

Water scarcity

We can often take water for granted. In a place like the UK, water shortages make it into the news. But for many families around the world, water scarcity is **a way of life**.

That's because 2.8 billion people live in water scarce areas. Water is scarce most often because it's badly managed, not only because places can be naturally dry. In the main, water scarcity is **a man-made problem**.

Water is a fundamental resource that underpins both **life and livelihood**. Water is essential to **human flourishing**. So water scarcity is an especially big problem for the third of the world's population who rely on small-scale farming to make sure they have enough to eat.

Like **Maria Yolanda Ávila**. Yolanda is 35 years old and lives with her husband and their three children in the watershed of the Lurín River near Lima, Peru.

"I need water for domestic tasks such as washing and cooking, and for personal hygiene," Yolanda says. "But I also give water to the animals I have around my home. My husband and I use water for irrigating our land. To me, **water means life**. Without water **the people, animals and crops cannot live**."

Yolanda's experience is common. Around the world communities like Yolanda's are facing an **uncertain future**. Climate change and land degradation make the challenges created by water scarcity even more difficult to manage.

Rio+20

This June world leaders will gather for '**Rio+20**', the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which will be held in Rio, Brazil.

It marks 20 years since the Rio '**Earth Summit**'. 1992's original Rio conference was a landmark event, kicking off local and international processes like the UN climate talks.

But much has changed around the world. Over the last 20 years **problems have become crises**. As Yolanda knows, one of the most important is the worsening **water crisis**.

So Rio+20 is a chance to renew commitment to sustainable development, but it must be a sustainable development that has the needs of **the poorest at its heart**. World leaders must commit to immediate and long-term progress towards this goal.

But fairness and flourishing won't make it onto the agenda at Rio+20 without some effort on our part. We need to **send a message** to the UK government that families like Yolanda's need to be at the heart of the Rio+20 talks.

Progressio, the international development charity with Catholic roots, is urging communities like ours to help make sure Rio+20 is a big step towards ensuring poor people and communities have the water they need for their livelihoods.

Take action!

The politician with the responsibility for leading the UK at the Rio+20 conference is the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, **Caroline Spelman** MP.

This is our chance to make sure Mrs Spelman hears the voices of the poor around the world, and it's a chance **we must take**. Please support people like Yolanda by joining Progressio's Waterproof campaign. It's really easy.

By taking a photograph of yourself and your household and adding it to many others, we'll send a visual message to Mrs Spelman that we care about sustainable development and we care about **families like Yolanda's**.

[Add in exactly how you're going to manage the action here]

And if you don't want to pose for a camera, you can stand in solidarity by adding your name to our list or simply **being mindful** of the blessing of water in our lives by trying to use less of it. **Thank you for listening**. The last words should go to Yolanda:

"My hopes for the future are for a good future for my children, in a healthy environment; I hope we will have enough water in the future.

"World leaders meeting in June should really listen to all the poor people in the world and not ignore us, because I think **everybody in the world should have the same chance** to have a good and decent life."

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