

For immediate release  
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## Inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene essential for life with dignity, says WaterAid



**From Liberia to Nepal, Ethiopia to India, progress is being made to ensure more disabled people are living lives with dignity with inclusive water infrastructure, accessible toilets and improved hygiene services, as demonstrated in new photos released by international nongovernmental organisation WaterAid to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December).**

The images show the progress in installing accessible facilities – including wheelchair-friendly toilets and shower blocks - as well as in changing mindsets around disability in communities and in local governments.

One billion people – 15 per cent of the world’s population - have some form of disability. The vast majority are living in the poorest communities in low- and middle-income countries, where poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability.

A lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene particularly affects disabled people living in poverty. Disparities are even more stark when disability combines with another common cause of exclusion, such as gender, remoteness, ethnicity, chronic illness or ageing.

WaterAid has been calling for action from policymakers, local and national governments, and water and sanitation practitioners to ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all, including disabled people.

**Jane Wilbur, Equality, Inclusion and Rights Advisor at WaterAid, said:**

“Too often, the reasons why it is hard to reach disabled people in poor communities are discussed. The lack of data, the lack of accessible infrastructure and the lack of money are given as reasons to delay, postpone, obfuscate.

“This is not an adequate response. There is more and more evidence of the progress that can be made when all people involved in delivering water and sanitation facilities start taking real, practical steps towards inclusive taps and toilets for all.

“We are calling for those people involved in delivering services to make them accessible for all, to end discrimination so people with disabilities can claim their rights to water and sanitation. This means promoting the rights to water and sanitation and how people can claim those rights. It is time to get real and get practical now.”

WaterAid works with governments to develop guidelines for delivering proper services and supports on implementation. In India, WaterAid worked with the government to develop and roll out their [Handbook on Accessible Household Sanitation for Persons with Disabilities](#) with practical, accessible water, sanitation and hygiene designs of varying costs.

WaterAid is calling on governments to meet their promises to ensure that no one is left behind, after every member state of the United Nations signed on to the Sustainable Developments Goals in autumn 2015, promising a healthier, fairer, more sustainable world by 2030.

WaterAid works on inclusive programming in 37 countries helping ensure no one is left behind, including disabled people.

To read more on clearing the path for disabled people to access water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, see [www.wateraid.org/disability-day](http://www.wateraid.org/disability-day) for more information on WaterAid's work in this area.

## Ends

**To download images of WaterAid's inclusive water points, toilets and shower blocks and their users, please click here:**

<http://assetbank.wateraid.org/assetbank-wateraid/images/assetbox/a0bef7c1-cb1f-41cb-bd75-074a694c46df/assetbox.html>

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## Notes to editors

### WaterAid

WaterAid's vision is of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation. The international organisation works in 37 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific Region to transform lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in some of the world's poorest communities. Since 1981, WaterAid has reached 25 million people with safe water and, since 2004, 24 million people with sanitation. For more information, visit [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org), follow @WaterAidUK on Twitter, or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/wateraid](http://www.facebook.com/wateraid).

- Around 315,000 children die each year from diarrhoeal diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation. That's almost 900 children each day, or one child every two minutes.
- An estimated 663 million people (around one in ten) are without safe water
- Nearly 2.4 billion people (around one in three) live without improved sanitation
- For every £1 invested in water and sanitation, an average of £4 is returned in increased productivity.
- Just £15 can help provide one person with access to safe water.
- For details on how individual countries are keeping their promises on water and sanitation, please see our online database, [WASHWatch.org](http://WASHWatch.org).

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