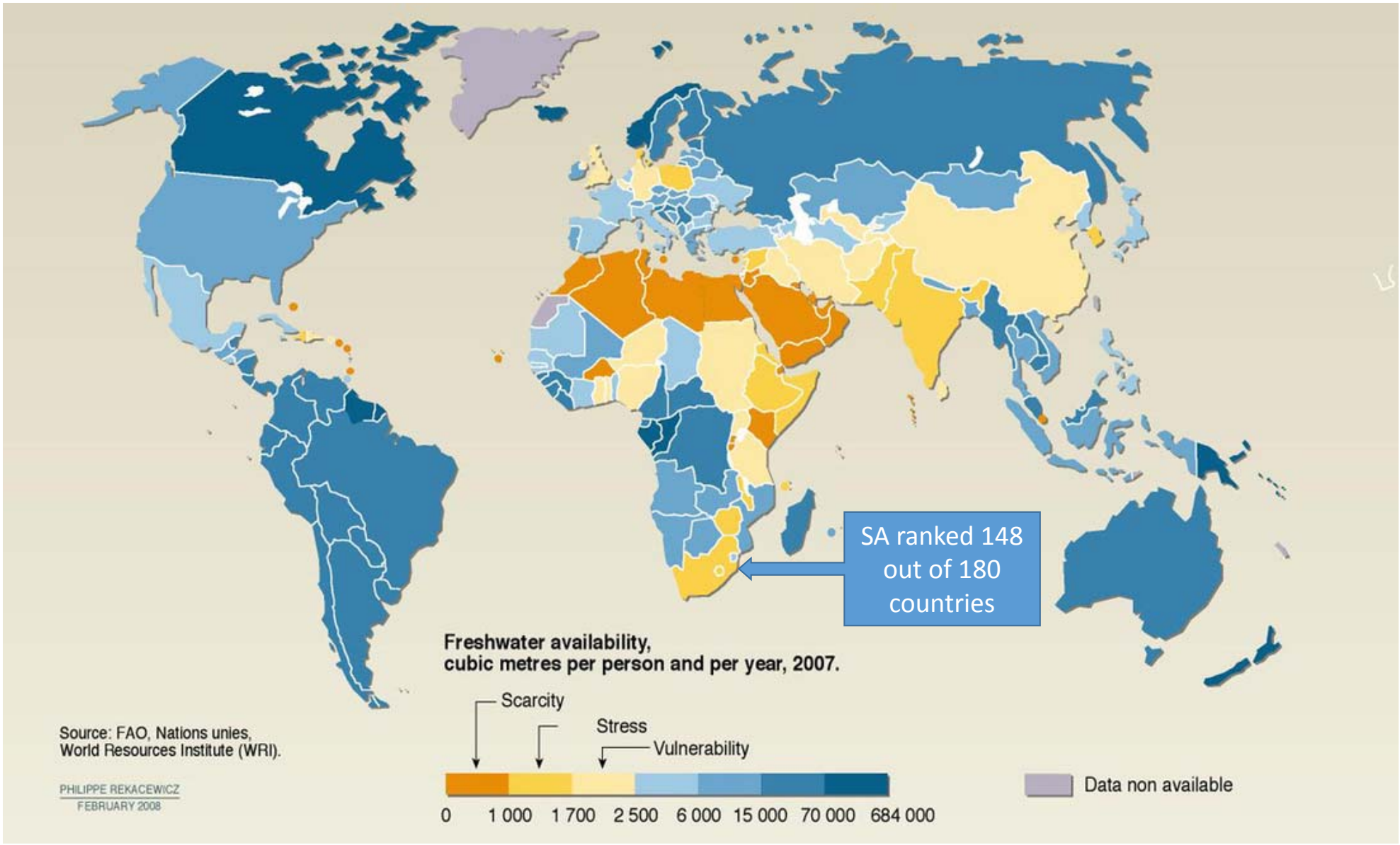
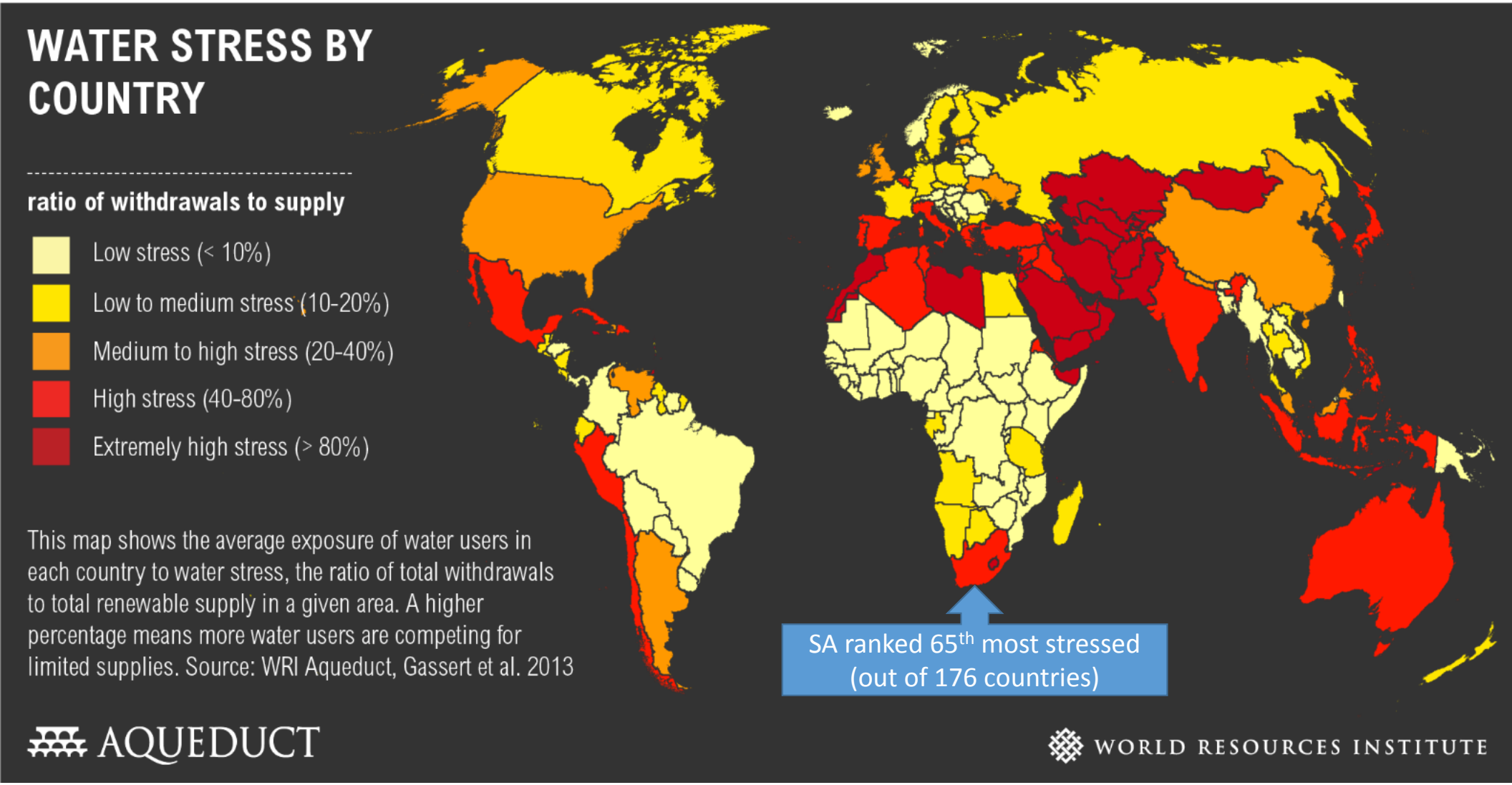
National and regional context for managing shared water resources in South Africa

John Dini

Water Research Commission

WATER RESEARCH COMMISSION


SA ranked 148 out of 180 countries
Freshwater availability,
cubic metres per person and per year, 2007.
Scarcity
Stress
Vulnerability
0
1 000
1 700
2 500
6 000
15 000
70 000
684 000
Data non available
Source: FAO, Nations unies,
World Resources Institute (WRI).
PHILIPPE REKACEWICZ
FEBRUARY 2008


WATER STRESS BY COUNTRY
ratio of withdrawals to supply
Low stress (< 10%)
Low to medium stress (10-20%)
Medium to high stress (20-40%)
High stress (40-80%)
Extremely high stress (> 80%)
This map shows the average exposure of water users in each country to water stress, the ratio of total withdrawals to total renewable supply in a given area. A higher percentage means more water users are competing for limited supplies. Source: WRI Aqueduct, Gassert et al. 2013
SA ranked 65th most stressed (out of 176 countries)
AQUEDUCT
WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

- 4 major river systems shared with 6 countries
- 60% of SA land surface

Department of Water Affairs. 2013. National Water Resources Strategy 2
www.dwa.gov.za/documents/Other/Strategic%20Plan/NWRS2-Final-email-version.pdf

Legislative framework

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL WATER ACT

Act No 36 of 1998

(English text signed by the President)
(Assented to 20 August 1998)

ACT

To provide for fundamental reform of the law relating to water resources; to repeal certain laws; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

PREAMBLE

Recognising that water is a scarce and unevenly distributed national resource which occurs in many different forms which are all part of a unitary, interdependent cycle;

Recognising that while water is a natural resource that belongs to all people, the discriminatory laws and practices of the past have prevented equal access to water, and use of water resources;

Acknowledging the National Government's overall responsibility for and authority over the nation's water resources and their use, including the equitable allocation of water for beneficial use, the redistribution of water, and international water matters;

Recognising that the ultimate aim of water resource management is to achieve the sustainable use of water for the benefit of all users;

Recognising that the protection of the quality of water resources is necessary to ensure sustainability of the nation's water resources in the interests of all water users; and

Recognising the need for the integrated management of all aspects of water resources and, where appropriate, the delegation of management functions to a regional or catchment level so as to enable everyone to participate;

BE IT ENACTED by the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, as follows: -

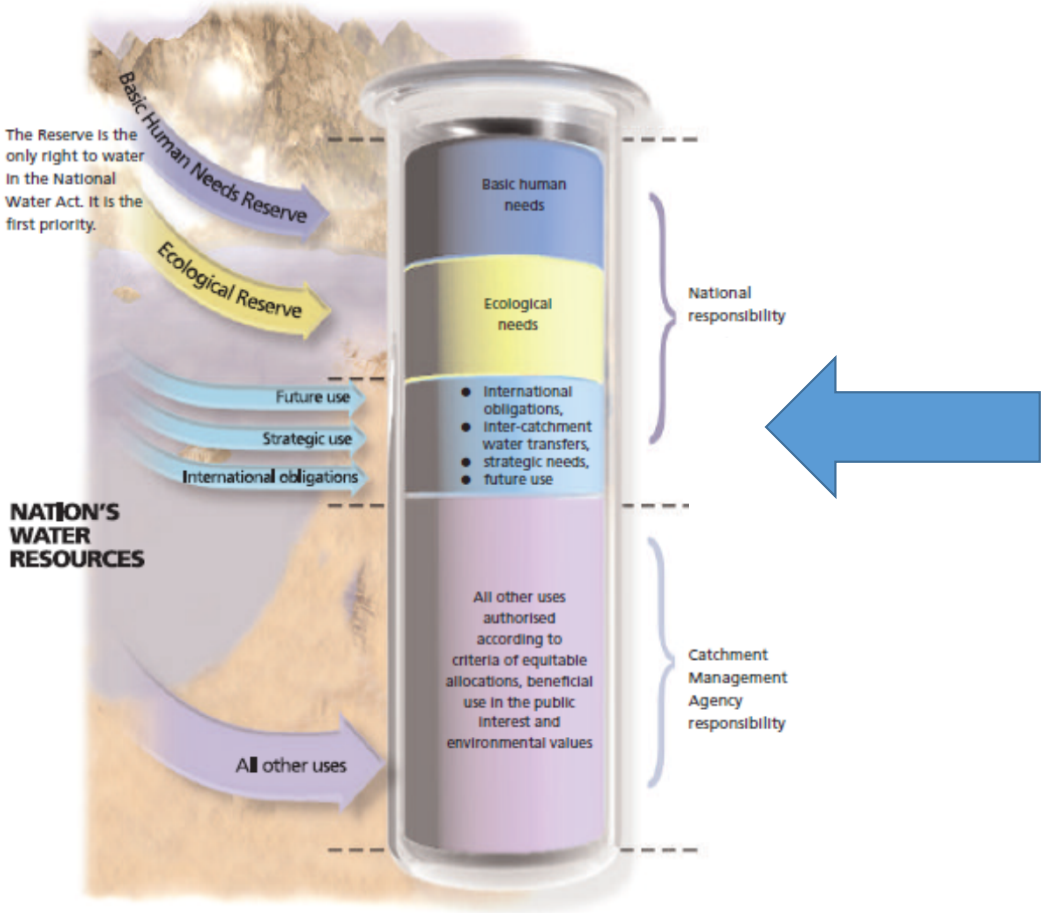
INDEX

CHAPTER 1: INTERPRETATION AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

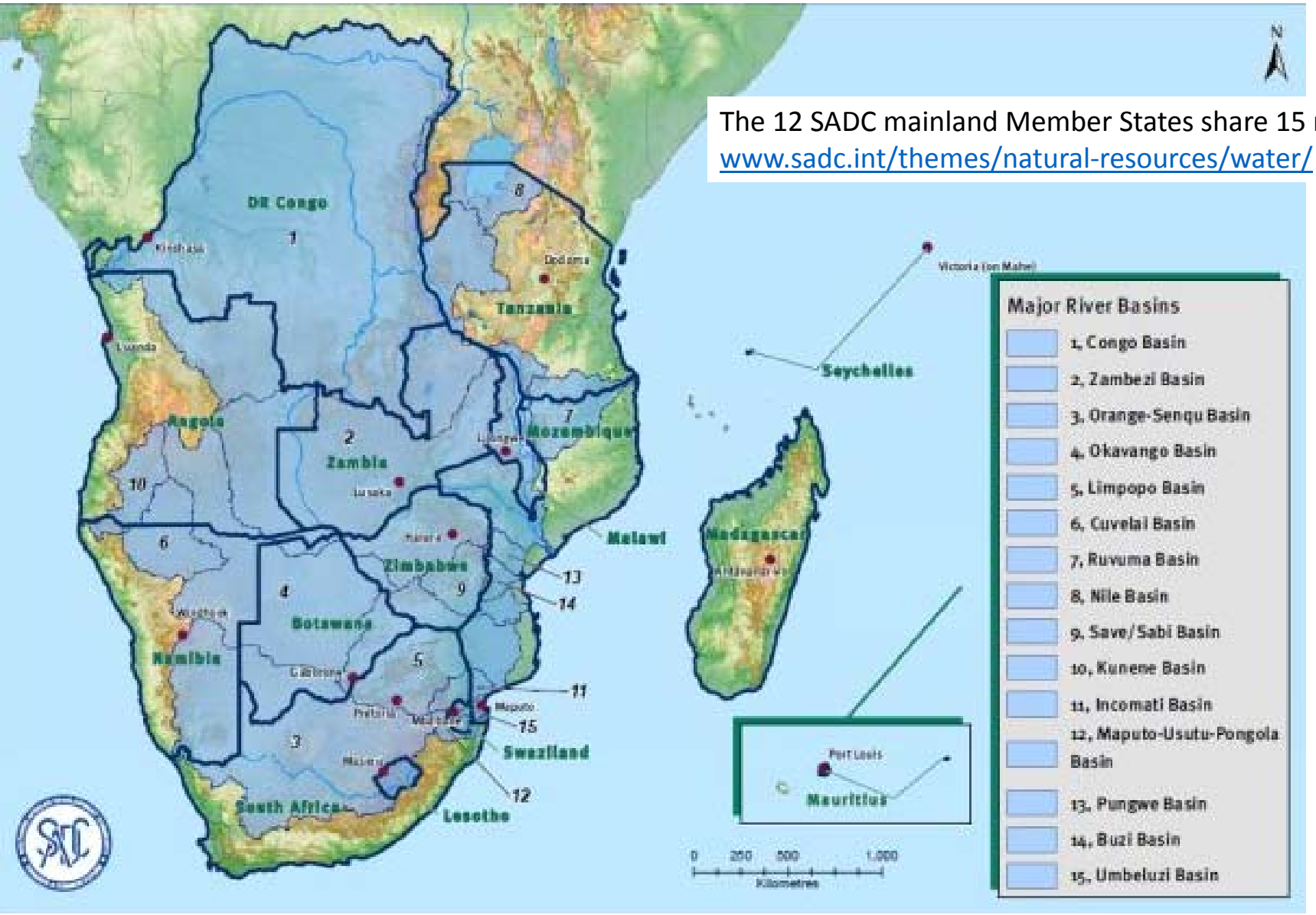
1. Definitions and interpretation
2. Purpose of Act
3. Public trusteeship of nation's water resources
4. Entitlement to water use

CHAPTER 2: WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Part 1: National water resource strategy



Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. Guide to the National Water Act www.dwaf.gov.za/Documents/Publications/NWAguide.pdf



The 12 SADC mainland Member States share 15 river basins.
www.sadc.int/themes/natural-resources/water/

SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses

- First binding agreement among SADC member states
- First drafted in 1995, revised Protocol came into effect in 2003
- Primary purpose is to develop closer cooperation between SADC member states for shared watercourses…
  - specific basin-wide agreements and institutions
  - sustainable, equitable and reasonable utilization
  - co-ordinated and integrated development and management
  - harmonisation and monitoring of legislation and policies
  - research and technology development, information exchange, capacity building

River basin organisations

- Vehicles for achieving these aims
- 15 shared river basins managed by 12 river basin organisations
- Not water management institutions. Implementation remains with domestic institutions.

In closing…

- National Water Act + SADC Protocol commits South Africa to sharing water in international river basins with neighbouring countries

- There are challenges, but SADC often put forward as a good example of transboundary water cooperation

Thank you