



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Description of UNDP

The **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** works to improve the quality of life in 177 countries and territories by building resilient nations, and offering global perspective and local insights. Currently, UNDP is focusing on challenges like overcoming poverty reduction, achieving the **Millennium Development Goals**, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and energy for sustainable development. Furthermore, the UNDP works on a regular basis to help **developing countries** attract and use aid effectively, protect human rights, encourage capacity development and empower women. It also releases an annual Human Development Report on the global debate of key development issues. This report provides new measuring tools as well as an innovative analysis and controversial policy proposals.¹

Established in 1996, the UNDP Executive Board is made up of representatives from 36 countries from five regional groups. These representatives serve on a rotating basis. The groups consist of eight states from the African region, seven Asian-Pacific states, five Latin America and Caribbean states, four Eastern European States and 12 Western European and “other” states including Japan, New Zealand and the United States of America. The board’s purpose is to ensure that the organization remains responsive to the evolving needs of the citizens of the world.¹ Currently, the President is Mr. Roble Olhaye from Djibouti in Africa. The four vice presidents are from Indonesia, Argentina, Bulgaria and Norway.¹

The Millennium Development Goals is the world’s blueprint to improve poverty by the target date of 2015.¹ To achieve the Millennium Development Goals, UNDP works with several partners around the world. First, it plays a key role in the United Nations and United Nations Development Group (UNDG). UNDP works in sections of the UN such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. It looks to international financial institutions for development funding. The UNDP has formal agreements with the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and is working on additional agreements. It aids developing country governments with funds from financial institutions, and helps them to use the aid effectively. It also works with organizations in the private sector to foster innovation, and provide funding and promote entrepreneurship in developing countries. For example, the UNDP connects local producers with domestic and global markets.



There are three different types of foundation partnerships that the UNDP engages in. One is the “donor-grantee” relationship, in which grants are awarded for specific projects to further UNDP’s mission. The second is foundations that work in specific areas such as governance, environment or HIV/AIDs to utilize their knowledge and capabilities. The third type is partnerships at the community level. They also work with various civil society organizations such as **grassroots** organizations.

Topic: Water, Sanitation and Health

Introduction

Water

Water is a critical natural resource upon which all social and economic activities and ecosystem functions depend. ¹Yet there is a limited amount of water supply specifically for underdeveloped, and developing countries. Almost 1 billion people lack access to clean water, although it considered a basic human right. ¹ Depletion of water also hurts other important resources, such as food security.

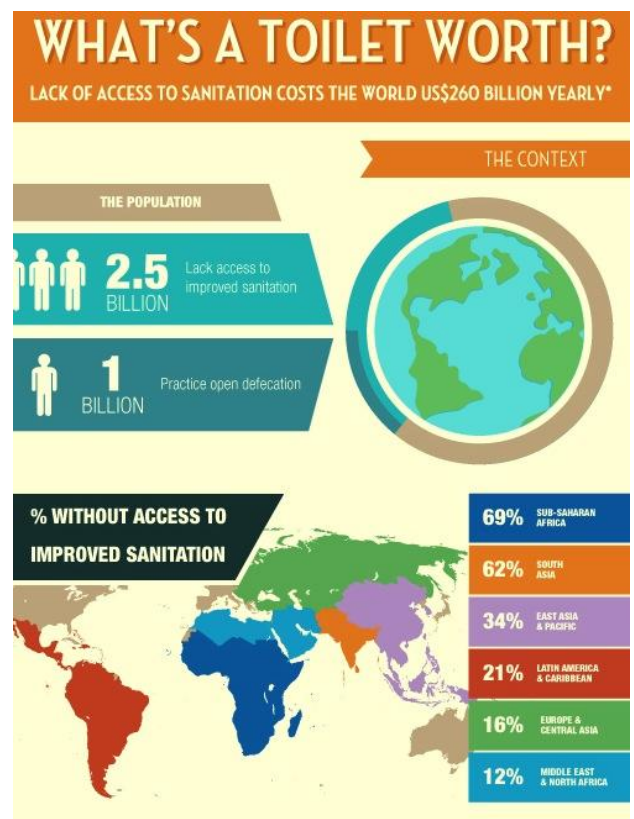
Although the majority of our planet is made up of water, resources are limited. Less than 3.5% of the water can be used and reused as freshwater, less than half of that is readily accessible. More often than not, this water is unfairly distributed and shared. ¹ In many of these countries, the rich, industries and agriculture consume the majority of clean water sources.

Sanitation

In addition, **sanitation** plays a huge role in human survival. Unsanitary conditions can lead to various fatal diseases. For example, Diarrhea is a leading cause of death; over 2 million people in the sub-saharan Africa and South Asia die from Diarrhea each year. ¹ Almost 1.5 million of these deaths are children under the age of five, accounting for 15% of all **child mortality**. Other common water-bourne diseases include Typhoid, Cholera and Hepatitis A.

In places with a high rate of sanitation related diseases, it is because most people practice **open defecation**. However, global trends in open defecation are currently declining. From 1990 to 2011, rates dropped from 24% to 15%, equally to the amount of 244 million people.

Depending on the circumstances of the environment,



open defecation can contaminate a community's water source. Another critical cause to unsanitary conditions, is runoff from areas near where agriculture is being grown. Sometimes the effects of fertilizers, pesticides and livestock waste can be transferred through the water.¹

Climate Change

Over the last 50 years, human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels have released large quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, which trap additional heat in the lower atmosphere and affect the global climate.¹ As a result the sea levels are rising and glaciers are melting, and extreme weather is becoming more frequent and intense. All populations will be affected by **climate change**, but islands, coastal states, and most developing countries are more vulnerable. Moreover, climate change is more likely to affect the health of children in developing countries.¹ It is known that diarrhea related diseases, malnutrition and malaria are climate-sensitive. Therefore, because of the effects of climate change, these diseases are expected to worsen, increasing the death toll. Unfortunately, most of these diseases already occur in the most impoverished areas of the world. Additionally, climate change has further reduced water resources by causing extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and storms.

“Moreover, climate change is more likely to affect the health of children in developing countries.”

Roots

The crisis in water and sanitation overwhelmingly affects the poor and is rooted in **poverty**. Availability of water is certainly a concern for some countries, but the crisis is mostly embedded in power and inequality and a question of governance, not of physical availability.¹

Current Situation

- Less than 2.5% of the world's water can be used and reused as freshwater
- Less than half of that is readily accessible
- 1 billion people lack drinking water
- 2.4 billion people have no access to hygienic facilities
- 1.2 billion lack any sanitation facilities
- In 2010, 2.6 billion's sanitation facilities didn't improve
- Diarrhea disease kills 2.2 million people every year
- Each day, 5.000 children die to water and sanitation related diseases, many preventable

International Action

Water is not a simple issue that can be addressed by a local, national or regional government alone because its affected by **global interdependence**. To work toward an overall higher quality of water and sanitation, the UN, societies, businesses and governments must work together. If not, their decisions can further imbalance our water supply. For example, poor policy decisions



can lead to over-use of water resources in some locations and under-use in others. Furthermore, governmental perceptions of water risks in a given case can be at odds with those of industry. Environmental concerns and pressures from the public, special interest groups and business can further influence government decisions regarding water.¹

SDGs and MDGs

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was a first of its kind conference that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, also known as Rio Conference. The most recent result of the conference was a **non-binding** document “The Future We Want” that was signed by 192 countries at the Rio +20 Conference in 2012.¹¹ The document stated countries’ commitment for a sustainable future and a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commitment to phase out the usage of fossil fuel, and shift in fundamental changes of human consumption and production.¹

SDGs are centered on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – eight international development goals agreed upon by all members of the United Nations. Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 10 is to halve the amount of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015. It has proved to be important for governments to connect with other partners to reach this goal. To accomplish this, Global Water Solidarity aims to become an institutional platform for local water management.¹

One step toward stabilizing water supplies is through integrated water resources management (IWRM). By integrating surface water, like lakes and rivers, with groundwater sources within basins, the ecosystems can stay balanced. This concept is accepted by all governments. However, it is a current goal of the IWRM to reasonably accomplish this globally.¹

The UN has more tactics to improve water supply such as coordinating country assistance, incorporating water and sanitation into development planning at national levels, increasing water access through governance reform, creating community-based initiatives, and increasing awareness of the water and sanitation challenges in states where they are the greatest.¹

Similar to most fatal issues within poverty, awareness and education is key. If the resources are available, it’s important to teach people in underdeveloped areas to wash their hands after using the restroom, and where the cleanest water source is located.

United Nations Development Program

TABLE 16.4
Countries least likely to express satisfaction with the quality of water in their communities

Risk	
Country	Satisfied (%)
Chad	21
Ukraine	26
Nigeria	29
Ethiopia	29
Liberia	30
Russia	30
Tanzania	35
Lebanon	35
Sierra Leone	36
Angola*	38

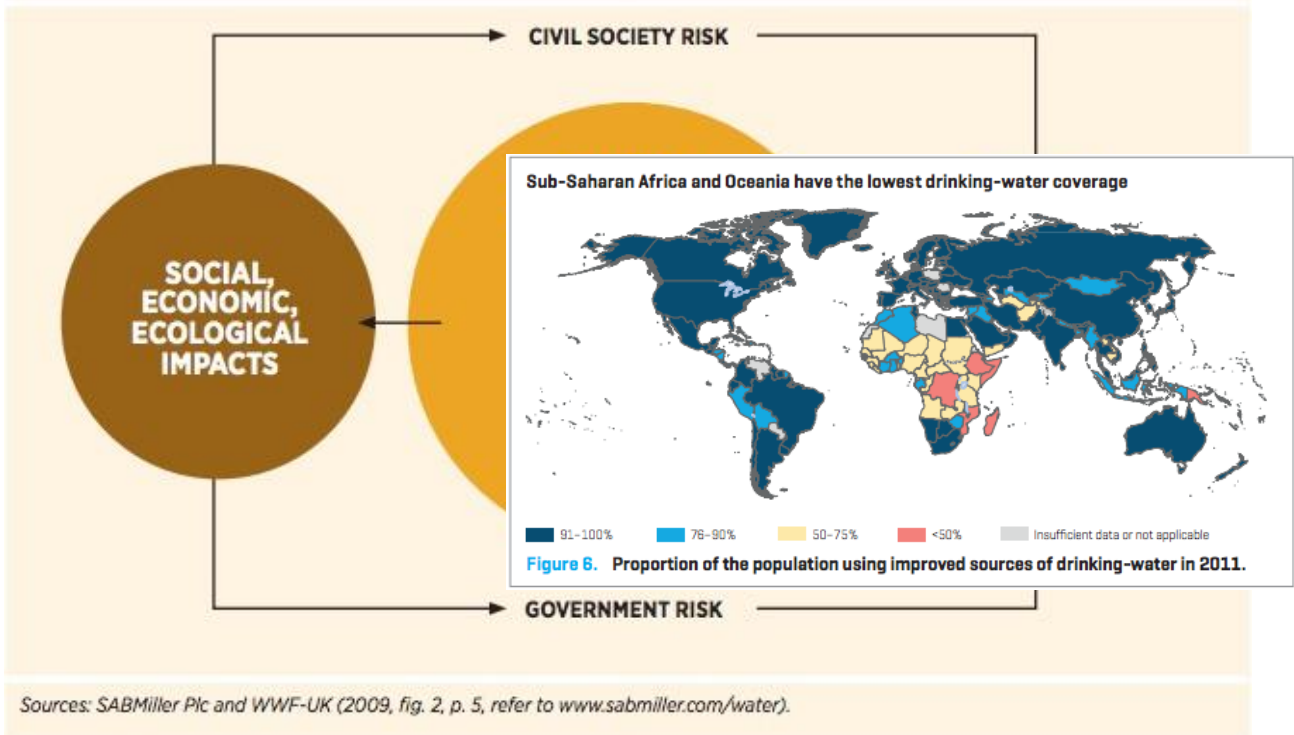
*Only urban residents interviewed.

Source: Ray (2008).



FIGURE 2.7

Inter-relationship of water risks among business, government and society



The UNDP has several specific projects working to improve water and sanitation in countries most in need of development. One is the Millennium Development Goal program GoAl WaSH, which is generously supported financially by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Its work takes place in 11 countries in South America, Africa and Asia where water and sanitation challenges are greatest. The program identifies gaps needs, and opportunities in national water and sanitation plans, and works within governance reform, and leadership and policy advocacy to accomplish their goals.¹

Every Drop Matters (EDM) is a partner program with UNDP and The Coca Cola Company working to identify and support community based solutions for water and sanitation issues. Working in 18 different countries, EDM has already positively impacted 800,000 people around the world. The project focuses on increasing access to these limited resources, promoting responsible water management through outreach and awareness, and adapting to climate change.

A third example is Cap-Net, which is an international network that focuses on building sustainable water management. It is made up of autonomous international, region and national institutions, including the European Union.¹



QUESTIONS/IDEAS TO CONSIDER

1. Why is it so important for the world community to address the issue of water and sanitation?
2. What will happen if the Millennium Development Goal 7 is not reached?
3. What are ways of improving sanitation?
4. Why will people in the impoverished areas be most vulnerable as a result of climate change?
5. Which areas are most affected by lack of water and sanitation?
6. What can United Nations do to encourage countries to seriously address the issues water and sanitation?
7. Are people of your country likely to be effected by lack of water and/or sanitation?
8. What other organizations work on this issue?



TERMS AND CONCEPTS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

United Nations Development Program: branch of United Nations whose focus is helping countries build and share solutions to the challenges of poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery and environment and energy for sustainable development

Millennium Development Goals: eight international goals established through the United Nations Millennium Declaration, being worked on by all 189 United Nations member states and 23 international organizations

Developing Countries: nations with low living standard, underdeveloped industrial base, and low Human Development Index

Grassroots: political movements on a local level by everyday citizens

Sanitation: conditions relating to clean public health, including adequate sewage disposal

Child Mortality: death of infants and children under 5 years old

Open Defecation: The release of bodily fluids in fields, forests, bushes, bodies of water or other open spaces

Climate Change: significant and lasting change of weather patterns due to the greenhouse effect, also known as global warming

Poverty: the state of being extremely poor, or inferior in quality

Global Interdependence: mutual dependence on a global level

Non-binding Document: a written resolution that cannot progress into law

Additional Resources

<http://www.unwater.org/>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr4-2012/>

<http://web.undp.org/geneva/watersolidarity/>

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Image Sources:

<http://www.wsp.org/>

[http://www.unicef.org/wash/files/JMP2013final_en\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/wash/files/JMP2013final_en(1).pdf)

