



Reuters Staff

Toward Comprehensive Groundwater Management in Mexico

Since the twentieth century, groundwater has been a fundamental input for all economic activities. According to the United Nations, almost half of humanity uses it directly for domestic purposes (22 percent), irrigation (67 percent), and industry (11 percent). The United States and Mexico are among the world's ten top consumers. There is, however, a significant difference between them, since U.S. consumption is 386 percent of that of Mexico. In countries like Malta and Saudi Arabia, the only water supply comes from groundwater; and Tunisia, Belgium, Morocco, and Germany depend on groundwater for more than 75 percent of their supply. In the United States, 75 percent of counties source groundwater directly for human consumption, meaning that more than half the U.S. population depends on it.

In August 2017, the UNAM Center for Research on North America hosted the international forum "Asymmetries in Groundwater Management and Regulation in North America: Toward a Comprehensive System in Mexico." The aim was to bring together specialists to dialogue about different management systems and current knowledge about groundwater in the region, taking into consideration that Mexico was about to pass a water regulation framework legal reform. This special section, therefore, is the result of the reflection and debate by some of the

specialists who presented their approaches to the issue of groundwater. The contributions analyze the importance and strategic value of this resource as an element that has made possible sustained demographic and economic growth for 300 years. Despite its importance, however, it has been under-appreciated, contributing to the fact that current regulations and management do not adequately reflect its centrality for the subsoil and that distribution to the different sectors that need it has not been equitable either. These articles aim to contribute to the debate about the political implications of the processes of legal harmonization about water use across the globe.

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