

GRAPE

Global Reformed Advocacy
Platforms for Engagement

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL TO LOCAL

Grape Pledge Kenya

Guarantee of 50 litres of clean and safe water or an equivalent cash compensation

Introduction

Kenya has a total area of 582,646 square kilometers, of which approximately 97% is land and 3% is covered by water bodies. Over 80% of the land area falls within arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), while the remaining 20% consists of non-arid and more agriculturally productive land that supports a significant portion of the country's economy and population.

Kenya is classified as a water-scarce country, with per capita water availability falling below 1,000 cubic meters annually—the internationally recognized threshold for water scarcity. As of now, the country's renewable freshwater availability stands at only 493 cubic meters per capita, well below the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended minimum.

With an estimated population of 47.6 million in 2019 and projections indicating growth to approximately 57.8 million by 2030, Kenya faces growing pressure on its limited water resources. The country grapples with several interlinked challenges, including:

- Persistent water scarcity and variability
- Worsening water pollution
- Continued catchment degradation
- Weak enforcement of water laws and regulations
- Commercialization of water forcing people in poverty to pay exorbitant prices for this basic human need
- Lack of or inadequate infrastructure for the provisions of water
- Inadequate water resources data collection and analysis
- Intensifying impacts of climate change

These challenges cut across various sectors of the economy and underscore the urgent need to prioritize effective water resources management and development as a key national agenda.

In light of the above, Kenya faces significant water scarcity challenges, with a large portion of the population lacking access to clean and safe drinking water, exacerbated by climate change, population growth, and poor water infrastructure and development. People living in poverty face additional burdens and costs when accessing water due to lack of infrastructure, higher pricing and need for transport. In reality this amounts to an extra tax on the poor.

Problem Statement

In the face of the pressing challenges posed by climate change and rapid population growth, Kenya is confronting a critical water crisis. Over one-third of its citizens are deprived of access to clean and safe water, resulting in a precipitous decline in per capita water availability below the essential threshold for health and sustainability. The scarcity of water further threatens the positive cultural foundations that have long sustained peaceful coexistence among Kenya's diverse communities. Traditional practices of farming and pastoralism are central to communal identity and harmony. As water sources decline, these life ways come under pressure, risking the breakdown of long-standing peace arrangements.

To address this crisis, it is imperative to implement innovative strategies and robust policy solutions that will secure a peaceful future where every Kenyan enjoys access to clean and safe water.

About the Grape Program

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) launched the Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement (GRAPE) program, a global initiative aimed at addressing unjust economic systems, the climate crisis, and peace-building, mobilizing churches and their congregants to advocate for social justice.

In response to the severe droughts and floods and critical water scarcity arising from the climate crisis, the Grape team in Kenya has chosen to advocate for the universal right to water. The campaign aims to secure access to 50 liters of clean and safe drinking water for every individual in Kenya or equivalent cash compensation by 2028.

The campaign notes that besides the national advocacy campaign, there is a compelling argument for the country to receive financial support from global climate justice, adaptation, and mitigation programmes, since Kenya has not been a key driver in terms of the climate crisis. Achieving a just transition can play a pivotal role in realizing the campaign's goal.

Clarion Call

We, as faith based institutions and partner organizations, commit ourselves to upholding the God-given and constitutional right of every Kenyan to access sufficient, clean, and safe water.

As stewards of creation, we pledge to advocate for just and equitable water access, especially for the vulnerable and marginalized. United across faith traditions and shared humanity, we commit to conserving water, promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring that no person in our communities is left without this essential resource.

In prayer, in action, and through compassionate service, we affirm our responsibility to protect and preserve water as a sacred gift and a shared blessing for all.

Declaration

We, the undersigned churches and organizations, have resolved the following:

- We are guided by the understanding that water is life and that equitable access to water is a theological mandate for economic and social justice.
- We note that water is a basic need for every human being, ensuring human dignity and the possibility of a flourishing life.
- We note divisive inequalities in Kenya, for instance, about 39% of Kenyans lack access to basic drinking water services.
- We note that water resources may be available, but they are often over-utilized or illegally utilized for business or industrial development. This takes the form of the destruction of water catchment areas or illegally utilizing of water resources without appropriate taxes paid.
- We observe the grave effect that this has since water is the basis of household and agricultural activities, business, industry, and robust public healthcare system. The lack of access to clean and safe water has negative implications for all of life.
- We observe the policy and legal provisions in Kenya, which have committed to the goal of providing water to all.
- We, therefore, commit ourselves to work with the county and national governments and all stakeholders to ensure that everyone has access to the minimum water requirement of 50 litres of clean and safe drinking water per day or an equivalent cash compensation.

Commitment Statement

We, the undersigned faith-based institutions and partner organizations, stand united in our commitment to advocate for access to clean and safe water for all members of our communities latest by the year 2028. Recognizing, that water is life and a basic human right, we commit to work together to make the provision of 50 litres of water to every Kenyan a reality to reduce the inequalities and to ensure this access to a basic need crucial for household and livelihood activities. We call on the government of Kenya and all stakeholders concerned to join us in this initiative.

Therefore, we agree:

- that every Kenyan should receive 50 litres of clean and safe drinking water per person per day
- that these 50 litres will be provided unconditionally
- that, where the 50 litres are not provided, the government provides equivalent cash compensation so that people can buy their water

In support of this campaign, we pledge to:

1. Raise Awareness: We will utilise our platforms to educate our congregations and communities about the importance of clean water and the dire consequences of water scarcity and contamination.

2. Advocate for Action: We will engage with local and national authorities, urging them to prioritise the provision of clean water as a critical component of public health and community development. We will advocate for this policy goal that not only ensures long-term access to clean water but also provides fair compensation to those affected by water scarcity.

3. Collaborate with Partners: We will partner with the Government of Kenya, local organizations, NGOs, and other faith-based groups to implement this policy goal, to enhance further effective clean water solutions and to ensure that our efforts are inclusive and impactful.

4. Support Policy Change: We will advocate for the implementation of equitable and sustainable climate policies at all levels of government, highlighting our commitment to social and economic justice and the protection of the environment as divine mandates.

As we move forward, we seek the guidance of our faith and the strength of our communities to drive this essential mission. In unity and purpose, we believe that by 2028, we can create a pathway to a future where every individual has access to clean and safe water; an essential foundation for life, health, dignity and justice. While we stand together in solidarity and faith, we envision a Kenya where ecological integrity social and economic justice are upheld, and where every community thrives in harmony with God's creation. Together, we will work tirelessly to fulfill this commitment for the well-being of our communities and in service to our shared humanity.

Let us work together to make the provision of 50 litres of water to every Kenyan a reality. We invite and call on government and all stakeholders to join us in this initiative.

Signatory to the Grape Pledge Kenya

Organization:

Position

Name

Date

Signature