

WaterAid Statement
Agenda Item 13.1 - Global action on patient safety
Agenda Item 13.5 - Antimicrobial resistance

Chair and honourable delegates,

Do no harm. It sounds simple, yet too many health workers are not able to keep their patients safe and prevent the spread of disease because the basic infrastructure to wash their hands isn't there. Nearly half of healthcare facilities in least-developed countries do not have a basic water service, and one in three don't have provision for hand hygiene at points of care.

Safe care to address the global threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and assure patient safety cannot be tackled when these fundamental building blocks are missing. Frontline healthcare workers and cleaners need the resources, training and infrastructure to enable them to deliver safe, clean care in hygienic environments for patients and health professionals.

WaterAid urges member states, the WHO and partners to:

Design, fund and implement AMR national action plans that prioritise prevention and have WASH in healthcare facilities and IPC targets and financing

- Embed WASH in healthcare facilities into national standards and monitoring processes for patient safety and quality of care

- Invest in infrastructure, resources and training to enable health workers and cleaners to deliver safe, clean care

Improve multi-sectoral coordination, data and monitoring to drive joined-up approaches to patient safety, IPC and WASH, and address AMR needs in healthcare facilities

Strengthen national leadership, governance and shared accountability on WASH and IPC within AMR and patient safety programmes

Implement WHO's Guidelines on Sanitation and on Drinking Water Quality to ensure WASH services are of sufficient quality and quantity to protect human health and curb AMR.

We need adequate financing and action to increase the speed and scale at which we improve access to clean water, decent sanitation and good hygiene for infection prevention control in healthcare facilities. Without investment and action, we will fail in our commitment to do no harm.

Thank you.