



# 10<sup>TH</sup> WORLD WATER FORUM 2024

**Florence, Assisi and Rome**  
candidates to host the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of  
the World Water Forum (WWF)



ITALY WATER FORUM

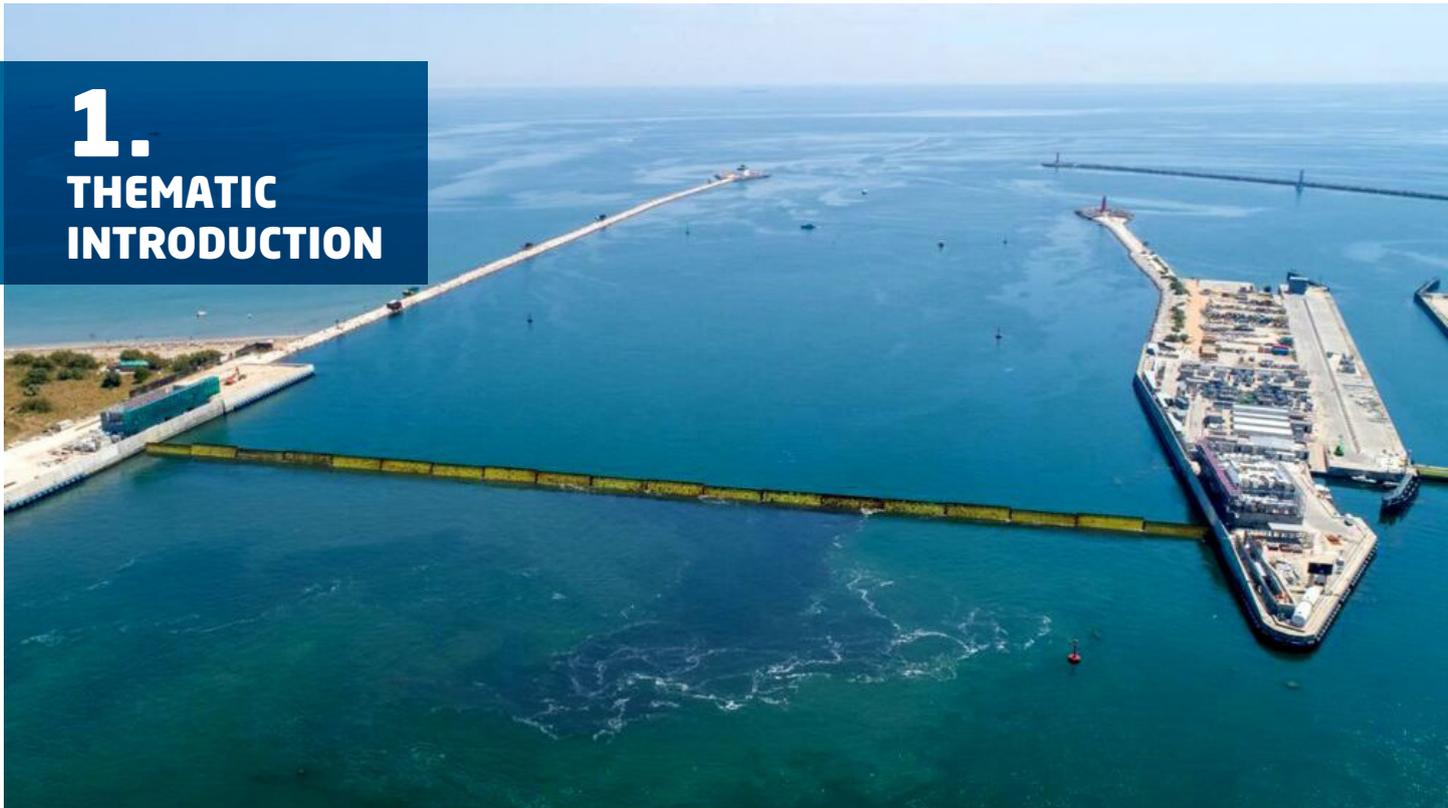
FACING A GLOBAL CHANGE:  
IN THE MAKING OF THE WATER "RINASCIMENTO"

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## 1. THEMATIC INTRODUCTION



Surface and underground water resources are essential components to all natural ecosystems. Water is a fundamental element for life and plays an essential role for the development of all human economic activities. Its quantity is limited on the earth's surface and, moreover, unevenly distributed. It covers almost 70% of the planet's surface, but its fresh component represents only the 2.5% (35 million km<sup>3</sup>).

According to the FAO water statistics released in 2021, with the growth of the world population there is a change in the distribution per capita of fresh water resources: between 2000 and 2018 there was a decline of 20% of fresh water globally. The worst peaks occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa (41%), Central Asia (30%), West Asia (29%) and North Africa (26%) (FAO AquaStat, 2021).

*Mose (Electromechanical Experimental Module), a system of mobile dams aimed at protecting Venice and its lagoon from flooding*



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According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), groundwater withdrawals for irrigation use from 2010 to 2018 increased by 19%. The global water stress indicator went from 17% to 18% in just two years (from 2017 to 2018), with many differences between continent and continent.

There is a close link between poverty and physical and economic access to water resources: the lack of water resources mines the productive and economic development of a country. Populations with a lower percentage of access to water often reside in low-income countries (especially in rural areas). The most critical areas remain those of sub-Saharan Africa and eastern and southern Asia. Among the most populated countries with less access to water resources: Ethiopia (22% of the 77.4 million), Mozambique (43% of the 19.8 million), Niger (46% of the 14 million) and, Nigeria (48% of the 131.5 million).

It is also important to stress the strong linkage between water, energy and food, the so called "**Nexus**", introduced by the "Nexus 2011" Bonn Conference. It represents the strong interrelation between the availability of water resources and the ability to guarantee water, food and energy in order to reach an equitable and sustainable growth. Population growth, urbanization and climate change are all factors causing growing pressure on water resources.

Moreover, the issue has always been at the center of the activity of the main international development agencies. Among others: the **UN Food and Agriculture**

**Organization** (FAO) and its Land & Water Division, besides implementing activities on the ground, developed software for the simulation of crop water requirements (*AquaCrop* and *Cropwat*) and a database with global water statistics (*AquaStat*); the **International Fund for Agriculture Development** (IFAD) works in the sector with dedicated programs in both the agriculture and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) domains; **UN-Water**, coordination mechanism between UN agencies for fresh water formalized in 2003, encompasses all aspects relating to freshwater management, including the interface between fresh and salt water.

Finally, it is important to mention that both in 2022 and 2023 events of great importance for the sector will be organized. In 2023, the **UN Water Conference**, the first on the topic after the 1977 UN Water Conference in Mar del Plata, jointly organized by the Government of Tajikistan and the Netherlands, represents the mid-term review of the implementation of the objectives of the International UN Decade "Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028". In 2022, among others, the **Groundwater Summit 2022**, to be held at the UNESCO Headquarters (Paris) in the period 7-8 December 2022 (the theme of groundwater resources will also be taken up by the World Water Development Report (WWDR) 2022, edited by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).



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# 2.

## THE WORLD WATER FORUM (WWF)



The **World Water Forum (WWF)**, organized on three years basis by the **World Water Council (WWC)**, represents an event of paramount importance in the international arena to raise public awareness on the major issues relating to water resources management, in the civil, industrial and agricultural domains.

The WWC is a multi-party international organization, created in 1996 and headquartered in Marseille. The mission of the WWC is to bring together the international community to create public awareness mainly among decision makers about the importance of water related issues for the sustainable and equitable development of the planet.

The WWF provides a unique technical platform where the international community discusses programs, challenges, opportunities concerning water related issues: from its use in agriculture to desertification, from the management of inland waters to rising sea levels,

from the access (both physical and economic) to water resources and its distribution in urban areas up to the global rising issues linked to the **blue diplomacy**.

The previous Fora have been hosted, chronologically, by Marrakesh, Den Haag, Kyoto, Mexico City, Istanbul, Marseille, Daegu Gyeongbuk (South Korea) and Brasilia. The 9th Forum (scheduled for 2021, but postponed to 2022 due to the SARS COVID-19 pandemic) will be hosted by Dakar (Senegal). On this point, it should be noted that the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS)**, supporter of the Italian application to host the 10th WWF, will contribute to the 9th WWF by participating in specific thematic sessions.

The last WWF (Brasilia 2018) had over 100,000 visitors, 172 countries represented, 12 Heads of State, 56 Ministers and over 100 State Delegates in over 350 work sessions and Events attended by over 1,000 organizations and about 2,000 journalists.



## 3. THE ITALIAN APPLICATION

With an average precipitation rate of 832 mm/year and a total water withdrawal per capita of 899.8 m<sup>3</sup> (2008), according to FAO, the **total renewable water resources** (TRWR) in Italy amount to 191.3 km<sup>3</sup>/year. In 2008, the pressure on freshwater resources (as % of TRWR) amounts to 28.1%.

In this context, considering its peculiar geographic and orographic conformation and the many climatic types, Italy has always had a close dialogue with water resources in its culture, history and life, in order to manage it in a proper and sustainable way.

Besides, Italy has a long tradition in the conservation and management of water resources, especially in areas characterized by arid and semi-arid climates. The technical-scientific expertise on the subject are the basis of Italy's substantial commitment in terms of both interventions aimed at ensuring access to drinking water and the conservation and management of water resources. Italy has favored potable uses; consistent efforts in the direction of participatory management of water use in rural areas, favoring efficient irrigation interventions for agriculture.

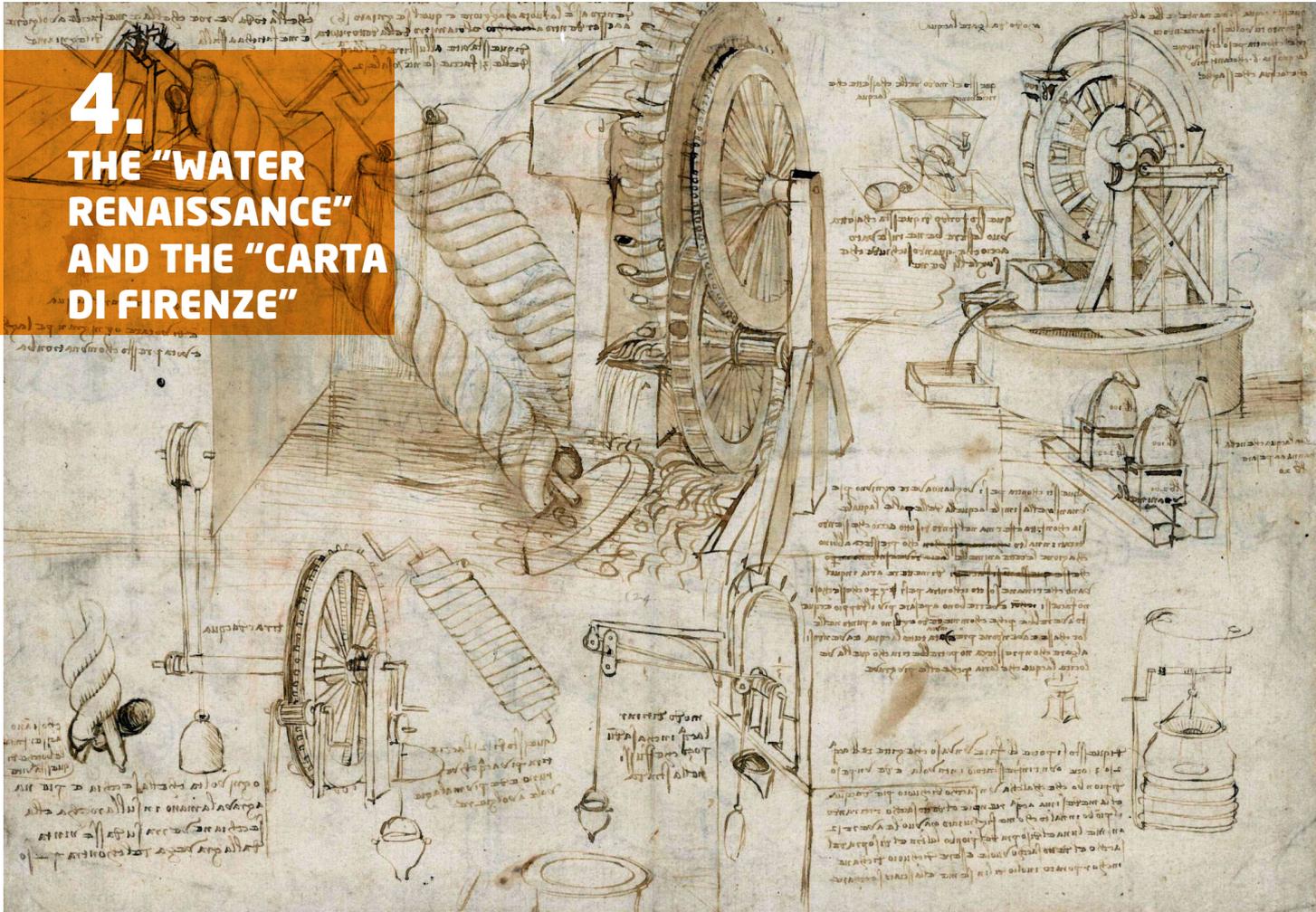
Many national research centers belonging to both the **National Research Council** (CNR) and **Council for Agricultural Research and Agricultural Economics Analysis** (CREA), work in this domain with research programs and pilot activities on the ground, in order to have a more proper and sustainable management of water resources, both surface and groundwater. Besides, the Accademia and the Land Reclamation and Irrigation Authorities, belonging to the **National Association**



**of Land Reclamation and Irrigation Improvements** (ANBI), work on daily basis to manage correctly the water resources. Moreover, the civil society, through its associations and organizations, and the profit sector deal with the issues of development, distribution and access to water in all sectors related to the blue economy. Italy is extremely rich in its social capital: grassroots organizations, environmental NGOs and Civil Society are extremely competent on the issue of the right to water and have a long tradition of mobilising communities, political parties, religious associations, volunteers groups on the theme. A proof of this "water awareness" was the mass participation in the Water Referendum of 2011, which brought 26 million Italians to vote.



## 4. THE "WATER RENAISSANCE" AND THE "CARTA DI FIRENZE"



The idea behind the Italian application is based on the concept of the so called **Water Renaissance**.

As the Renaissance marked, in the Italian history, a revival of the arts and science linked to a strong innovation and freedom, the result of a new awareness of man's means, Italy wants to mark with precise points the boundary between a before and after the 10<sup>th</sup> WWF. In continuity with the final agenda of Dakar, which will mark the path between water security and ecosystem security, the Italian Forum will carry out actions aimed at restoring the centrality of the water resources management in the uncertain future of post-pandemic humanity and in the midst of the climate crisis.

The central themes in the 10<sup>th</sup> WWF edition are the following:

- Post SARS COVID-19 pandemic crisis and access to water as a primary good for public health: human right to water recognized by as many states as possible in their constitution;
- Climate crisis and extreme water events: bringing water back into climate negotiations, in accordance to what was remarked at COP26 by the UN agencies of the "water and climate coalition" and in connection with COP27 (Egypt 2022) and COP28 (United Arab Emirates 2023).



Moreover, the specific themes of the 10th WWF edition are the following:

- Climate change and adaptation measures;
- Water extremes (floods-droughts);
- Resource and risk management;
- Digital transition and ecological transition;
- Post- SARS COVID-19 pandemic crisis and water;
- Human right to water;
- Gender issues in water management;
- Occupation, sustainable development and water: blue opportunities;
- Ports and blue infrastructures;
- The spiritual value of water;
- The water - food - energy nexus;
- Nutrition, health and well-being;
- Culture, beauty and water.

The core values of the 10<sup>th</sup> WWF edition are the following:

- **Inclusion** and respect for the different visions, sensitivities, proposals of the movements fighting for the human right to water, of urban and rural communities, of companies, of institutions in an open and fruitful dialogue;
- **Transformation** through the a gender transformative approach: enhancement of gender issues and highlighting the roles of men and women in the management of water resources;

- **Sustainability:** water management, access, protection of marine environments, care of the territory will be the guiding star of the discussions, not a label but a paradigm to measure choices;

- **Opportunity** for a true water renaissance: diplomatic pressure from above and below to expand the number of states subscribing to the human right to water; possibility of including water among the promises of the climate agenda signed by governments and in upcoming COPs.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi, a unique event will be held with the intention of ensuring the presence of exponents of all religions, in a dialogue on the relationship between Spirit and water. The aim of the Forum is the collective drafting and signing of a "Carta di Firenze" for the Water Renaissance.

The works will give space to culture, beauty, and the wisdom of communities over time in their relationship with water through suggestive places and encounters. Alongside conferences, BtoB meetings, hackathons, virtual villages, there will be exhibition moments of Italian excellence in the technology and engineering sector but also 15 itineraries distributed throughout the country with dedicated thematic events.



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## 5. THE PROMOTING COMMITTEE

The Italian application to host the 10th World Water Forum 2024, with the cities of Florence, Assisi and Rome, was filed in September 2020 by the Promoting Committee.

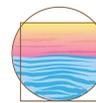
The application is supported, among others, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

(MAECI), by the Department of the Civil Protection, by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - AICS, by the Ministry of Ecological Transition - MITE, by the Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi and the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research - ISPRA.

The Promoting Committee is made up of:



# ROMA



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The following are also part of the **Promoting Committee** to date:





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The Promoting Committee is structured in an Institutional Committee and a Board of Directors.

The **Institutional Committee** is composed of:

- President Dario Nardella, Mayor of Florence;
- Vice President Stefania Proietti, Mayor of Assisi;
- Vice President Emilio Ciarlo, AICS.

The **Technical Board of Directors** is composed of:

- Delegates from AICS;

- Delegates from Sacred Convent of St. Francis of Assisi;
- Delegates from the Municipalities of Florence, Assisi and Roma Capitale;
- Erasmo D'Angelis, Massimo Gargano, Mauro Grassi, Francesca Greco, Endro Martini, Giovanni Selli, Filippo Maria Soccodato.

The technical secretariat and the ordinary management of the activities are coordinated by the non-profit foundation "Earth and Water Agenda".



## KEY CONCEPTS



There is no healing from a pandemic without water for all; the **"Renaissance of water"** includes solutions for "one world, one health vision"



The **Renaissance of water** means a gender-transformative approach with women and men equally represented in all thematic sessions of the Forum



The **Renaissance of water** means: putting back water into the climatic agenda, as requested by the United Nations "Water and Climate Coalition" launched at COP26



Italy, by hosting the 2024 World Water Forum, could make a mark in advocating for making the human right to water universal



Participation and inclusion are the key elements for the **Renaissance of water**: inclusion of civil society is needed for the preparation of the political agenda and the final declaration of the Forum



The **Renaissance of water** means helping business to be more "water neutral". Zero pollution of water resources, circular economy for a water-fair trade. In this context, sharing both technical experiences and solutions is fundamental



The **Renaissance of water** means: helping farmers and agri-food companies to re-think their food-supply chains in terms of water management, including the proper combination of technological innovation and traditional knowledge in order to produce "more crops per drops" in a sustainable way



The **Renaissance of water** means: giving water back its primary meaning: life. Water is spirituality, civilizations' crossing point and, above all, a source of peace



The **Renaissance of water** means water technologies and water-related infrastructures. This is what Italy can show to the world: a real "Water-expo"



The **Renaissance of water** means moving towards a future where managing water sustainably is key