

Draft for Public Comment
Draft United Nations Framework
Classification for Resources
Supplemental Groundwater Specifications
Prepared by the
Groundwater Resources Working Group of the Expert Group on
Resource Management

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Groundwater is a vital water supply for humanity. Worldwide, 2.5 billion people in urban and rural areas depend solely on groundwater resources to satisfy their basic daily water needs. Access to safe, affordable and reliable drinking water and sanitation services are basic human rights. They are indispensable to sustaining healthy livelihoods and maintaining people's dignity according to SDGs. In addition, the role of groundwater in agriculture is worthwhile noting especially for low-income countries to reach the food self-sufficiency. None such statements are said concerning commercial minerals; as such, this should exempt groundwater from being treated in the same group with mineral or energetic resources.

The eco-hydrological role of groundwater should also be mentioned as aquifers have vital interconnections with rivers, lakes, wetlands and even plants. Groundwater also controls many features on the Earth's surface. The depth of the water table is partly responsible for different plant species occupying different positions along the slopes from hill to valley, as only the drought tolerant plants can live on dry hill sides and water tolerant plants live near streams. In desert environments, groundwater discharge forms oases, which provide habitats for animals and plants.

Thirdly the transboundary aspect of aquifers are not clear in the classification proposed. Finally it is deplorable that the Groundwater Resources Working Group takes a vision of experts from sub-Saharan Africa. The only need actually is to increase the understanding of our groundwater systems, to raise awareness on the vulnerability of this resource and for managing them in a thoughtful manner. Efforts going in another way won't be useful for the global community.

References:

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