

Plan to stave off water war in SA

By [Dave Chambers](#)

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Former World Bank vice-president Ismail Serageldin famously predicted that "the wars of the 21st century will be fought over water".



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But now a [plan has emerged](#) to ensure that if violence erupts, it bypasses South Africa. It has been put together by the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Boston Consulting Group.

Among the steps suggested in the report are:

- Water-use compliance and disclosure reporting requirements for JSE-listed companies;
- Equipping communities with the skills to fix leaks;
- Strictly enforced penalties for abuse of water; and
- Incentives for the private sector to save water.

WWF's senior manager for fresh water Christine Colvin said the worst drought for 20 years had taught some harsh lessons.

"Although the Cape is still in the grip of a deepening disaster, a greater danger may be that the floods in the rest of the

country wash away the good resolutions to be better prepared and strengthen water governance," she said.

South Africa would face a water deficit of 17% by 2030, the report said. By then demand for water was expected to have grown from 15-billion cubic metres to 18-billion cubic metres.

Delegates at the Future of Water workshop in January imagined four scenarios:

- Ample water across the country but excessive waste due to decaying infrastructure, and a depressed socioeconomic environment;
- Adequate water and a booming economy leading to growing demand;
- High economic growth but water scarcity due to drought and pollution; and
- Severe drought coupled with recession.

Four key goals emerged: Becoming a water-conscious country; implementing strong water governance; managing water supply and demand; and becoming 'water smart' by commercialising low-water technologies for industry and agriculture.

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