



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Search SDG Site



A-Z Site Index

Home About ▾ Goals ▾ Take Action ▾ Partnerships ▾ News And Media ▾
Learn More ▾ UN 2023 SDG Summit

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is the most basic human need for health and well-being. Billions of people will lack access to these basic services in 2030 unless progress quadruples. Demand for water is rising owing to rapid population growth, urbanization and increasing water needs from agriculture, industry, and energy sectors.

Decades of misuse, poor management, overextraction of groundwater and contamination of freshwater supplies have exacerbated water stress. In addition, countries are facing growing challenges linked to degraded water-related ecosystems, water scarcity caused by climate change, underinvestment in water and sanitation and insufficient cooperation on transboundary waters.

To reach universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene by 2030, the current rates of progress would need to increase fourfold. Achieving these targets would save 829,000 people annually, who die from diseases directly attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene practices.

Facts and figures

THE 17 GOALS





- In 2020, 74 per cent of the global population had access to safely managed drinking water services, up from 70 per cent in 2015. Still, two billion people live without safely managed drinking water services, including 1.2 billion people lacking even a basic level of service, in 2020.
- Between 2015 and 2020, the population with safely managed sanitation increased from 47 per cent to 54 per cent and the population with access to handwashing facilities with soap and water in the home increased from 67 per cent to 71 per cent. Rates of progress for these basic services would need to quadruple for universal coverage to be reached by 2030.
- At the current rates of progress, 1.6 billion people will lack safely managed drinking water, 2.8 billion people will lack safely managed sanitation, and 1.9 billion people will lack basic hand hygiene facilities in 2030.
- Eight out of 10 people who lack even basic drinking water service live in rural areas, and about half of them live in least developed countries (LDCs).
- Water use efficiency worldwide rose from \$17.4 per cubic metre in 2015 to \$19.4 per cubic metre in 2019, a 12 per cent efficiency increase.
- Assessment of rivers, lakes and aquifers in 97 countries in 2020 shows that 60 per cent of water bodies have good water



quality. For at least 3 billion people, the quality of the water they rely upon is unknown owing to a lack of monitoring.

- From 2015 to 2020, the population practising open defecation decreased by a third, from 739 million people to 494 million. The world is on track to eliminate open defecation by 2030.
- Over the past 300 years, over 85 per cent of the planet's wetlands have been lost, mainly through drainage and land conversion, with many remaining wetland areas degraded. Since 1970, 81 per cent of species dependent on inland wetlands have declined faster than those relying on other biomes, and an increasing number of these species are facing extinction.
- Across the world, water stress levels remained safe at 18.6 per cent in 2019. However, Southern Asia and Central Asia registered high levels of water stress at over 75 per cent, whereas Northern Africa registered a critical water stress level of over 100 per cent. Since 2015, water stress levels have increased significantly in Western Asia and Northern Africa.
- Data from 2017 and 2020 suggest only 32 countries have 90 per cent or more of their transboundary waters covered by cross-border cooperative arrangements.

Source: **The Sustainable Development Goals Report**

2022

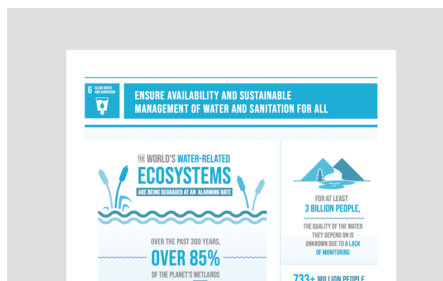
Goal 6 targets

Links

Why it matters: Clean Water and Sanitation



Infographic: Clean Water and Sanitation



Water Action Decade, 2018-2028

40 per cent shortfall in freshwater resources by 2030 coupled with a rising world population has the world careening towards a global water crisis. Recognizing the growing challenge of water scarcity the UN General Assembly launched the Water Action Decade on 22 March 2018, to mobilize action that will help transform how we manage water.

COVID-19 response

Availability and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services is fundamental to fighting the virus and



preserving the health and well-being of millions. COVID-19 will not be stopped without access to safe water for people living in

vulnerability, [UN experts](#) said.

The impacts of COVID-19 could be considerably higher on [the urban poor living in slums](#), who don't have access to clean water. [UN-Habitat](#) is working with partners to facilitate access to running water and [handwashing in informal settlements](#).

[UNICEF](#) is urgently [appealing for funding](#) and support to reach more girls and boys with basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, especially those children who are cut off from safe water because they live in remote areas, or in places where water is untreated or polluted, or because they are without a home, living in a slum or on the street.

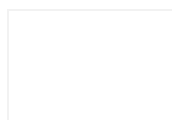
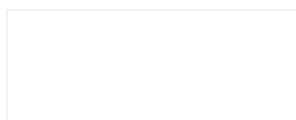
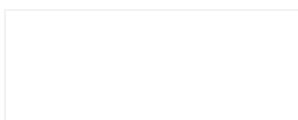
In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is [adjusting its WASH services](#) to prevent the spread of the disease. This includes continued support to affected, at-risk, low-capacity and fragile countries to secure WASH services and infection prevention control in health facilities.

Read more about the work in response to COVID-19 by [UN-Water](#) members and partners.

Clean Water and Hygiene Services He...



RELATED NEWS





INTERVIEW
W: Turn
the tide
on water
crisis with
game-
changing
commitme
nts, urge
co-hosts
of UN
conferenc
e

01 Mar 2023

Water is life



UN 2023
Water
Conferenc
e

24 Feb 2023

In March
2023, the
world will
come
together to
address the
urgent water
crisis at the
UN 2023
Water
Conference
in New York.
Co-hosted by
the Kingdom



Ancier
tale of
hummb
bird
inspire
UN Wc
Water
campa

16 Jan 20

16 Jan
GENEV,
Inspired
an ancie
tale of a
hummin
trying to
out a for

LOAD MORE POSTS

RELATED VIDEOS

COP23: Mariet
Verhoef-Cohen
on how water
connects

WATCH: How
we treat our
waste affects
our health,
environment
and even our
economies
"Mottainai!" is a
Japanese term for
"what a waste!"
Watch this UN
Environment video
to see how living

In small
villages in
Papua New
Guinea, the
UN
Sustainable
Development
Goals can
make a big
difference

more sustainably
saves literally
tonnes of waste.



SDG RESOURCES ACROSS THE UN

[Sustainable Development
Knowledge Platform](#)

[United Nations Sustainable
Development Group](#)

[United to Reform](#)

[United Nations homepage](#)

[SDG Media Zone](#)

UN NEWS

> [Beyond borders: Why new
'high seas' treaty is critical for
the world](#)

> [Europe warming twice as fast
as other continents, warns
WMO](#)

> [Combating drought, one
garden at a time](#)

> [Women suffer
disproportionately from
ravages of drought,
desertification](#)

UNITED
NATIONS

[A-Z Site Index](#) | [Contact](#) | [Copyright](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Fraud Alert](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Terms of Use](#)