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UNICEF's Engagement in the UN 2023 Water Conference

The UN 2023 Water Conference is a critical moment that shines the global spotlight on the importance of water as a unifying purpose for communities and nations. With 2 billion people worldwide still lacking access to safely managed drinking water and 3.6 billion lacking access to safely managed sanitation, universal access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services and systems is urgently needed.

The conference presents the world with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to come together to accelerate progress towards achieving universal access to WASH, particularly in areas vulnerable to climate change, water insecurity, and humanitarian crises. UNICEF advocates for a focus on the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalized communities; capacity-building within organizations, national systems, and communities; strengthening systems and governance; scaling up investments in WASH; and improving data quality.

UNICEF will use its participation in the conference to reinforce its support to the Water Action Agenda. UNICEF has articulated its commitments to WASH in the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025, with important emphasis on systems strengthening and expanding reach to the most vulnerable children in development and humanitarian settings. We will work even more closely with national governments and partners to integrate WASH and climate change agendas into funding opportunities and programming across 130 countries. We will enhance knowledge and skills of governments and partners by bringing in cutting-edge training opportunities and South-South, North-South learning in critical areas, including climate-resilient WASH, safely managed and inclusive sanitation, water security, and nexus programming. We will continue to provide sector leadership and coordination of our response and preparedness to emergencies and humanitarian crises.

We invite you to join us in the events featured below, as we work together towards realizing our vision of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene for all. Let's join forces to advocate for increased financial and political support for WASH, and to strengthen strategic partnerships.



Joined-up Action and Collective Outcomes to Accelerate SDG 6

Date: Wednesday March 22nd

Time: 08:00 – 10:00 hrs.

Location: UNICEF House – Danny Kaye Hall

Please RSVP [here](#)

The Global WASH Cluster (GWC), on behalf of over 90 humanitarian WASH agencies, in partnership with Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), will convene a high-level session on “Joined-up Action and Collective Outcomes to Accelerate SDG 6” to showcase the UN humanitarian-development coordination structures as a catalyst for maximizing gains to reach the targets set by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: leaving no one behind, ending needs by reducing risks and vulnerabilities, achieving sustainable development and peace are shared commitments of the GWC and SWA.

The event will highlight the need for ‘joined-up’ action for collective outcomes by humanitarian, development, and peace actors to reduce risks and vulnerabilities and achieve sustainable development and peace. The discussion will emphasize the importance of effective leadership and coordination to achieve collective outcomes. The panelists will also advocate for and promote the need for multi-stakeholder platforms to drive consistent and coherent approaches for achieving collective outcomes in the WASH sector, including through joint analysis and linking national priorities across humanitarian and development planning processes. As part of their commitments, the Global WASH Cluster will support over 30 countries for over 100 million people annually in humanitarian contexts until 2025 by strengthening collective action, promoting joint analysis, linking national priorities, calling for the recalibration of financing mechanisms, and advocating for innovative partnerships and coordination.

For more information, please contact
Monica Ramos, Global WASH Cluster Coordinator
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Interactive Dialogue - Water for Health: Access to WASH, including the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation

Date: Wednesday March 22nd

Time: 10:00 – 13:00 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters –
Conference Room (4)

The Water for Health: Access to WASH, including the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation interactive dialogue will bring together Member States and a diverse range of stakeholders to discuss the urgent need for universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. Co-chaired by the Dominican Republic and the United Kingdom, and moderated by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell, the dialogue will facilitate a collaborative, multi-stakeholder discussion that prioritizes gender and geographical balance. The panel discussions will be followed by an interactive debate among States and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of generating concrete actions to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to water and sanitation. The summary of the interactive dialogue will be submitted to the Conference at its closing meeting.

For more information, please contact
Ann Thomas, Senior WASH Adviser anthomas@unicef.org and
Aidan Cronin, Senior WASH Adviser acronin@unicef.org

High-level Meeting on Presidential Compacts

Date: Wednesday March 22nd

Time: 14:30 – 15:25 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters –
Delegates Dining Room, 4th floor
(closed-door meeting – by invitation only)

The Government of The Kingdom of The Netherlands, as co-host of the UN 2023 Water Conference with partners UNICEF, IRC, and SWA, are hosting a high-level gathering around their joint vision of “High Level Water and Sanitation Compacts for Sustainable Service Delivery to All, Leaving No One Behind.” Commitments by Heads of State, Presidential Compacts, aim at accelerating progress towards SDG 6.1 and 6.2. The Netherlands will host this high-level meeting to inspire invited Heads of States and Prime Ministers to commit to achieving SDG 6.1 and 6.2 by adopting a High-Level national compact on sustainable water, sanitation, and hygiene services for all. The meeting is expected to include high-level representation, including UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. The outcome of the meeting will serve as inspiration for participating countries to drive change and work towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation services for all. UNICEF is coordinating with its country offices to support governments in the preparation of technical input to government commitments.

For more information, please contact
Farai Tunhuma, Senior WASH Adviser, ftunhuma@unicef.org and
Aidan Cronin, Senior WASH Adviser, acronin@unicef.org

Systems Strengthening and Leadership for Sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services

Date: Wednesday March 22nd

Time: 18:30 – 19:45 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters –
Trusteeship Council Chamber

Please RSVP [here](#)

This side event at the UN 2023 Water Conference aims to galvanize action and additional partners to address sustainability and systems strengthening in the WASH sector. The event will encourage Member States and other partners to make commitments to the Water Action Agenda and be part of the Presidential Compact. The key messages of the event include the importance of political leadership, collaboration, and accountability to improve sustainability and strengthen systems for WASH services for all. The expected actions from the event include demystifying systems approaches, showcasing concrete actions for WASH systems strengthening, and making commitments towards sustainability and systems strengthening, including addressing climate change. The event will also discuss methods for monitoring progress and ensuring long-term success through collaboration and mutual accountability.

For more information, please contact
Farai Tunhuma, Senior WASH Adviser, ftunhuma@unicef.org

Leaving No One Behind: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Humanitarian Settings

Date: Thursday March 23rd

Time: 08:00 – 09:15 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters –
Side Event Room (9)

Please RSVP [here](#)

This session will emphasize the significance of the Sustainable Development Goals in humanitarian contexts and the need for new business models that blend the strengths of both development and humanitarian frameworks to attain better and more sustainable outcomes in areas affected by fragility and conflict.

The event will focus on the impact of WASH in humanitarian situations and the need for an innovative approach to improve resilience and sustainability. The importance of observing International Humanitarian Law, protecting essential services, and promoting partnerships and coordination will also be emphasized.

For more information, please contact
Omar El Hattab, Senior WASH Adviser, oelhattab@unicef.org

Achieving SDG 6 through (1) A Gender Lens on Climate Change & Youth and (2) Global Goals for Menstrual Health & Hygiene

Date: Thursday March 23rd

Time: 15:30 – 16:45 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters – Side Event Room (C)

Please RSVP [here](#)

Menstruation is a natural part of life for around 1.8 billion people in the world. However, it is often accompanied by taboos and stigma, making it a difficult topic to talk about. Much like the topic is avoided in daily lives, menstruation and menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) are not explicitly mentioned under the Sustainable Development Goals, despite their relevance to achieving multiple SDG targets. Without clear international and national goals, MHH will remain a low priority and progress will continue to be fragmented at best. In this session, a wide range of stakeholders from the WASH and MHH space will come together to catalyze progress towards a world in which no woman or girl is held back because of her period.

For more information, please contact

Ann Thomas, Senior WASH Adviser anthomas@unicef.org

Water Security for All – A Powerful Partnership to Ensure All Children Have Access to Sustainable, Climate Resilient Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene by 2023.

Date: Thursday March 23rd

Time: 17:00 – 18:15 hrs.,
followed by Cocktail Reception

Location: UNICEF House – Danny Kaye Hall

Please RSVP [here](#)

This high-level event will highlight the unprecedented water scarcity crisis with 1.42 billion people, including 450 million children who live in areas of high-water vulnerability. The current situation is further compounded by the climate crisis, with an estimated half of the global population expected to be living in water-stressed conditions by 2023. These shortcomings have devastating impacts on children. Every day, over 1,000 children under age 5 die from diseases linked to unsafe water, sanitation, and poor hygiene. But with urgent action this crisis can be addressed.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell and Goodwill Ambassador Vanessa Nakate will be joined by senior representatives from government and business to discuss how to urgently reimagine our approach to water. This event will examine innovation and solutions in water resources availability, supply, usage, infrastructure, governance, and sustainable management, with a focus on climate resilient water and sanitation and strengthening WASH programming across the development-humanitarian-peace nexus. The session will launch the call to action for “Water Security for All”: calling for innovations and partnerships to accelerate sector reforms in 65 priority countries and reach the most vulnerable children and families facing severe water insecurity.

For more information, please contact

Davide Simone Nardi WASH Partnerships and Advocacy Team Leader
dnardi@unicef.org

Accelerating Progress on Safe Sanitation and Hygiene for All: Countdown to 2030

Date: Friday March 24th

Time: 12:30 – 13:45 hrs.

Location: UN Headquarters –
The Economic and Social Chamber (ECOSOC)

Please RSVP [here](#)

This side event aims to raise awareness about the poor state of global sanitation and hygiene and to profile game-changing commitments by multiple stakeholders, including national governments, development partners, the private sector, and civil society – towards achieving universal safely managed sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030. The emphasis will be on partnerships, collaboration, and cooperation under government leadership. UNICEF Executive Director, Catherine Russell, will give the opening remarks and moderate high-level panel discussions with senior government officials from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Tajikistan and Tanzania. The key messages of the event will highlight the importance of increased political commitments and investment, and the requirement for sustained partnerships and harmonized collaboration across all stakeholders to achieve universal access to safe sanitation and hygiene.

For more information, please contact

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