

Olçay Ünver

Olçay Ünver is the Deputy-Director of Land and Water Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since September 2013. His responsibilities at FAO include the water, land and soil related activities and programs, mainstreaming water across the various sectors and disciplines, and cooperating with partners and stakeholders within and outside the United Nations system. Between 2007 and 2013 he served as the Coordinator of the United Nations World Water Assessment Programme and the Director of the UNESCO Programme Office on Global Water Assessments. Prior to that, he was a distinguished professor of water resources at with Kent State University, Ohio, USA, where he founded the Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC), a track-two program that aims to support and strengthen the cooperation efforts between Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. While he served as the president of the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) Regional Development Administration in Turkey, he transformed a large infrastructure project into a sustainable socioeconomic development program. Because of his accomplishments at GAP, New York Times published a feature of him on its 29 May 1997 issue and Time Magazine listed him as “a European Visionary” in its 1998-1999 Special Winter Issue on Europe. Mr. Ünver has taken up leadership duties in various international organizations such as a Board Member (1995-2003; 2015 to present) and the Treasurer of the World Water Council; Vice-President and Secretary-General of the International Water Resources Association (2001-2006), and a council member of the International Hydropower Association (1997-2000).

His professional interests are water within a socioeconomic development context, transboundary water cooperation, water governance, and natural resources management.

Mr. Ünver holds a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering (water resources planning and management) from The University of Texas at Austin and Master's (hydraulics) and Bachelor's degrees, also in Civil Engineering, from Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.