

## Water engineering for the promotion of peace

W. Richard Bowen

*i-NewtonWales, 54 Llwyn y mor, Caswell, Swansea, SA3 4RD, UK*  
*email: wrichardbowen@i-newtonwales.org.uk*

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### ABSTRACT

In a world of limited resources, limited sympathy and limited rationality, competition leading to tensions and conflict can arise. In such circumstances, a key responsibility of any society is to ensure the security of its citizens. The role of engineering in contributing to such security is most usually considered to be the development, manufacture and use of military equipment so as to ensure dominance if tensions result in violence. To make a contribution to international security is a worthy goal for individual engineers and engineering enterprises. However, contributing by preparation for war is an inadequate response, especially considering recent analyses of the origins of conflict, government strategy and international initiatives. These emphasise the importance of cooperatively resolving the underlying roots of conflict so as to promote sustainable peace. Competition for water is already a root source of violent conflict in some parts of the developing world, and a source of tension in many others. Even for affluent Western countries, water stress is a significant factor in security strategy. Hence, water engineers have the expertise to make a substantial contribution to the promotion of peace by working to ensure the availability and equitable distribution of clean water and sanitation on a world-wise basis. This will require the incorporation of increased degrees of compassion and generosity in the fulfilment of our professional activities. The concept of Peace Engineering can provide an effective focus for these goals. A further task for engineers is to take greater responsibility for informing security analysts, politicians, and other decision makers about the specific capabilities of engineering to contribute to sustainable peace. The fulfilment of this task may be greatly enhanced if the promotion of a culture of peace within engineering is aligned with major international initiatives such as the UN's programme of action on a Culture of Peace.

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