

For Immediate Release
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Building a better future for women starts with taps and toilets WaterAid at Women Deliver 2016

Clean water and safe, private toilets are essential to women and girls' education, health care, gender equality and the gateway to a better, more prosperous life, WaterAid has said ahead of the opening of the world's leading conference on the health and rights of women and girls this week.

Women Deliver's 4th Global Conference opens in Copenhagen on 16 May 2016.

WaterAid Director of Global Policy and Campaigns Margaret Batty said:

"The Women Deliver conference is a unique opportunity to find new ways to address issues of health, education, poverty and injustice that persist for women and girls around the world. In any discussion of women and girls' rights, we must consider their ability to access clean water, safe private toilets, and the ability to keep clean with soap.

"It is women and girls who walk long distances to collect dirty water, and the absence of good sanitation makes them more vulnerable to illness, harassment or even violence. Without access to clean water and toilets, they miss out on education and opportunities to make a living, and are less able to change their lives for the better. If we really want to create a fairer, more sustainable world by 2030 and eradicate extreme poverty, then water, sanitation and hygiene are a crucial part of that equation, and essential for both good health and dignity."

The UN's Global Goals on sustainable development include Goal 6, to reach everyone, everywhere with access to clean water and basic toilets by 2030. However clean water, safe private toilets and good hygiene are also essential elements in making progress on education, maternal, newborn and child health, ending hunger and malnutrition and reducing inequalities.

Critical facts on women and girls and water and sanitation:

- **1.2 billion women and girls are without a safe, private place to go to the toilet**, and at any given time some 800 million women and girls are forced to manage periods without this basic necessity;
- **330 million women and girls are without access to clean water;**

- **A newborn dies every minute** from infection or sepsis, deaths which can often be prevented with safe water and rigorous hygiene, including the midwife's ability to wash hands with soap.
- **315,000 children under five die each year** from diarrhoeal illnesses linked to dirty water and poor sanitation
- **Some 42% of the healthcare facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 38% of facilities in low- and middle-income countries around the world, do not have access to water.**
- **Nearly half of schools in low- and middle-income countries do not have basic toilets** – meaning children who are ill from diarrhoea or girls who are menstruating are unlikely to attend school during this time.

WaterAid at Women Deliver events include:

- **'Would you give birth without clean water, soap and a toilet?'** An event focusing on the need for water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities to improve maternal and newborn health, featuring speakers from WaterAid Rwanda, Unicef, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Centre for Health and Gender Equity, and Every Women Every Child as well as a community health expert from Zambia, Dr Margorie Makukula. *(To register for this event on Wed 18 May, Bella Centre Room B1M1, 7 am, please click [here](#).)*
- **'Breaking the Taboo: Protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of menstruating women and girls'**, featuring youth rights activist Vivian Onano, Nina Besser of the International Women's Health Coalition and moderator Elizabeth Ford from The Guardian. *(To register for this event on Tues 17 May, Bella Centre Room 179, 6 pm please click [here](#).)*
- Live challenge: could you carry a 25-litre jerrycan of water while pregnant? WaterAid will conduct this experience in partnership with Girls Globe. *(Wed 18 May).*
- Regular WaterAid Facebook Lives from Copenhagen and participation in the Women Deliver LIVE online conference.
- Screenings of WaterAid films '[The Ultimate Pregnancy Test](#)', '[Across The Tracks](#),' and '[Parallel Lives](#)'

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Visual assets available at Women Deliver

Pregnant? Congratulations! But will your hospital have water? Some 38% of healthcare facilities in the developing world don't – which means millions of women in Africa risk infection and death each time they give birth, for themselves and their babies. Check out our new film, The Ultimate Pregnancy Test.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH26uimQ8eA&feature=youtu.be>

Watch WaterAid's stunning film, Parallel Lives, illustrating the differences – and similarities – in the lives of midwives in Liverpool, UK and Kiomboi, Tanzania.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pz84KiKAKPs>

Experience Parallel Lives as an interactive film here:

<http://www.wateraid.org/uk/news/news/experience-life-as-a-midwife-with-our-new-interactive-film>

Explore our photo gallery showing how what women bring to the hospital to give birth changes around the world, depending on what they find upon arrival.

<http://assetbank.wateraid.org/assetbank-wateraid/images/assetbox/3f55c031-7fae-440f-9512-f15d367934d6/assetbox.html>

And explore our photo gallery illustrating the challenges young women face trying to manage their periods when clean water, private toilets and a place to wash with soap are hard to come by. <http://assetbank.wateraid.org/assetbank-wateraid/images/assetbox/395ba5d3-6a8d-467a-abf5-7a384efb3ad9/assetbox.html>

About 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, Central 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 23 million people with safe water and, since 2004, 21 million people with sanitation. For more information, visit www.wateraid.org, follow @WaterAidUK on Twitter, or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wateraid.

- Around 315,000 children die each year from diarrhoeal diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation. That's nearly 900 children each day, or one child every two minutes.
- Over 650 million people (around one in ten) are without safe water
- Over 2.3 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.