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Drought risk reduction for achieving Sustainable Development Goals

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Water is crucially important to most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Not having enough water due to drought or water scarcity can result in food shortage, environmental degradation, reduced energy availability, poverty, illness and loss of life, migration and conflict. Lack of water also has intangible consequences related to equality, gender, and education that are often overlooked. These cascading socio-ecological impacts are most acute in the Global South where exposure and vulnerability to drought are high. African nations have therefore urged the international scientific community to support them by developing tools and data covering all aspects of drought risk (Padma, 2019). Our challenge is to increase our understanding of the relationship between water and society and how to use this understanding to improve water management and reduce drought risk. Real progress towards achieving the SDGs can only be made when our science is instrumental towards solving real-world problems. With the “Drought in the Anthropocene” group (90+ scientists working on the feedbacks between drought and society as part of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences’ Panta Rhei decade, <https://iahs.info/Commissions--W-Groups/Working-Groups/Panta-Rhei/Working-Groups/Drought-in-the-Anthropocene.do>) we are doing interdisciplinary research on which data and tools we can utilise to reduce drought risk around the world. Here, we will share many recent examples of our research on the links between drought and SDGs and discuss ways forward to use our increased scientific understanding to make actual impact towards achieving the SDGs.

Padma, T. V. (2019). African nations push UN to improve drought research. *Nature*, 573, 319-319.

Panta Rhei Drought in the Anthropocene group: -