

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

Our interest in authoring this textbook is anchored in our active engagement in the subject of transboundary (international) water and negotiation. Each of us has been involved, in one way or another, with teaching this subject in the classroom, conducting research, and participating in international forums. Some of us have even acted as consultants to governments involved in transboundary water decisions. In our work on the subject, we have come to realize that despite conflicting interests among riparians over a shared water body, the interactions among neighboring states have largely lead to cooperative outcomes.

Since the study of conflict and cooperation over freshwater has proliferated in academic and professional settings, a guiding textbook on the subject is imperative. To our knowledge, there is no such textbook and this volume is an attempt to fill that void. In addition, the study of conflict and cooperation over freshwater often requires an interdisciplinary approach, considering the topic's political, economic, legal, environmental, and hydrological nuances. To that extent, we feel this textbook speaks of the multidisciplinary facets of freshwater, by bringing together a group of scholars from the aforementioned fields to analyze these important points. The lessons learned and issues raised in this volume are applicable to the student or the practitioner, regardless of the disciplinary background they prescribe to.

This volume also hopes to provide the reader with a somewhat positive assessment regarding the future of the world's water. Often heard are gloomy scenarios citing "water-wars" as making up future conflicts. Media reports, as recent as 2006, have predicted that armies are on stand-by to tackle wars over water.¹ Even respected international leaders have predicted that water scarcity will lead to interstate violence. Most notable have been expressions made by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan citing that "Fierce competition for fresh water may well become a source of conflict and wars in the future."² Similarly, Ismail Serageldin, at the time Vice-President of the World Bank, was cited that "If the wars of the twentieth century were fought over oil, the wars of this century will be fought over water."³

¹Russel, B. and Morris, N. "Armed Forces are Put on Standby to Tackle Wars over Water," *The Independent*, February 28, 2006, p. 2.

²Association of American Geographers (AAG), (March 1, 2001). "United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan addresses the 97th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers" [Transcript of speech]. Association of American Geographers. Retrieved November 2, 2004, from <http://www.aag.org/News/kofi.html> (Last visited on September 5, 2005).

³Serageldin was quoted in Crosette, B. "Severe Water Crisis Ahead for Poorest Nations in the Next Two Decades," *The New York Times*, August 10, 1995, Section 1, p. 13.

While such predictions are well suited to capture headlines and turn heads, they are marred with sensationalist and populist appeal. Conflicts indeed proliferate over transboundary water, yet cooperation among states usually ensues. Examples of cooperation far outnumber armed incidents. This volume is dedicated to assessing these phenomena.

The book's main readership are graduates in economics engineering, water law, international relations, and practitioners in water resource management, international water and water policy.

The book comprises 11 chapters, allowing adjusting the sequence of issues into a 13-week semester course. The book also includes a series of annexes with supporting material, and software that allows the reader to have hands-on experience with the various concepts that have been discussed and demonstrated in the book. It is planned that the set of case studies and the scope of the hands-on analysis will be expanded in future editions.

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