irrigation effectiveness—in this case, as sumed to be 70 percent. Negative values of NET and IR are set at zero for purposes of these estimations.

For technical readers it should be noted that we have used potential ET, not actual ET, which may cause an upward bias in NET, depending on the extent of rice irriga tion. On the other hand, we have used full





Notes: Prob = probability. PM = Mean precipitation in mm. Tem C = Mean temperature in Celcius. ETP = Potential evapotranspiration in mm. NET = ETP - Precipitation at 75 percent probability in mm. IR = irrigation requirement in mm.

precipitation, not effective precipitation, which would cause a downward bias in NET. We hope these factors balance out to a reasonable approximation.

Agricultural maps (FAO 1987; Framji, Garg, and Luthra 1981; USDA 1987) of dif ferent countries were consulted to identify climatic stations located within agricultural areas. (Unfortunately, there are no interna tional maps of major irrigated areas). Then tables similar to the one above were ana lyzed for the stations in all the countries. From these data, a representative table for the country as a whole was developed. When the irrigated area of different regions within a country is known (here only the USA and India) on a state or provincial ba sis, the representative table is compiled as a weighted average; otherwise a simple aver age of the stations is used.

Given these data, the **potential crop season** (C4) is defined as the number of months with an average temperature of over 10 °C. In table Bl, for example, the temperature is above 10 °C in all 12 months, thus the poten tial crop season for this station is 12 months.

A crop season is assumed to be 4 months long. The NET in the "first" season is the sum of the NET in the 4 consecutive months when the irrigation requirement is lowest (C5). In table Bl, for example, it is assumed that irrigation for the first crop starts in June and extends through Septem ber. The irrigation effectiveness is assumed to be 70 percent (C6). The irrigation require ment at 70 percent irrigation effectiveness is given in C7. The surplus or deficit (C3-C7) of the withdrawals after the first season ir rigation is in C8. The irrigation intensity of the first season is in C9. If there is a surplus after the first season irrigation, it is assumed to be used for multiple cropping of the irri gated area (the "gross" irrigated area). However, we assume that 50 percent (C10), default value, of the agriculture withdraw

als remaining after the first season is not available for the second season because of evaporation losses and lack of storage facili ties. This average loss figure should be in creased for areas with highly peaked sea sonal water supplies, such as monsoonal Asia, and with inadequate storage facilities. It should be decreased for areas with the reverse conditions, such as in Egypt, which can store several years of water supply in the High Aswan Dam. The withdrawals carried over to the second season (max {0,C8 x [1-C10]}) are in Cll.

Then the second consecutive low-irriga tion requirement period (of 4 months) is chosen from table Bl, after leaving a har vesting and land preparation period of at least a month following the first season, to utilize the remainder of the agricultural water. The country's NET for the "second" season is given in C12. The amount re quired at 70 percent basin effectiveness is given in C13. The surplus of withdrawals after the second season irrigation is in C13. It should be noted that while changes in the percentage of water carried over to the sec ond season will change the estimated irriga tion intensity of the country, it will not af fect the **proportional** change in irrigation re quired over the period, since the same fig ure is applied to both 1990 and 2025.

If a country has sufficient water to irri gate for up to 8 months, it is assumed that this is done. A limit of 8 months for the gross irrigation requirement is assumed. The annual irrigation intensity is shown in C15. For a few countries, the annual irriga tion intensity was found to be less than 100 percent. This may be due to discrepancies and errors in the reported net irrigated area in the database or insufficient water to pro vide full irrigation.

The NET for the gross irrigated area in 1990 is in C16. The depth of annual NET over gross irrigated area is in C17.

#### **A Note on Rice Irrigation**

Estimating the irrigation requirement for rice is exceptionally difficult. First, the ac tual evapotranspiration (ETa) for nearly all the major crops is about 90 percent of the reference crop of grass (ETP, in table Bl), but for rice, due mainly to land preparation by flooding and the consequent exposed surface of water, the ETa is about 110 per cent of grass. Thus, if the irrigated area of a country is one-half rice, the country average estimate is about right, but otherwise there is a corresponding error. Unfortunately, there are no international data on irrigated area by crop, so adjustments for this factor cannot be made. About 80 percent of the ir rigated area of Asia is in rice—so the error could be significant, especially in Asia.

Second, an even more difficult problem is that net evapotranspiration (NET) is not the only—or, in many cases, not even the most—important determinant of the irriga tion requirement for rice. Rice fields are kept flooded primarily for weed control. This creates high percolation "losses" from the fields. Thus in order to keep the fields flooded, an amount of water that is several times NET is often applied to the field. As if this were not enough, many farmers also like to have fresh water running through their rice fields, rather than simply holding stagnant water, in the belief that this in creases yield (and perhaps taste). There is no scientific evidence for this belief except that during very hot days running water may beneficially cool the plant. On the other hand, this practice flushes fertilizers out of the rice fields and contributes to water pol lution. Whatever the reason, this common practice leads to very high withdrawals of water for rice irrigation—and, even with re cycling, a considerable amount of mismatch ing between water supply and demand.

Technological and managerial advances in rice irrigation, especially with the use of herbicides, have created the potential for ir rigating rice at much higher effectiveness; but the problem lies in convincing farmers to adopt these new methods.

Also, in light of recycling, one wonders how the water withdrawals for irrigation are actually estimated in the WRI database. If the estimated "withdrawals" for irrigation in a country are based on a field irrigation requirement for rice that is several times NET for the gross irrigated area in rice, which may in fact be the case, this could lead to a serious overestimation of actual net withdrawals of water for irrigation in the country. If this overestimation possibility is true (and we suspect it is), then the imputed ineffectiveness of irrigated agriculture and hence the potential for water savings in rice-intensive countries are not as large as the data would indicate. Of course, this same recycling effect may be true for other crops as well, but the magnitude of the error would not be nearly so great. Clearly, this is an important area for further research into the data set. In the meantime, the calculations of potential water savings from the irrigation sector, especially in countries that have a high percentage of their area in rice, must be treated cautiously. Water requirements for crops should be made on the basis of NET, in the first approximation, with the difference between this and the irrigation requirement considered in light of recycling within the basin. Perhaps the best way to regard this problem is by saying that countries with intensive rice irrigation may have high **potential** for transferring water from agriculture, **if rice irrigation is, infact, highly ineffective from a basin perspective.**

Introduction to table 1. Country names and identification numbers.



1. AWR, total WITH and per capita WITH data are from FAO 1995, FAO 1997a, and FAO 1997b.

2. AWR of these countries are equal to internally renewable water resources of WRI data.

3. Canada and Belgium are moved to group 4.

4. AWR of Ethiopia are 80 percent of internally renewable water resources of WRI data.

Introduction to table 1. Description of columns in table 1.







*to*







![](_page_39_Picture_2245.jpeg)

# *Introduction to Appendix Table B2.*

![](_page_40_Picture_302.jpeg)

![](_page_41_Picture_668.jpeg)

*to*

![](_page_42_Picture_935.jpeg)

![](_page_43_Picture_1250.jpeg)

![](_page_44_Picture_1161.jpeg)

![](_page_45_Picture_1125.jpeg)

![](_page_46_Picture_1058.jpeg)

 $\label{eq:3.1} \langle \Psi \rangle = \langle \Psi \rangle \langle \Psi \rangle$ 

 $27\,$ 

![](_page_47_Picture_1364.jpeg)

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