



2019 Leaving no one behind

WHAT IS THE THEME?

The theme for World Water Day 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind'. This is an adaptation of the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: as sustainable development progresses, everyone must benefit.

HOW DOES IT RELATE TO WATER?

Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) includes a target to ensure availability and sustainable management of water for all by 2030. By definition, this means leaving no one behind.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Today, billions of people are still living without safe water – their households, schools, workplaces, farms and factories struggling to survive and thrive.

Marginalized groups – women, children, refugees, indigenous peoples, disabled people and many others – are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.



WHAT DOES 'SAFE WATER' MEAN?

'Safe water' is shorthand for a 'safely managed drinking water service': water that is accessible on the premises, available when needed, and free from contamination.¹

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Whoever you are, wherever you are, water is your human right. Access to water underpins public health and is therefore critical to sustainable development and a stable and prosperous world. We cannot move forward as a global society while so many people are living without safe water.

WHAT IS THE HUMAN RIGHT TO WATER?

In 2010, the UN recognized "the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right

that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights."²

The human right to water entitles everyone, without discrimination, to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use; which includes water for drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, and personal and household hygiene.³

WHY ARE PEOPLE BEING LEFT BEHIND WITHOUT SAFE WATER?

People are left behind without safe water for many different reasons. The following are some of the 'grounds for discrimination' that cause certain people to be particularly disadvantaged when it comes to accessing water:

- Sex and gender
- Race, ethnicity, religion, birth, caste, language, and nationality
- Disability, age and health status
- Property, tenure, residence, economic and social status

Other factors, such as environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, conflict, forced displacement and migration flows can also disproportionately affect marginalized groups through impacts on water.



¹ WHO/UNICEF: <https://washdata.org/monitoring/drinking-water>

² UN (2010): A/RES/64/292 Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 28 July 2010: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292

³ OHCHR, UN Habitat, WHO: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet35en.pdf>

KEY FACTS

- 2.1 billion people live without safe water at home.⁴
- One in four primary schools have no drinking water service, with pupils using unprotected sources or going thirsty.⁵
- More than 700 children under five years of age die every day from diarrhoea linked to unsafe water and poor sanitation.⁶
- Globally, 80% of the people who have to use unsafe and unprotected water sources live in rural areas.⁷
- Women and girls are responsible for water collection in eight out of ten households with water off-premises.⁸
- Over 800 women die every day from complications in pregnancy and childbirth.⁹
- For the 68.5 million people who have been forced to flee their homes, accessing safe water services is highly problematic.^{10,11}
- Around 159 million people collect their drinking water from surface water, such as ponds and streams.¹²
- Around 4 billion people - nearly two-thirds of the world's population - experience severe water scarcity during at least one month of the year.¹³
- 700 million people worldwide could be displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030.¹⁴
- The wealthier generally receive high levels of WASH services at (often very) low cost, whereas the poor pay a much higher price for a service of similar or lesser quality.¹⁵



⁴ WHO/UNICEF (2017) *Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene*: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/

⁵ UNICEF (2018) *WASH in Schools: Global baseline report 2018*: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/wash-in-schools/>

⁶ Calculation made in 2018 based on data from UNICEF: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/diarrhoeal-disease/>

⁷ WHO (2017) *Safely managed drinking water - thematic report on drinking water 2017*: <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/safely-managed-drinking-water-JMP-2017-1.pdf>

⁸ WHO/UNICEF (2017) *Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene*: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/

⁹ UNICEF: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/maternal-mortality/>

¹⁰ UNHCR (2017) *Global Trends Report: Forced Displacement in 2017*: <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf>

¹¹ WWAP (UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme)/UN-Water (2019) *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind*

¹² WHO/UNICEF (2017) *Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene*: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/

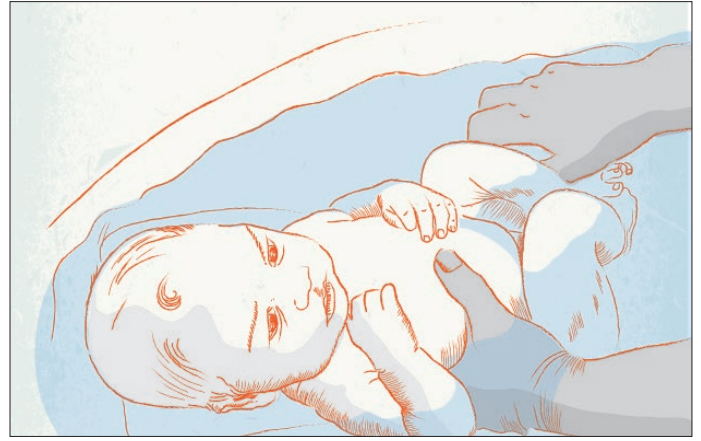
¹³ Mekonnen and Hoekstra (2016), Four billion people facing severe water scarcity. *Science Advanced*, Vol. 2, No. 2: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26933676>

¹⁴ Global Water Institute (2013) *Future water (in)security: facts, figures and predictions*: https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/27b53d18-6069-45f7-a1bd-d5a48bc80322/downloads/1c2meuvon_105010.pdf

¹⁵ WWAP (UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme)/UN-Water (2019) *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2019: Leaving No One Behind*

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

To 'leave no one behind', we must focus our efforts towards including people who have been marginalized or ignored. Water services must meet the needs of marginalized groups and their voices must be heard in decision-making processes. Regulatory and legal frameworks must recognise the right to water for **all** people, and sufficient funding must be fairly and effectively targeted at those who need it most.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE CAMPAIGN

• Share:

Use or adapt campaign materials on your social media channels

Engage your friends and contacts with information and stories about the reality of the water crisis and how it affects every aspect of society.

Go to www.worldwaterday.org/resources or www.worldwaterday.org/social-media to start a conversation and inspire action.

• Act:

Organize an event or activity

Gather people together to share ideas and make them grow. Hold or attend an event to make personal connections that could make a difference to people living without safe water.

Go to www.worldwaterday.org/events to see where a World Water Day event is taking place near you and find out how you could hold an event yourself.