

## Key Water + Sanitation Facts | for use in 2019-2020

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### Water

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- 785 million people – 1 in 9 – lack access to safe water.
- More than 6x the population of the United States lives without a household water connection.
- The water crisis is the #4 global risk in terms of impact to society, announced by the World Economic Forum in January 2019.
- 144 million people depend on surface water, like a river, to meet their basic needs.

### Sanitation

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- 2 billion people – 1 in 3 – lack access to a toilet.
- Globally, 55% of people do not have access to safely-managed sanitation.
- 673 million people – more than 10% of the global population – defecate in the open.
- More people have a mobile phone than a toilet.

### Health

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- Nearly 1 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases.
- Every 2 minutes a child dies from a water-related disease.
- Better water, sanitation, and hygiene could save the lives of 297,000 children under the age of 5 each year.
- 160 million children suffer from stunting and chronic malnutrition linked to water and sanitation.
- Diarrhea is one of the top 3 leading causes of child death, a majority of which are water and sanitation related.

### Women

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- Women and children bear the primary responsibility for water collection.
- Women and girls spend 200 million hours every day collecting water. This is time not spent working, caring for family members, or attending school.
- Women and girls often spend up to 6 hours every day collecting water.
- Women and girls living without a toilet spend 266 million hours every day finding a place to go.
- Access to improved sanitation leads to a reduction in assault and violence on women and girls.

### Education

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- Reductions in time spent collecting water increases school attendance, especially for girls.
- Globally, 1/3 of all schools lack access to basic water and sanitation.
  - Alternate fact: Globally 1 in 3 schools lacks access to basic water and sanitation.
- Having a sanitation solution at home means children are more likely to have higher cognitive test scores.
- For every year a girl stays in school, her income can increase by 15-25%.

## **Economic**

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- \$260 billion is lost globally each year due to lack of basic water and sanitation.
- Every \$1 invested in water and sanitation provides a \$4 economic return from lower health costs, more productivity and fewer premature deaths.
- Universal access to basic water and sanitation would result in \$18.5 billion in economic benefits each year from avoided deaths alone.

## **Finance**

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- \$114 billion per year is needed to achieve safely managed water and sanitation for all by 2030, meeting Sustainable Development Goal 6.
- Current investments for water and sanitation amount to \$28.4 billion per year. This represents a gap of \$85.6 billion.
- It will take three times more than what is currently being invested to fill the financial gap and achieve universal access to safely managed water and sanitation.
- Globally there is an \$18 billion demand from individuals for affordable financing to meet their water and sanitation needs.

## **Climate change**

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- Climate change affects water and sanitation, and water and sanitation contribute to climate change through the use of energy.
- The impact of climate change on water and sanitation systems may undermine progress toward achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 by pushing communities down the WHO/UNICEF JMP ladders for water and sanitation.
- People living in poverty are especially vulnerable to the impact of climate change because of their reliance on unstable water and sanitation systems, weaker institutional protections and limited access to funding.
- Adopting water and energy efficiency improvements that are affordable and resilient to climate change can benefit both the environment and people living in poverty.
- Significant investments – far above what has currently been committed – are needed for water and sanitation infrastructure and institutions. The gap between need and commitment will grow as the impact of climate change intensifies.
- Efforts to identify and mobilize new funding are critical to developing climate resilient water and sanitation programs. Innovative financing approaches are available, including new forms of bonds (such as green and catastrophe bonds), microfinance and microinsurance, and favorable taxing strategies.

## References

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- Hutton and Varughese [The Costs of Meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal Targets on Drinking Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene.](#) World Bank Group, 2016.

## Other water and sanitation resources

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- Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) is produced every two years by the World Health Organization. ([available here](#))
- UN-Water produced the SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation. This represents a joint position from the United Nations on the global status of SDG 6 targets. ([available here](#))
- Water.org-IRC-World Bank working paper, “Mobilising finance for WASH: getting the foundation right” ([available here](#))
- The World Water Development Report 2019 demonstrates how improvements in water resources management and access to water supply and sanitation services are essential to addressing various social and economic inequities, such that ‘no one is left behind’ when it comes to enjoying the multiple benefits and opportunities that water provides. ([available here](#))