



**7 November 2014 – The lack of access to water is a threat to peace and stability in the world, according to the UN's second in command.**

The UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson told the World Water Summit in London this week that water 'the most basic of all human rights', was a central element in global affairs and the development agenda with wide implications on international peace and security.

'Around today's world, we see how a lack of access to water can fuel conflict and even threaten peace and stability,' Jan Eliasson pointed out as he delivered the [keynote&nbsp;address](#) on *Tackling the Global Water Challenges: What's Next?*, to the Summit, which was organized by *The Economist*.

**The need for Hydro-Diplomacy**



The Deputy Secretary-General stressed the need for 'hydro-diplomacy, or water diplomacy' as degraded access to water stemming from climate change, or population pressure risks creating social tensions, political instability and intensified refugee flows.

'And most recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has also exploited access to water to expand its control over territory and to subjugate the population.

And from Tajikistan to Ethiopia, upstream/downstream tensions related to large hydroelectric projects remain an issue,' the DSG said.

### **Exacerbated by climate change**

The DSG quoted recent UN statistics to support his argument:

- **demand for water will grow by 40%** before 2050;
- **750 million** have **no access** to safe drinking water;□
- **80% of water** is **discharged untreated** into oceans, rivers and lakes;□
- **2 billion** have already **benefited from access to improved water sources**, thanks to actions inspired by MDGs.

Tensions over water will clearly be exacerbated by climate change but 'we must not lose sight of the opportunities that water offers as a source of cooperation.'

'No single Government can implement the water agenda alone,' the Deputy Secretary-General added.