MEDIA ALERT – Stockholm World Water Week 26 – 31 August 2018

Innovative tools to help prevent water driven conflicts

Today, at the annual World Water Week conference in Stockholm, the Water, Peace and Security partnership presents its first experiences with 'hotspot identification tools' and other innovative modelling techniques to predict and enable timely preventive action of escalating water driven conflicts.

STOCKHOLM (27 August 2018)—The world is facing increasing water crises. A wide range of water-related risks undermine human well-being and can contribute to political instability, violent conflict, human displacement and migration, and acute food insecurity. But political instability and conflict are rarely caused by any single factor, such as a water crisis. Instead, water crises should be seen as contributing factors to instability.

A group of academic and policy institutions recognized the need to understand the origins of water-related security risks, and formed the "Water, Peace and Security" (WPS) partnership in March 2018. WPS was launched to provide expert guidance on the link between water and security and identify potential 'hotspot areas' as well as the appropriate tools to help prevent the next water-driven security crisis.

At **World Water Week**, WPS is co-convening the event Water and security: assessing risks and mitigation options in hotspots on **Monday, 27 August at 16:00 CEST in the NL Auditorium**.

Conveners will share what is known about multiple water and conflict pathways, preview a global water and conflict early warning system, and share a framework for assessing water and conflict locally. This interactive session, hosted by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will bring together defense, diplomacy and development experts as well as practitioners from 'hotspot' basins. Together they will identify ways to strengthen cooperation and regional stability.

In Mali for example, extended droughts and increasing water demands, in combination with plans to expand water use for energy and agriculture purposes, threaten ecosystems and livelihoods in the Inner Niger Delta. This will affect the livelihoods of local people, who depend on fisheries, pastoralism and agriculture for a living. Further deterioration of the already critical situation is expected to stir-up existing tensions between different communities, unless mitigating action is taken.

Recognizing that water risk is not only a function of hazards, such as extreme droughts and floods, but also a function of a community's governance capacity and resilience in the face of natural hazards, no single strategy is sufficient to reduce water risks. By using machine learning, the WPS partnership aims to eventually predict insecurity and conflicts related to water that was never before possible.

The commentary of the WPS experts *'Are water and conflict linked and what actually links them?'* explains in more detail why the link between water and conflict is never direct and straightforward. Find the article here.

For interview requests with WPS experts during World Water Week in Stockholm, please contact Emma Meurs, IHE Delft (e.meurs@un-ihe.org or +31 64390 3823)