

## **WaterAid Statement at 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly**

### **Agenda item 15.1 - Draft global health sector strategies**

DG, honourable delegates and colleagues, WaterAid welcomes the draft global strategy, and the emphasis on the role of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the prevention and control of the disease.

The reference to the importance of WASH for the prevention of hepatitis A and E should, in our view, be strengthened as follows:

First, the strategy should refer consistently to water, sanitation and hygiene interventions as a comprehensive package of interventions throughout. Furthermore, the inclusion of a dedicated goal on water and sanitation within the SDGs and the broadened monitoring framework that accompanies the goal should be acknowledged as important opportunities for prevention and enhanced monitoring. Recent efforts on improving WASH services in healthcare facilities by WHO and UNICEF should also be acknowledged with respect to enhancing infection prevention and control in healthcare settings.

Second, we are concerned by the absence of any impact or service coverage targets with respect to hepatitis A or E. Such targets are essential to ensure effective implementation and accountability with respect to the Hep A and E components of the Strategy. It is also worth noting the WHO document, *Waterborne outbreaks of hepatitis E (2014)*, which clearly identifies the role of WASH and specific actions for preventing up to 20 million infections of Hepatitis E annually.

Third, WASH interventions should be included within the set of core viral hepatitis interventions.

Fourth, the WHO Essential Environmental Health Standards in Healthcare, as well as the WHO and UNICEF Global Action Plan on WASH in healthcare facilities, should be referenced with respect to action on enhancing infection prevention and control in healthcare settings.

Thank you.