

WaterAid, climate change and the road to the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP21)



Women from Bewatoo village work together to pull water up from the dug well, Tharparkar, Pakistan, 2013.

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Summary

The purpose of this document is to outline why current developments in global climate change policy are a material concern for WaterAid's mission towards universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), specifically taking into account the Paris climate talks in December 2015. The document articulates WaterAid's main messages for stakeholders involved in the climate change negotiations, how key themes relate to our work on WASH and what climate resilience looks like in the WASH sector.

Key messages for the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP21)

1. Today's climate variability threatens the lives and prosperity of people across many of the countries where WaterAid works, along with other challenges such as rapid urbanisation, high inequality and changing land-use. **Climate change will worsen these existing challenges.**
2. Climate change is primarily water change – droughts, floods, cyclones and rising sea levels are all a **material threat to the sustainability of WASH services.**
3. A **climate agreement in December that keeps the global temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius** is essential if we are to meet the ambitious Global Goals, especially the water and sanitation Goal.
4. Finance for climate change adaptation must be given sufficient priority at COP21 so that the countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts receive the financial, technical and policy support they need to continue to develop as the climate changes. **WaterAid is calling for at least 50% of global public funds for climate change to be directed towards climate adaptation** in the poorest and most vulnerable countries – a 34% increase on current provisions.
5. These funds should be provided via mechanisms most suitable for meeting the adaptation needs of the poorest and most vulnerable communities. **These should principally be through grants over loans.**
6. The **sustainable development and climate change agendas must be better aligned** to ensure that sustainably eradicating poverty is the priority when it comes to building resilience to the coming climatic changes.
7. **Water is to adaptation what energy is to mitigation**, yet WaterAid research shows that climate finance has not been directed towards enhancing water security for poor people.
8. **Policy makers must understand that investment in the provision of sustainable WASH services to all effectively builds resilience to climate change.** Access to safe water shifts people to more reliable sources such as groundwater or well managed and reliable surface water sources. Improved sanitation reduces the likelihood of diseases spreading after a flood. Healthy people are able to attend school and earn an income, which strengthens their ability to cope with an increasingly uncertain climate.
9. Governments of developing countries should be supported to **mainstream adaptation and climate resilience into their poverty eradication strategies and water sector plans.**

National water sector plans that incorporate climate risk can be linked to national adaptation plans and to global climate funding.

10. **Strengthening country systems so that they can achieve and sustain universal access**, implement large multi-sectoral projects, quickly restore WASH services after extreme events and make the right technology choices is the best way of increasing climate resilience in the WASH sector.
11. All **global climate funds must work together** to simplify the climate finance landscape, provide readiness support for least developed countries, ensure funds are spent at the local level and provide at least 50% of funds to adaptation activities in the least developed countries.
12. **Loss and damage mechanisms are needed** to make sure developing countries are not overburdened by climate impacts.

Why is climate change important to our work on WASH?

- **The majority of climate impacts will be felt through the water cycle** – droughts, floods, more intense monsoons and rising sea levels. Climate change will affect the poorest people in the poorest countries hardest.
- The 650 million poor and marginalised people who rely on unimproved drinking water sources will be increasingly vulnerable to climate change because such sources are highly exposed to climatic threats. Poor hygiene behaviours and lack of access to improved sanitation also increase vulnerability to climate change. **This will directly impact on WaterAid's mission of achieving universal access to sustainable WASH services by 2030.**
- Access to WASH builds resilience to many threats, including climate change. Therefore, working on improving the sustainability of WASH services is vital to increase resilience to climate change, and **universal access to sustainable WASH should be considered a climate change adaptation mechanism.**



WaterAid/ Jason Larkin

Local women begin to collect fresh water from a newly drilled borehole.
Kaniiche, Malawi.

How does climate change relate to the Global Goals and specifically Goal 6 on Water and Sanitation?

Ahead of the Sustainable Development Summit in September, Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon stated: “Unless we take urgent action on climate change we will not achieve sustainable development”.¹

The links between climate change and sustainable development are irrefutable and obvious – you can’t have a sustainable future without a sustainable environment and planet. Climate change will affect every one of the 17 new goals, either directly or indirectly, and risks undermining hard-earned development gains in all regions of the world.

Poor and developing countries will be among those most affected and least able to cope with shocks to their natural, economic and social systems. Within these countries, the poorest and most marginalised people are most vulnerable because they have less protection, insurance and fewer assets and alternatives. They tend to live in more hazardous areas and have livelihoods that depend on natural resources. Climate change will therefore threaten the first core goal, to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere.

Crucially for WaterAid, climate change will compromise our ability to achieve Global Goal 6: to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The vast majority of climate change impacts are manifested through water (i.e. there is too much, too little, it is too dirty or it arrives at the wrong time). Sanitation (Global Goal target 6.2) and water quality (target 6.6) are both threatened because storm run-off adds to the sewage and could contaminate water supplies. Importantly, climate change is happening alongside other major threats to water security, rapid urbanisation and changing land use, so will exacerbate these existing challenges.

The success of Global Goal 6 therefore depends on taking ‘urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’ (Global Goal 13). It relies on the merging of national climate change, development and WASH agendas and the availability, transparency and accessibility of international public finance.

How does climate change relate to WaterAid's new Global Strategic Aims?

Reducing inequalities	Strengthening services	Integrating WASH	Hygiene
<p>Climate change is a driver of local, national and global inequality.</p> <p>The transfer of wealth, technical expertise and knowledge to help poor countries address climate change is critical (and fundamentally an issue of justice).</p>	<p>Investing in a strong water sector is equally important as is the physical robustness of WASH infrastructure.</p> <p>Good-quality data, coherent policies and institutions across a range of sectors and monitoring of adaptation effectiveness are essential building blocks of a governance system that can deliver and sustain WASH services in a changing climate.</p>	<p>Building resilience to climate change emphasises the need for integrated sustainable development that addresses the multiple causes of vulnerability.</p> <p>Access to WASH is critical to resilience, as is access to food, education, health services and economic opportunity. Climate adaptation initiatives provide a unique opportunity for different sectors to work collaboratively on joint projects that address people's multiple development needs.</p>	<p>Climate change has both direct and indirect impacts on human health. Our ability to improve public health through increased access to WASH may also be effected by climate change. Neglecting the importance of health (and hygiene) would, therefore, increase the public health risk from climate change. Most critically, governments must ensure adaptation strategies are designed to maximise public health.</p>

UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP21) – what is it all about?

Every year government delegates from countries across the world meet at a 'Conference of the Parties' (COP) to review the implementation of a convention which aims to stabilise atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to prevent 'dangerous' human interference with the climate system.

This convention, titled the 'UN Framework Convention on Climate Change' (UNFCCC), was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit and entered into force on 21 March 1994. Now it has a near-universal membership of 195 parties. The Global Goal agenda acknowledges the UNFCCC as the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

The first COP took place in Berlin in 1995, and significant meetings since then have included COP3 where the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, COP11 where the protocol was extended, COP15 in Copenhagen which failed to negotiate a new international instrument to tackle climate change and COP17 in Durban where the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was created.

Why is COP21 in December so important?

This year COP21, also known as the Paris Climate Conference, will, for the first time in more than 20 years of UN negotiations, aim to form a legally binding and universal agreement on climate. The agreement is centred on a goal of keeping global warming below 2°C over the next century (Box 2).

50,000 participants – including 25,000 official delegates from governments, intergovernmental organisations, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society – are expected to attend the COP, which will run from 30 November to 11 December.

Among the major policy issues associated with the global climate agreement are:

- Climate change mitigation
- Adaptation and resilience
- International climate finance

The effectiveness of the Paris outcome will be judged on the nature of the responsibilities within the legal agreement, the long-term planning and how well these responsibilities are enforced. All year countries have been submitting their individual pledges to the UNFCCC ('Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions') and these, for some, represent a new form of engagement and promise that the world has never seen before. However, getting almost 200 countries to agree the way forward is a big deal, and there is still much debate around the major policy issues (Box 1) and the extent to which the country pledges are sufficient (Box 2).

What is WaterAid doing for COP21?

In the lead up to negotiations in Paris, WaterAid has been engaging with other international development NGOs and networks, such as the French Water Partnership, to monitor the formulation of the Paris Agreement. We have been helping to shape the UN-Water side event, along with UNICEF, FAO, UNEP and others, and have reviewed the World Bank's high-level paper on water for the negotiators.

We are also in tune with the development of the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) alongside the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA) which is an effort to bring state and non-state stakeholders together to accelerate cooperative climate action in support of the agreement. As part of the LPAA and parallel to the COP, focus thematic events will be taking place. This includes a 'Day on Resilience', in which a half-day session will be dedicated to water. During this session, a Presidents Panel on Water will take place to raise the profile of water in the climate agenda. The Secretariat will be manned by the World Bank, Stockholm International Water Institute, World Water Council and Water Environment Federation. The ten presidents on the panel will include those of Senegal, Rwanda, India and Sweden.

In the UK, we have been engaging with MPs and ministers, encouraging them to think critically about the allocations for climate adaptation finance and WASH.

We will be keeping a close eye on the outcomes and will disseminate key decisions that affect the WASH sector after the event.

After COP21 national governments will need very high levels of support from all actors in implementing the adaptation activities they have outlined as necessary. This will be an important entry point for the sector to ensure that adaptation includes pro-poor WASH. The last section in this document explains the support and resources available to support Country Programmes in engaging in this process.

Box 1: The road to Paris

Bonn negotiations

Climate negotiations and preparations ahead of COP21 have been taking place since 2012, initiating work on the 2015 agreement and pre-2020 ambition. The negotiations are led by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). The last meeting of the ADP before COP21 was held from 19-23 October 2015 in Bonn, Germany, and its task was to build a firm base for Paris. During this meeting, the co-chairs of the current negotiations produced another version of the Geneva negotiating text, which will become the 'Paris Agreement' to be signed by 196 parties in December.

The text

The current document includes a 35-page 'agreement' followed by 16 pages of 'decisions'. In theory these decisions would cover all details relevant to the new climate regime. Christina Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, has said that the text reflects the concerns of all countries: "We now have a party-owned text that is balanced and complete".²

However, on every page there are brackets around paragraphs, sentences, phrases and individual words. These brackets mean that agreement has not been reached and will have to be revisited. 30 of these brackets define choices between 'should' and 'shall' and refer principally to the extent to which developed countries will support developing countries. For example, the question about who should pay to help alleviate the impacts of climate change in developing countries is unlikely to be decided before the second week of COP21.

Pre-COP21

A pre-COP21 ministerial meeting was held on the 8-10 November with the aim of coming to agreement on the key issues that remain open. During this meeting, participants reinforced their commitment to succeed in reaching a universal agreement. Despite progress made on areas like reviewing commitments every five years and where finance should stand in the agreement, the results generated currently lack legal standing and must be officially approved by negotiators at the beginning of the gathering in Paris.

What are the key themes under the UNFCCC processes and how do they relate to WASH?

Article 3: Climate change mitigation

At the heart of the UNFCCC and the climate negotiations of COP21 is climate change mitigation – significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to avoid a temperature rise of more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. It is hoped that this will help avoid the most damaging impacts of climate change.

Mitigation can mean using renewable energies and new technologies, improving energy efficiency or changing consumer behaviour or management practices.³

Under the UNFCCC process, mitigation targets and preparations are communicated through each country's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). These will largely determine whether the world achieves an ambitious 2015 agreement. As of 18 November, 137 INDCs have been submitted, representing 164 countries (including the EU member states). Together these submissions cover around 91% of 2010 global emissions (excluding gas emitted from land use, land-use change and forestry) and 92% of the global population.⁴

A synthesis report on the aggregate effect of the INDCs was published on 30 October. The key finding was that, together, the contributions planned will lead to a fall in per capita emissions of up to 8% in 2025 and 9% in 2030 - a decrease that is adequate to keep global temperatures under the 'safe' limit of 2 degrees.⁵

Despite this finding, there is concern that the current level of collective ambition is well below what is needed. To this end, climate groups are encouraging parties to consider establishing a schedule for revisiting and 'ratcheting up' international commitments for climate action.

Box 2: 1.5°C – a tougher target

Two degrees Celsius has been referred to as the 'north star' for climate negotiations.⁶ Scientists estimate that two degree warming is the limit of safety, beyond which climate change becomes catastrophic and irreversible. Gernot Wagner, lead senior economist at the Environment Defence Fund, has stated that beyond 2 degrees we will be "gambling with the planet".⁶

However, even this amount of warming would have a devastating impact, especially for low-lying islands, coastal nations and sub-Saharan Africa. Already, we are seeing the effects of climate change in these areas.⁷

For this reason, developing countries, including the V20 group of most vulnerable countries, Least Developed Countries group (LDC) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), have been campaigning for a 1.5 degree target. A 1.5 degree target would mean more manageable adaptation measures, particularly for those countries that will face the brunt of global warming. However it would also require much more ambitious emissions cuts than those now pledged by governments ahead of the Paris summit. Consequentially, the proposition was one of the factors that led to the failure of the Copenhagen Summit and continues to be a source of tension between developed and developing countries.

Climate change mitigation and WASH

Whilst actively calling for the mitigation of GHG emissions is not WaterAid's core business, **a strong, global agreement on GHG emissions is critical for meeting WaterAid's objective of reaching everyone, everywhere with WASH by 2030**. This is because climate change will have the greatest impact on the least developed countries through water issues (too much, too little, too dirty, or at the wrong time), making it impossible to extend permanent and sustainable WASH services to the poorest people.

Article 4: Climate change adaptation

Adaptation to climate change is necessary because climate change impacts are already being felt and greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise, even with a strong agreement in Paris.

Climate change adaptation is defined as the adjustment in natural or human systems to a new or changing environment. Adaptation includes addressing underlying vulnerabilities, for example living with little or no water, sanitation or hygiene, as well as measures to improve planning, coordination and infrastructure to cope with climate change impacts. It has been shown that well-planned, early adaptation saves lives and money.⁸

Adaptation plays a central role in the draft text and 100 parties (88%) of INDCs – including 46 African states – include an adaptation component. As part of this, parties have highlighted their determination to strengthen national adaptation efforts such as NAPAs (National Adaptation Programmes of Action) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

NAPAs provide a process for least-developed countries (LDCs) to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change – activities for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. As of October 2015, NAPAs from 50 LDCs have been made available to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

NAPs build on the experiences of LDCs in preparing and implementing NAPAs. They focus on identifying medium- and long-term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies to address those needs. The NAP process is ongoing, with expectations that most countries will have finalised a NAP before 2020. WaterAid has identified NAPs as a valuable entry point to highlight the importance of sustainable WASH in the national climate change agenda (see page 20).

Successful implementation of these plans will depend on the extent of international climate finance made available. Both NAPAs and NAPs are funded by climate finance, through the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF).

Box 3: The inter-relationships between adaptation and mitigation

Mitigation and adaptation to climate change are dealt with in separate tracks in the climate negotiations. However, in practice, mitigation and adaptation are strongly interconnected. For example, in practice, implementing appropriate water resource management is essential for reliable renewable energy production and therefore very important for many mitigation measures. Similarly, energy is important for many adaptation measures. There are also trade-offs between mitigation and adaptation. For instance, if not designed for flexible operations, the longevity of energy investments can engender conflict and limit adaptation options.

Specific technologies and approaches to WASH programming represent combined adaptation and mitigation options. WASH interventions such as demand management, leakage minimisation and the development of new technologies such as low-emissions waste management can complement low-income countries' efforts to combine their low-carbon or green growth and adaptation objectives. There is huge potential to develop approaches to WASH that satisfy mitigation, adaptation and broader development projects.

Climate change adaptation and WASH

Due to the unreliability of climate change models, it is currently not possible to predict what climate changes will occur at the local level in the countries in which we work (Box 4).

However, WaterAid's work to deliver access to sustainable WASH benefits communities, builds resilience and helps people adapt to a changing climate no matter how the climate changes. Access to safe water shifts people to more reliable sources such as groundwater or well-managed and reliable surface water sources. Improved sanitation reduces the likelihood of diseases spreading after a flood. Healthy people are able to attend school and earn an income, which strengthens their ability to cope with an increasingly uncertain climate.

Improving access to WASH is therefore seen as a 'no or low regrets' adaptation strategy which will have benefits regardless of how the climate changes. More information on our work on climate change can be found on page 17.

Box 4: Climate models and uncertainty

There is still a lot of uncertainty around the likely impact of climate change, especially on rainfall. For example, in East Africa, limited confidence can be assigned to climate models that indicate that the climate will get wetter. Climate models don't always align with the trends that are seen on the ground and also don't tell us how the intensity and frequency of rainfall will change in areas with already high levels of inter-annual rainfall variability.

Therefore, for the WASH sector, measures to improve information about the effects of current climate variability for water management would assist adaptation to longer-term climate change impacts.



Mithun Mondal walks home with a jug of water through a landscape in Koyra, Bangladesh, made barren by salination after cyclone Alia struck in 2009.

In many countries WaterAid is working to influence national adaptation plans so that they promote sustainable WASH as an example of a climate change adaptation activity. We call on governments to support the adaptation needs of developing countries and to make this clear during the Paris negotiations

Article 6: Climate finance

Finance is necessary to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Mitigation activities generally require large-scale investments to significantly reduce emissions in sectors that release large quantities of GHG emissions. For adaptation activities, financial resources will allow countries to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of climate change.

Box 5: The costs of climate change

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that, if average global temperature rise is kept at 2°C, poorer countries will still need to invest \$70 to \$100 billion every year in adaptation activities between 2014 and 2050 to deal with hazards such as rising sea levels, storms, droughts and other climate change effects.⁹ The OECD has since claimed that last year, \$62 billion of climate finance flowed to developing nations, giving hope to poorer nations that the \$100 billion pledge will be met.¹⁰

However, the costs of climate change remain uncertain and UNEP has revised the IPCC figure to as high as two to three times this initial estimate.¹¹ An aggregation by the South Centre, a developing-country think tank, found that the core of climate finance necessary ranged from \$600 billion to \$1.5 trillion a year.¹²

Despite the current flows of climate finance, developing countries have been forced to take action through their own domestic budgets, according to a recent report by Oxfam.¹³ The report estimates that sub-Saharan African countries are already spending around \$5 billion of their own resources on adaptation, substantially more than has been received. The concern is that such spending on climate change runs the risk of crowding out urgently needed spending in other priority sectors.

The principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities' (CBDR) requires developed country parties to provide financial assistance for the costs that face developing countries (Box 5). These costs are substantial – the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea and Madagascar have stated that their entire climate commitment depends on international finance.¹⁴ Without this support, less developed countries will struggle to implement their NAPAs and NAPs which have/are being developed through the UNFCCC process.

At COP19 in Copenhagen, developed countries committed to a goal of jointly mobilising US\$100 billion a year in climate finance from 2020 onwards. In fact, it is likely that future climate finance flows will far outweigh Official Development Assistance (underscoring the needs to ensure WASH benefits from these flows). However, climate finance remains a major point of contention ahead of the climate change talks and ambiguity remains on the sources, instruments and channels that will enable developed countries to achieve this goal.

Box 6: Climate finance and ODA

Climate finance is an emerging area and there is a lack of clarity about the relationship between climate finance and development finance.¹⁵ The Copenhagen Accord calls for developed countries to provide 'new and additional' climate change financing to developing countries. These terms have not been clearly defined, however, and many developed countries are counting their climate-related spending as ODA – which now makes up 17% of total bilateral ODA. The bulk of this spending is not going to LDCs, but to middle-income countries for mitigation (for example, building wind turbines in China). In 2012, almost a quarter of total ODA to LDCs was spent on mitigation in middle-income countries (ibid).

When climate finance for mitigation is directed towards LDCs, there is a concern that core development priorities, such as water and sanitation, education and health, may receive less international funding. This concern is justified because total ODA for LDCs has shown a decline in recent years, with bilateral ODA falling by 15% between 2013 and 2014. It is essential that these declines are reversed. Not only should developed countries be meeting their long-standing traditional ODA commitments, but they should also be taking steps to ensure that LDCs receive sufficient new grant finance to meet their climate adaptation needs.

The structure of the global climate finance architecture is complex. There are a range of funds, with some focusing on mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, some on adaptation, and some on both. In terms of adaptation, the main funds include the Adaptation Fund (AF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR).

With regard to accessing these funds there have been several challenges for developing countries.¹⁶ These include:

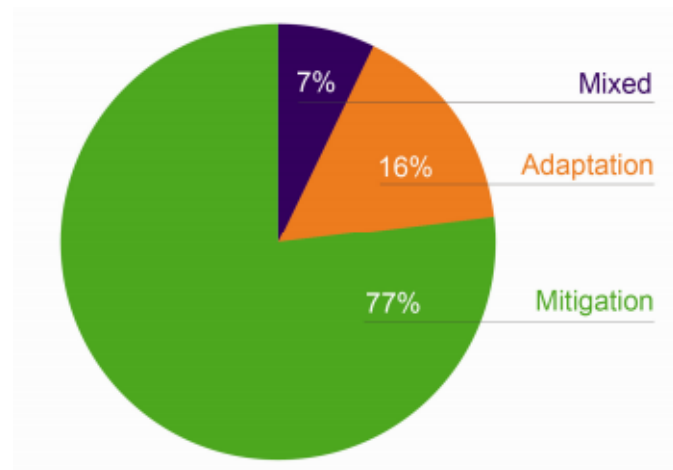
- Low level of awareness of the need for sources of funding
- Difficulty in understanding and meeting funds' procedures and standards to access finance
- Low level of capacity to design projects/programmes

This demonstrates the need for both a more streamlined process and enhanced capacity building to facilitate better access to funds.

Where are climate funds going?

In addition, despite the range of funds and efforts to ensure a balance, a recent report by the OECD has estimated that the vast majority of international climate finance is going towards mitigation (77%), with only 16% going to adaptation projects¹ (Figure 1). Most concerning is that the majority of mitigation funds are going towards mitigation projects in middle-income countries.

Figure 1: The \$100 bn goal



Source: Pettengell (2015), Africa's smallholders adapting to climate change

The 'Fast-Start Finance' stream refers to the \$30 billion that was pledged over 2010–2012 as a down payment for the \$100 billion goal. India, Indonesia and Brazil have been the largest recipients of fast-start financing since they have the greatest scope for mitigation.¹⁷ Adaptation, in comparison, received just 21% of these funds. The reason behind this imbalance is that the 'public good' aspect of adaptation activities means that opportunities for profit-making are limited and therefore unattractive to the private sector.¹⁸ The WASH sector in particular can be viewed as low revenue and a 'silent need', especially in poor communities.

In addition, within the total available for adaptation finance, **only 2.8% is flowing as grants**. The overwhelming reliance instead is on loans and private finance – both of which are unlikely to be suitable for meeting the adaptation needs of the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

Climate financing will be a crucial issue for whether the world can agree on a new climate agreement in Paris. However, there is much to suggest that international climate finance is not yet prioritising those who are suffering the worst consequences of climate change and that a funding gap remains to deliver the new and additional public finance needed to enable adaptation at the scale required. It is hoped that the GCF, which may work as the primary financial mechanism for the operation of the COP21 agreement, will offer an opportunity to address this (Box 7).

¹ The remaining 7% went towards activities that supported both mitigation and adaptation.

Box 7: The Green Climate Fund (GCF)

The GCF is a comparatively new funding institution which will be a key building block for the new climate agreement. By allocating 50% of the fund's resources to adaptation, the GCF will be the largest multilateral funder of climate adaptation initiatives, and as such holds huge promise for developing countries. It also offers a way of 'doing development differently' by facilitating 'direct access' – enabling national or regional entities to develop, design and oversee projects, which is normally the responsibility of multilateral, international entities.

To date, \$10 billion has been pledged, with contributions from 36 countries including Japan (\$1.5 billion), Germany (\$1 billion) and the UK (\$1.2 billion). The United States has pledged the largest amount (\$3 billion), but has yet to come through with the actual contribution. The GCF will offer a range of funding options, including grants, loans, concessional loans and structural insurance. Co-financing is to be expected.

In November, the first proposals will be approved by the board in Zambia. The board will consider eight proposals which would require a total of \$168 million in funding. They were selected from 37 proposals submitted since July. A prior concern was that adaptation was going to be neglected –however, seven out of the eight projects (which draw from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific Islands) focus on adaptation. In addition, many of these projects are grant-based.

WaterAid has recently become an official observer of the GCF, enabling us to keep abreast of the fund's development, and to influence – where possible – its spending.

Climate finance and WASH

It is essential that at least half of global public funds for climate change are directed towards adaptation in developing countries and that a substantial proportion of this goes towards WASH. These funds should flow primarily through grants, not loans.

WaterAid's recent climate finance research forms part of an increasing number of reports and analyses critiquing the way climate funds have been spent, and strengthens the view that international climate finance is not yet prioritising those most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. By drawing on three case studies (Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Zambia) it shows that there are only a limited number of projects focused on WASH, and that the majority of these projects are not related to water in any way.

The findings of the research will be used by WaterAid to help developing country governments secure climate finance for projects that improve access to WASH and enhance water security. The next phase involves a new project with the World Bank and others that will aim to demonstrate what climate-resilient WASH projects would look like.

Other themes covered in the agreement that relate to WASH

Article 5: Loss and Damage

Though not receiving a lot of media coverage, the Loss and Damage mechanism is likely to be a key policy topic at the COP21. Also known as 'climate compensation', it refers to the negative impacts and permanent losses caused by climate change in developing countries, and a discussion of measures to compensate for these impacts. It encompasses a continuum of climate change impacts, from 'slow onset' processes (e.g. glacial retreat or sea-level rise) to periodic, extreme events (e.g. hurricanes, droughts and floods).

Examples of loss and damage include farmers who can no longer grow crops because their soil has become too salty, and fishermen who have lost their livelihoods because rivers have dried up.¹⁹

Discussions on loss and damage have been polarised and nations are still split over how far the Paris text should cover it. For the G77 (a key coalition of developing nations) and China, climate compensation is a matter of survival which will accelerate their ability to cope with losses. They see it as a critical part of the Paris agreement and walked out over this issue during COP19 in Warsaw in 2003.

However, many developed countries, including the US and Canada, want no reference to it at all. This is because they, being top emitters, would have to bear the brunt of the costs.

We have yet to see whether the issue of loss and damage will be included in the new climate agreement, but analysts forecast that it will get just a fleeting mention.²⁰

Loss and damage and WASH

WaterAid calls for loss and damage mechanisms to make sure the developing countries are not overburdened by climate impacts caused by the GHG-emitting actions of developing countries. Climate-resilient WASH programming has the potential to play a significant role in reducing the economic impacts associated with loss and damage because:

- it reduces existing vulnerabilities to climate change by shifting people to more reliable water sources.
- Climate-resilient water and sanitation facilities are less likely to be damaged thereby negating the need for loss and damage.
- Damaging and expensive health outcomes like the spread of water-borne diseases following climate change-related disasters will be significantly reduced owing to good sanitation facilities.

Article 8: Capacity building

Capacity building will be vital to facilitate the effective implementation of the new agreement and to address new challenges that countries may face in the coming years. This is especially important for LDCs, which often lack the institutional as well as the human capacity to address their adaptation needs.

Article 8 of the current text states that climate change cannot be the sole responsibility of any single institution and that instead, existing systems of governance should be strengthened.²¹ This recognition presents the opportunity to learn from the lessons of the past 50 years in the effective

delivery of development finance and would improve national ownership and help align development and climate outcomes. Despite this, to date, the roll-out of adaptation finance has led to the setting up of parallel systems of delivery, with funds being spent on narrow 'climate adaptation-specific projects' that do not form part of an overall national strategy.²¹

As international public climate and development finance will likely move towards a greater use of country systems through national and planning systems (such as the GCF (Box 7)), development partners should provide support for public financial management in countries where these systems are weak (as in fragile states),

Capacity building and WASH

Investing in a strong water sector is as important as the physical robustness of WASH infrastructure.

Good-quality data, coherent policies and institutions across a range of sectors, and monitoring of adaptation effectiveness are essential building blocks of a governance system that can deliver and sustain WASH services in a changing climate. Therefore, in addition to more adaptation finance, it is important that its effectiveness should be measured by the ability to create and deliver equitable and sustainable services and institutions.

What is WaterAid doing to help communities cope with climate variability and change?

WaterAid has more than 30 years of experience in helping communities build resilience to climate variability. Although there is still a lot of uncertainty around the impact climate change will have on water resources and the communities that depend on them, WaterAid is able to implement 'no or low regrets' activities that build resilience to climatic threats regardless of exactly how the climate changes (wetter, drier, more variable etc.). Expert studies focusing on climate change and groundwater in Africa show that groundwater is likely to be the most resilient source of water to climatic change. Aquifers act as a buffer, storing water when surface sources dry up. The natural filtering properties of aquifers protect groundwater from contamination. Our current focus on developing groundwater is therefore likely to be sound in the face of climate change. In urban environments the situation is more complex and more work is needed.

All sustainable WASH programmes build community resilience, and sustainability is crucial to WaterAid's work). However, WaterAid has a number of programmes that are specific to climate-driven vulnerability:

- **WaterAid's Securing Water Resources Approach (SWRA)** is being implemented by the Regional Learning Centre in West Africa and is designed to improve local management of water resources and strengthen community resilience to water-related threats (Figure 2).

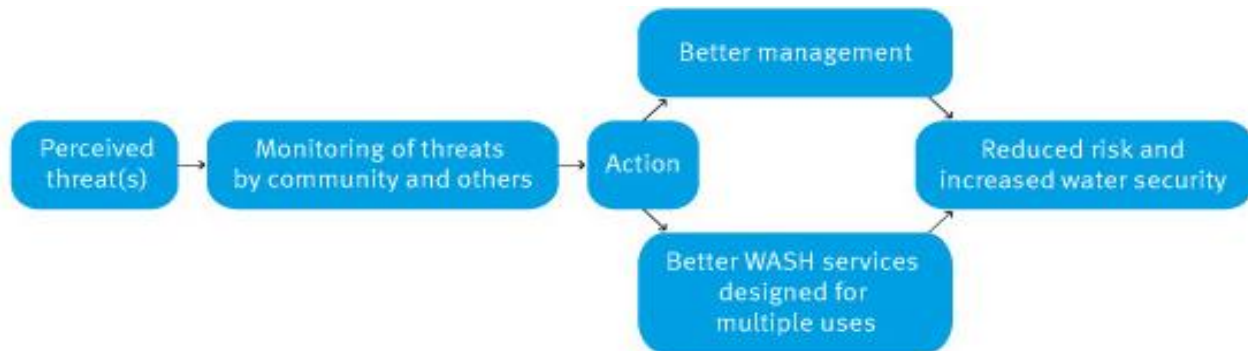


Figure 2: WaterAid's model for Securing Water Resources

- WaterAid favours a bottom-up, vulnerability based assessment approach which is crucial to identifying the existing vulnerabilities that will be compounded by climate change. Our **Participatory WASH Vulnerability Analysis (PWVA)** helps communities to reduce their vulnerabilities by supporting them to draft their own development plans, which are then used as a basis for demanding better services and investment from responsible authorities. Efforts are being made to better embed the approach into the practice of local authorities.



SWRA in action – women monitoring drought levels in Burkina Faso.

- Climate change is predicted to increase the incidence of natural disasters, and **WaterAid's Disasters framework** outlines our approach to disaster risk reduction and disaster response. WaterAid has a growing body of experience in providing emergency WASH assistance immediately after a natural disaster.
- WaterAid is conducting new research that examines the complex and evolving climate finance landscape to better understand how it relates to water security. The results will be used by WaterAid to **help developing country governments secure climate finance for projects that improve access to WASH and enhance water security**. We are also official observers of the GCF and a member of the Adaptation Fund NGO Network which allows us to follow and scrutinise the development of the funds and influence, where possible, the outcomes.
- WaterAid's spatial planning for urban sanitation and water project is studying the impacts of rapid urbanisation on cities' water and sanitation capacity and has identified climate change as a major challenge. Combining this with new research on climate change adaptation in low-income urban communities, WaterAid will continue to produce evidence of the policy frameworks and investments required to improve the resilience of poor, urban residents.

What does adaptation look like in the water and sanitation sector?

1. Provide water and sanitation services that last (more of the same but doing it better)

A richer, healthier and more water-secure population is the best way forward to achieve transformational adaptation and climate resilience. Possibly the biggest shift that the WASH sector must make to achieve greater climate change resilience involves doing what we currently do better. An unacceptably high number of water points fall out of service after just one year. There are high slippage rates in sanitation and hygiene behaviour change. Climate change is not likely to be driving these problems. Poorly sited, poorly designed, poorly constructed and poorly supervised boreholes fail to provide people with resilience to current conditions let alone future climatic change. Similarly, one-off hygiene or sanitation interventions don't deliver the lasting behaviour change required for resilience.

2. Focus on strengthening government systems

Doing things better means focusing on enabling environments. This is because resilience is achieved under governments that can provide universal access and keep services running, plan so people don't live on floodplains, protect drinking water sources during drought, restore services quickly after an extreme event and make robust and flexible decisions in the face of uncertainty. There are many actors working on these aspects with whom WaterAid can link.

What's next for WaterAid Country Programmes?

WaterAid has produced briefing documents to outline specific adaptation and climate policies in each country in which it works. We've identified NAPs as an important entry point to raise the profile of WASH in the climate change agenda and our step-by-step guides aim to help increase engagement with these. For the creation of national development adaptation plans, WaterAid's extensive experience and expertise at the local level will be very valuable.

Our climate change approach calls for providing WASH services that last. Regardless of climate change, this is core to WaterAid's objectives. Therefore engagement at this level will not require expertise on climate change.

In addition to this we will be working with staff to support WASH sector strategies and policies that incorporate climate risk. This will form part of a new climate change 'learning agenda' that will be rolled out for Country Programmes from January 2016.

For more information contact [Miriam Denis Le Seve](#) – Climate Change Policy Officer.

WaterAid's climate change resources

WaterAid is expanding its work on climate change and there are further resources available at <http://www.wateraid.org/policy-practice-and-advocacy/climate-change/resources>.

- These include briefing notes on WASH and climate change, and climate finance and water security, as well as our water security and disasters frameworks.
- The climate finance and water security reports can be accessed [here](#)

Information on WaterAid's water security work can be found [here](#).

Information on WaterAid's sustainability framework can be found [here](#).

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