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Global water consumption has tripled since the middle of the 20th century. In view of the world's growing population, this trend is set to continue. This not only affects emerging and developing countries, but also industrialised countries, where in some cases consumption exceeds natural supplies. In order to protect mankind's most important resource, experts from water research, politics and economics are working together to create solutions for the sustainable management of water supplies.

The aim is to guarantee water supply and wastewater disposal and to increase efficient usage. For this we need technical and structural innovations, as well as a systematic national and international exchange of scientific findings and practical applications.

Within the framework of the government's "high-tech strategy", the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is supporting the implementation of groundbreaking innovations within relevant fields of application. For the framework programme "Research for sustainable development" (FONA), the BMBF is set to provide more than two billion euro of funding by the year 2015. A major part of FONA is the water research that will be implemented within the BMBF's new principle "sustainable water management". BMBF is therefore promoting joint research projects with partners from the worlds of science and economics.

As well as enabling the exchange of knowledge, these projects are intended to provide emerging and developing countries in particular with support in training specialist personnel and thus ensuring they can deal with their ecological problems themselves in the long term. They also give German companies the opportunity to play a greater role in the global market in the fields of water and environmental protection. In this way, we are securing quality of life and at the same time promoting Germany as a business location.

This eBook presents a selection of completed and ongoing BMBF research projects. With such projects, we are making a significant contribution to expanding Germany's leading position as a development partner and exporter of environmental technologies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johanna Wanka".

Prof. Dr. Johanna Wanka,
Federal Minister for Education and Research