Leaving no one behind

Improved water resources management and access to safe water and sanitation for all is essential for eradicating poverty, building peaceful and prosperous societies, and ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’ on the path towards sustainable development.

March 22

by Richard Connor

Editor in Chief
United Nations World Water Development Report
The human rights to water and sanitation

On 28 July 2010, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a historical resolution recognizing “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” (UNGA, 2010, para. 1).
Billions are being left behind in access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
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Source: Adapted from PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (2018, p. 14). Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported (CC BY 3.0).

*People affected are defined as those requiring immediate assistance during a period of emergency; this may include displaced or evacuated people.
Drivers and consequences of poverty and discrimination

Population growth
Drivers and consequences of poverty and discrimination

Urbanization
Drivers and consequences of poverty and discrimination

Extreme poverty

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Drivers and consequences of poverty and discrimination

Figure 20. The rise of the global top 1% versus the stagnation of the global bottom 50%, 1980–2016

Figure 21. Top 10% national income share across the world, 2016

Income inequality

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Drivers and consequences of poverty and discrimination

Education and employment

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Who is being ‘left behind’?
Urban Settings
Rural Poverty

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Refugees and forcibly displaced people
Walking the Walk
Socio-economic dimensions: Funding and financing

Funding gap in WASH
### Socio-economic dimensions: Funding and financing

### Multiple benefits for vulnerable groups

#### Table 5.1 The relative possibility of gaining selected benefits from WASH interventions, by vulnerable population group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Living environment</th>
<th>Convenience and time savings</th>
<th>Dignity (social)</th>
<th>Educational outcomes*</th>
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<tr>
<td>People below national poverty line</td>
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<td>Slum dwellers</td>
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<td>Remote and isolated populations</td>
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<td>Ethnic [minority] groups</td>
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<td>Women and female-heads of households</td>
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<td>Elderly, sick, and physically disabled people**</td>
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<td>Emergency contexts</td>
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<td>Refugees</td>
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<td>Prison population</td>
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</table>

*Due to reduced stunting, reduced illness-related absence, and higher enrolment and completion rates (especially among girls).

**Buildings and other facilities, including toilets, are often not accessible to persons with mobility limitations due to the lack of an accessible design, such as an entrance ramp, retrofitted bathrooms, or improved signage (ILO, 2017d).

***Educational gains for disabled children.

Note: The number of arrows is meant to illustrate the magnitude of the outcome expected for each population group.

Socio-economic dimensions: Funding and financing

WASH makes good socio-economic sense
Socio-economic dimensions:
Funding and financing

Reaching the furthest behind first
Socio-economic dimensions: Funding and financing

Funding sources

- Subsidies
- Structured tariffs
- Blended finance
- National government
- Official development assistance (ODA)
- Commercial finance
- Private sector
Good Governance: The ‘invisible’ part of the water cycle

Human Rights Based Approach
Takeaway messages

• Access to safe, affordable and reliable drinking water and sanitation services are basic human rights.

• Billions are being left behind in terms of access to water and sanitation.

• The wealthy generally receive high levels of service and often at very low price, while the poor often pay a much higher price for a service of similar or lesser quality.

• Ensuring that water is affordable to all requires policy recommendations tailored to specific target groups.

• Equitable access to water for agricultural production, particularly for supplemental irrigation, can make a difference for farmers’ livelihoods.

• Mass displacement can strain water-related services for both existing populations and new arrivals, creating inequalities and potential conflicts.

• Investing in water supply and sanitation in general, and for the vulnerable and disadvantaged in particular, makes good economic sense.

• Good governance overcomes vested interests and exclusionary practices.
Good news: momentum is already growing!
Thank you

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