

WaterAid Statement

Agenda Item 34.1 Progress report H. Water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities (resolution WHA72.7 (2019))

Chair and honorable delegates,

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of further health and climate crises, WaterAid reiterates the urgent need for action and investment to strengthen health systems through water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in healthcare facilities.

1.8 billion people use facilities without basic water services and in least-developed countries, half of healthcare facilities lack basic water services. The full extent of the problem remains hidden through major data gaps, especially on environmental cleaning. What data does exist indicates that conditions are dire.

Achieving WASH in healthcare facilities is achievable and affordable: just \$3 per person per year to 2030 is needed to achieve universal basic WASH services in healthcare facilities in least-developed countries. Yet, investment in safer healthcare facilities through WASH remains a critical gap for health services in the world's poorest countries.

WaterAid urges member states to take immediate action to improve WASH in healthcare facilities and build resilience to future crises:

1. Prioritise WASH in healthcare facilities in COVID-19 response and recovery, including the implementation of the International Health Regulations, and in the proposed new international treaty on pandemic preparedness and response.
2. Ensure adequate financing to implement costed WASH in healthcare facility national roadmaps to:
 - a) strengthen WASH and health coordination;
 - b) develop health workforce capacity to sustain WASH services and promote and practice good hygiene;
 - c) improve monitoring and data on WASH and WASH in healthcare facilities;
 - d) and improve and maintain WASH infrastructure
3. Ensure services leave no one behind through prioritising vulnerable healthcare users, including women, newborns and people with disabilities, and targeting areas most in need including rural facilities and overcrowded hospitals.

WaterAid stands ready to support Member States to improve WASH as part of health system-strengthening to achieve safe healthcare for all.

Thank you.