

Africa: Water & Sanitation

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About Water and Sanitation in Africa

Key facts

- On average, people in Africa use about 5 litres of water per day. While in Europe they use 200 litres per day. In the United States its 400 litres¹.
- Access to drinking water through a household connection is as low as 16% in sub-Saharan Africa¹.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the absolute number of people without access to sanitation actually increased – from 335 million in 1990 to 440 million by the end of 2004².
- To meet the MDG target, over 35 million people in Africa need to gain access to sanitation annually².
- Annually some \$28.4 million is lost in Africa due to low levels of access to water and sanitation, a figure that exceeds total aid flows and debt relief to the region in 2003³.

Progress made

- Access to safe drinking water has improved in sub-Saharan Africa from 49% in 1990 to 56% in 2004².
- Access to basic sanitation has improved in sub-Saharan Africa from 32% in 1990 to 37% in 2004².

Working to improve the water and sanitation sectors in Africa

DFID has produced a "Global Call to Action" on water which calls for:

- more money to be spent in the sector;
- the funds to be spent effectively; and
- the right international structures to be put in place to make progress.

DFID's "Global Call to Action" is focused on the "Five Ones", which are:

- at the International level: one annual report and one high-level meeting; and
- at the national level: one water and sanitation plan; one coordination group and one lead UN body.

At the national level, DFID has increased its allocation to water and sanitation in Africa to £95 million, and is developing a strategy to reach it's commitment of £200 million by 2010/11.

At the international level, the UN General Assembly declared 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation. The goal is to raise awareness and to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to reduce by half the proportion of the 2.6 billion people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

¹ WHO and UNICEF 2006: 'Meeting the MDG drinking water and sanitation target. The urban and rural challenge of the decade.'

² UN MDG Report

³ UNDP Human Development Report 2006: 'Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis'

Pan Africa and regional action on water and sanitation

DFID is providing £6 million of Technical Assistance to support the Africa Development Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative to help achieve 80% water and sanitation coverage in Africa by 2015.

We are also providing Technical Assistance to support the Africa Water Facility, an initiative of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) and managed by the Africa Development Bank.

DFID continues to support the Nile Basin Initiative, which aims to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the equitable use of Nile Basin water resources.

We are also working to reform the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) and to empower it to meet its objectives on improving the effectiveness of EU development assistance at country level. In particular, the UK (through DFID) will co-Chair the EUWI Africa Working Group in 2008, offering us the opportunity to promote the agreed changes to the EUWI.

Who are we working with?

DFID works with partner Governments, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the EC, the UN (particularly UNICEF), bilateral donors, non governmental organisations (NGOs), and the private sector. We also support Global Initiatives (such as the Global Water Partnership) which include specific African activities.

Country examples

Nigeria: DFID supports large-scale provision of water points and sanitation facilities through its £15 million Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES), implemented by UNICEF. In 2007, the WES programme provided access to improved water supply to more than 650,000 people. More than 40,000 pupils benefited from the installation of latrine compartments in schools and an additional 40,000 people from construction of household latrines.

Sierra Leone: DFID is providing £32 million for the design of a nationwide water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programme, in partnership with UNICEF. Working with the World Bank, DFID is also providing £15 million to support emergency rehabilitation and improve planning capacity for the water supply in Freetown.

Ethiopia: DFID is providing £75 million over 5 years to the Ethiopia national water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme. It will pay for the construction of an additional 7,000 rural water supply schemes and 37 small town schemes, helping an extra 3.2 million people get safe water.

For more information about DFID's work on water and sanitation please visit www.dfid.gov.uk
If you are a journalist and wish to know more about DFID and its work to reduce poverty in Africa please call DFID press office: 0207023 0600.