Water resources: health, environment and development


Despite its title, Water resources: health, environment, and development is an unashamedly focused book, and although some of its chapters stray into wider or parallel issues, the book looks especially at vector-borne diseases. It is dedicated to “help developing countries” and addresses environmental management measures to control vector-borne disease in water resources and agricultural development projects.

The book is based on the results of an international conference held in Townsville, Australia, and comprises a collection of papers commissioned after the conference, which was organized by the World Health Organization/Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations/United Nations Environment Programme/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (WHO/FAO/UNEP/UNCHS) Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM), Townsville Water Board, and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. The collection of papers makes an excellent introduction to the subject for both specialists and non-specialists. Despite the focused theme, the text reflects well the complex interdisciplinary, intersectoral environment in which management for vector control occurs and places vector control in a wider context where vector-borne disease priorities exist alongside competing pressures for ever-more-scarce access to water resources for multiple uses — which, depending on local circumstances, may or may not be compatible with vector control.

Individual papers address diverse aspects, including the following: technical dimensions of resource management; activities of the principal international agencies; health benefits and disbenefits of water resource management; case studies of success and failure; reflections on the policy, institutional and participatory frameworks that have been used to support integrated management; as well as concerns specific to urban and rural areas and to recreational and aquacultural use.

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