



WORLD WATER DAY 2021: VALUING WATER

#WorldWaterDay is a United Nations observance that celebrates water and raises awareness of the global water crisis, with the theme of World Water Day 2021 being **valuing water**. Water has multiple values for individuals, households, communities, governments and businesses globally. It plays an enormous part in food, culture, health, education, economics and the integrity of our natural environment, and therefore it is critical to safeguard water for the benefit of everyone, and to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6: to ensure water and sanitation for all.

IOM WASH values the multidimensional role water plays in the lives of the communities where we work. IOM WASH provide safe access to sufficient quantities of clean water for human consumption and livelihoods, and work with communities and governments to protect water sources. This year **#WorldWaterDay** is about what water means to people. IOM have asked communities where IOM operates what **#ValuingWater** means to them, to support and celebrate all the different ways water benefits our lives, and to ensure it is properly valued and safeguarded for everyone.



Jama Abdi Slalan with livestock. IOM 2020

In Somalia

IOM have rehabilitated 26 boreholes and built 46 shallow wells, that provide clean and safe water to vulnerable communities.

For Ibaado Salah Nur #Watertome means a life free from drought.

“I wasn’t born in here, I moved because of the drought. Here we can collect [water] by ourselves from the well and bring it home. This water is used for everything. We cook our food, wash the dishes and wash the clothes.”

For Jama Abdi Slalan water means livelihoods. “I am a nomadic man with goats, camels, and a family. Everything I do is for these camels. Our lives are consumed by livestock. The borehole is good for our lives. We drink from it and it has only a positive impact on our lives. And it has been nothing but good for the animals.”

In North-east Nigeria

Over 2.1 internally displaced people (IDPs) living in camps and camp-like settings and in host communities rely on a steady water supply to feed their families, prevent disease, and keep their businesses afloat. St. Hilary camp is an informal settlement in Maiduguri, Borno, the state worst-affected by the humanitarian crisis. In 2020, IOM rehabilitated a borehole that provides solar pumped water to camp residents as well as the neighboring community.



A woman collects water at St Hilary camp from a solar-powered borehole rehabilitated by IOM. IOM 2020.



Furiara greets a thirsty customer. She resuses old plastic bottles of water and soda to package her drinks. IOM 2020.

For Furiara, **#Watertome means benefits to business**, saying “I used to spend a lot of money buying water, but now I use that money for my business.” Furiara sells tiger nut juice and zobo, an infusion made from hibiscus.

In Suleimanti camp, another informal settlement, two water points distribute 21,000 liters of water in Suleimanti daily. **For children living in the neighboring houses #Watertome means being able to fill up their jerrycans and buckets at a water collection point.**

Last year, IOM designed and installed 659 foot-operated handwashing stations in Borno and Adamawa States which prevent the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding contact with surfaces. **For Abatcha #Watertome means safe hygiene**, saying that he endeavors to raise awareness among his family of the importance of physical distancing and reporting COVID-19 symptoms. “I always tell them that if their temperature is high, they should inform me immediately.”

In Yemen

It is six years into the conflict and over a year since fighting erupted along the outskirts of Ma’rib, Al Jawf and Sana’a governorates, causing the displacement of nearly 150,000 people mostly towards Ma’rib city and surrounding areas. Displacement sites in Ma’rib are overcrowded, with limited access to essential



A displaced woman receives a water container during a distribution in a site in Ma'rib. Photo O. Headon IOM 2020

services like clean water. IOM are working to provide comprehensive water, sanitation, and hygiene services to 16 displacement sites across the governorate. IOM rehabilitated the worn-out water network, extended pipes to displaced persons’ shelters that previously had no access to the network, and installed a submersible pump and generator to guarantee a continuous flow. 5830 families also received 500-litre tanks, which allowed them to safely store water.

For Hassan, #Watertome means resilience, “It was very hard for us whenever our flow of water would be interrupted. We had no way of storing water for these

emergencies. The family storages tanks are a solution to our problems. Now, we are prepared for any possible future water shortages and we can also keep the water clean.”

IOM carried out hygiene and water management awareness sessions to spread key messages with people about how to use and store water properly and how to follow correct hygiene practices to stay healthy and keep their sites clean. For **Abdalkreem, #Watertome means health**, “After the awareness sessions, we learned safe and healthy ways to transport and store water, as well as paying correct handwashing methods to limit the spread of communicable disease and combat the transmission of dangerous viruses.”

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