

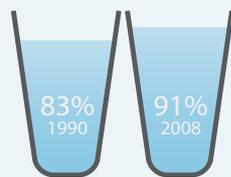
Republic of South Africa

Total Surface Area: 1 221 037 km²
 Estimated Population in 2009: 50 110 000

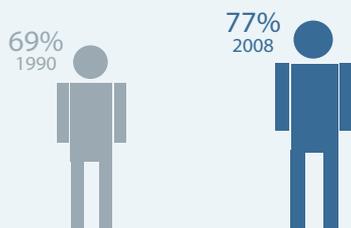


PROGRESS TOWARDS MDG GOAL 7

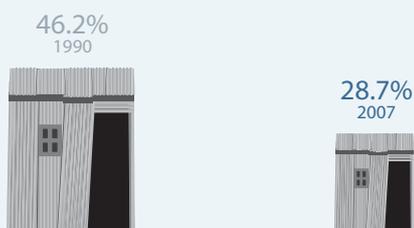
South Africa has made significant progress in supplying improved drinking water since 1994 and developing the national water and sanitation programme: 91 per cent of the population is served. Less progress has been achieved in providing improved sanitation. Between 1990 and 2008, urban provision increased from 80 to 84 per cent and it grew from 58 to 65 per cent in rural areas. South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that formally recognizes water as a human right.



Proportion of total population using improved drinking water sources, percentage



Proportion of total population using sanitation facilities, percentage



Slum population as percentage of urban

WATER PROFILE

Water Availability

	Year	Value
Average precipitation in depth (mm/yr)	2008	495
Total renewable water (actual) (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)	2008	50
Total renewable per capita (actual) (m ³ /inhab/yr)	2008	1 007
Surface water: total renewable (actual) (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)	2008	48.2
Groundwater: total renewable (actual) (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)	2008	4.8
Dependency ratio (%)	2008	10.4

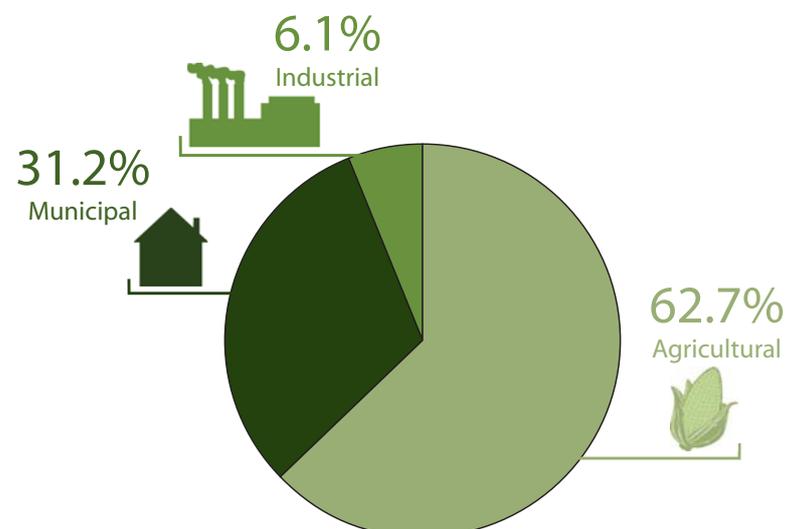
Withdrawals

	Year	Value
Total freshwater withdrawal (surface water + groundwater) (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)	2000	12.5
Surface water withdrawal (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)
Groundwater withdrawal (10 ⁹ m ³ /yr)
Total water withdrawal per capita (m ³ /inhab/yr)	2002	270.6
Freshwater withdrawal as % of total renewable water resources (actual) (%)	2002	25

Irrigation

	Year	Value
Irrigated grain production as % of total grain production (%)	1988	9
Area salinized by irrigation (1000 ha)

Withdrawals by sector (as % of total water withdrawal, 2000)

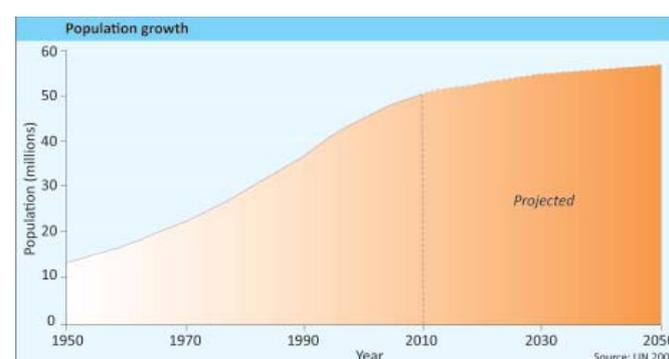




Water Supply Shortage

Population pressure, an expanding economy and increased evaporation driven by a changing climate are all contributing to water stress in South Africa (UNOCHA 2009a). With only 1 007 m³ of renewable water available to each inhabitant in 2008, South Africa is already hovering dangerously close to the international water scarcity threshold (FAO 2008). The country's population has grown significantly over the last few decades. Between 1990 and 2008 alone, the population increased by almost 13 million people (WHO/UNICEF 2010). The nation's water supply is expected to become even further stretched in coming years, going from a situation of water stress to one of water scarcity.

The impending water crisis is further exacerbated by the threat to the quality of freshwater resources. In 2008, Ukhahlamba—an impoverished



district in Eastern Cape Province—reported very high levels of E. Coli and other bacteria in some parts of its water supply. This necessitated an issuance of “boil alerts”, with some communities requiring water delivery by tanker trucks (UNOCHA 2009b). Heavy rains can aggravate the problem by washing human and animal waste into water systems, further contaminating supplies.

Distribution of Water Rights

With an average of only 495 mm of rainfall each year, rain-fed cultivation is a challenge in South Africa (FAO 2008). Even this relatively limited level of precipitation is strictly seasonal and highly variable and 60 per cent of runoff occurs from only 20 per cent of the total land area (FAO n.d.). As a result, agricultural production in the country is extremely dependent on the ability to secure access to a water supply.

Water access is especially problematic for South Africa's small-holder farmers, many of whom attained land rights following land reform in the country. Land

and water rights, however, are distributed separately causing huge inequities in access (IPS 2009). Approximately 98 per cent of water has already been allocated (UNOCHA 2010). With no legal mechanisms in place to protect the interests of small-holder farmers, many face huge obstacles in sustaining their land and production. Globally, small-holder farmers, especially women, produce an estimated 80 per cent of the food consumed in the developing world (IFAD 2010); if South Africa's farmers cannot access the water needed to sustain their crops, there is a potential for the country to suffer from food insecurity.