

# Abu Dhabi warns of potential water shortage

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WATER SUPPLIES: Cut consumption, don't run your taps as often. (Getty Images)

**Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of EAD (Environmental Agency of Dubai) says the Emirate's groundwater supply has fallen by 18% since 2003.**

The claim, detailed in EAD's annual Abu Dhabi Emirate Water Resources Statistics Report, has led to Abu Dhabi increasingly relying on unconventional water resources, such as desalination and the re-use of treated wastewater.

Currently, 641 m<sup>3</sup> groundwater resources are still available, but less than 3% of this is fresh water. The remaining 97 percent, which is brackish, has a high salt content and can negatively impact soil quality for agricultural purposes.

The report also reveals that groundwater contributes 71.2% to the total water demand, followed by desalinated water (24%) and treated wastewater (4.8%),

Sheikh Hamdan noted that currently, the total consumption of water resources in the Emirate exceeds 24 times its natural recharge capacity.

This has arisen from the rapid social and economic development that Abu Dhabi has witnessed in the last four decades and the stress it has placed on water use.

He noted the Emirate has one of the highest levels of consumption in the world on a per capita basis. Ominously, he warned of challenges ahead unless action is taken to reduce the rate of consumption.

Majid Al Mansouri, EAD's Secretary General reinforced the point, arguing that the continuous growth in the population, which is expected to reach about 3.5 million people by 2030, in addition to the huge economic development projects planned, poses a major challenge in the next decade.

He pointed out that previous studies of the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi and Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority, has clearly shown a significant deficit in water supply in the coming years.