

---

## UN Warns AI Boom Threatens Global Natural Resources



Published on July 3, 2026

Document Date: Fri, Jul 03 2026 09:33:21 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

Show on website : [Click Here](#)

---

rki.news|Source: Anadolu

GENEVA, July 3: The rapid expansion of artificial intelligence is placing increasing pressure on global electricity, water and land resources, with AI-powered data centres expected to consume 945 terawatt-hours of electricity annually by 2030, according to a new report by the UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

The report warns that AI's environmental impact is being significantly underestimated because

assessments largely focus on carbon emissions while overlooking growing demands on water and land resources.

By 2030, AI-related data centres could consume up to 9.3 trillion litres of water annually—equivalent to the basic domestic water needs of 1.3 billion people in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their land footprint could also exceed 14,500 square kilometres.

UNU-INWEH Director Kaveh Madani stressed that the findings are not an argument against artificial intelligence but a call for responsible development and stronger measures to reduce unintended environmental consequences.

The report estimates global data centres used 448 terawatt-hours of electricity in 2025, making them the equivalent of the world's 11th-largest electricity consumer if treated as a country. It also notes that 80 to 90 percent of AI's energy demand comes from operating deployed systems rather than training them.

The UN called for greater transparency, sustainable AI design, global cooperation and environmentally responsible policies to minimise AI's growing ecological footprint.