

HIGHLIGHTS



The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation reviews the global progress made towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It builds on the latest data available for the 11 SDG 6 global indicators and will inform the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development during its in-depth review of SDG 6 in July 2018. The report represents a joint position from the United Nations family.

The world is not on track

- **Billions of people still lack safe water, sanitation and handwashing facilities:** 844 million lack basic water services, 2.1 billion lack safely managed drinking water, 4.5 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation and 892 million still practice open defecation. Only 27 per cent of the population in least developed countries has access to soap and water for handwashing on premises.
- **Water pollution is worsening:** Increasing wastewater in many parts of the world is profoundly affecting the quality and amount of water available to meet human needs and sustain ecosystems.
- **Water and sanitation lack funding:** Over 80 per cent of countries have insufficient finance to meet national water, sanitation and hygiene targets.
- **Governance structures are weak and fragmented:** Political, institutional and administrative rules, practices and processes are inadequate in many countries, particularly those where pressures on water resources are greatest.
- **Agriculture places enormous stress on water, but could be part of a water-saving solution:** The agriculture sector accounts for nearly 70 per cent of global freshwater withdrawals.

Although its share of global withdrawals has decreased over the past decades, it increasingly contributes to global water consumption owing to a growing population and changing lifestyle patterns.

Saving just a fraction of agricultural withdrawals would significantly alleviate water stress in other sectors.
- **Capacity is insufficient:** A serious lack of institutional and human capacity across the water sector is constraining progress, particularly in least developed countries.
- **Ecosystems and their services are in continuous decline:** The world has lost 70 per cent of its natural wetlands over the last century, with profound impacts on economic development and social and environmental stability.



PRODUCTION

UN-Water has established a Task Force to produce the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. The Task Force is coordinated by the UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) of UNESCO and is comprised of the following UN-Water Members and Partners: CEO Water Mandate, FAO, ILO, UNDP, UNECE, UN Environment, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNU, WHO, WMO and the World Bank Group. The Task Force is also receiving support from Aquafed, WaterAid, the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and UFZ.

Here is what we need to do

Know

- **Understand the interdependency of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Achieving SDG 6 is essential for making progress on all other SDGs and vice versa. Sustainable management of water and sanitation underpins wider efforts to end poverty and advance sustainable development.
- **Monitor more and better data:** Less than half of Member States have comparable data available on progress towards SDG 6 targets. Additional and better data (use Earth observations, citizen science and private sector data; disaggregated) are required for national, regional and global monitoring of SDG 6.

Plan

- **Adapt to country contexts:** Governments must decide how to incorporate SDG 6 targets into national planning processes, policies and strategies and set their own targets, taking into account local circumstances.
- **Create multi-stakeholder partnerships and strengthen regional integration:** SDG 6 provides the ideal platform to share, access and develop solutions to address poverty and sustainable development.
- **Implement integrated water resources management:** Integration across water and water-using sectors with

intersectoral policymaking structures (across several ministries) and effective transboundary governance frameworks is essential to ensure that limited water resources are shared effectively among many competing demands.

Act

- **Eliminate inequalities:** Effective policies, strategies and subsidies must be developed to ensure no one is left behind.
- **Finance water and sanitation through a new paradigm:** The efficiency of existing financial resources and mobilizing additional and innovative forms of domestic and international finance must be increased.
- **Ensure public participation:** Community participation in decision-making yields many benefits, but better means of measuring quality and effectiveness of such participation are needed instead of relying on quantity of engagement.
- **Develop capacity:** Only limited progress can be made and any investment is at risk without developing the necessary long-term human and institutional capacity.
- **Use smart technologies:** Smart technologies could improve all aspects of water resources and water, sanitation and hygiene management.

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