**Key messages**

* I am a health professional. Clean water, toilets and good hygiene are fundamental to my ability to **deliver quality healthcare**.
* Without these basic needs, **millions of patients – especially mothers and newborn babies – are at risk from life-threatening preventable infections**, such as sepsis, meningitis or tetanus, all infections strongly linked to unhygienic conditions.
* Our leaders and all UN member states **have promised** to ensure healthy lives for all by 2030. This will be **impossible** without clean water, adequate sanitation and good hygiene services and information in all healthcare facilities.

**Key statistics**

* The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that **38%** of healthcare facilities in low and middle income countries lack access to a basic water source. **19%** do not have adequate sanitation, and **35%** do not have soap for handwashing.
* In sub-Saharan Africa, **42%** of healthcare facilities do not have access to a basic water source.
* It is estimated that **one in five babies** who die in their first month in the developing world could have survived if they had been washed in clean water and cared for in a clean environment by people who had washed their hands.
* In 2013, **four babies died every five minutes** in sub-Saharan Africa or Southern Asia from highly-preventable causes, such as sepsis, meningitis or tetanus, all infections strongly linked to unhygienic conditions.

**Actions we want decision-makers to take**

* Commit that **by 2030 every healthcare facility** will have a reliable and sufficient supply of clean running **water**, safe **toilets** for patients and staff (with locks and lights, child-friendly, and accessible to people with disabilities), functional **sinks, soap and alcohol-based hand rubs** for health workers and patients in all treatment and birthing rooms, and sufficient supplies of **cleaning materials** to maintain a hygienic and sterile environment.
* Ensure that **no new healthcare facilities are built** without adequate, sustainable water and sanitation services.
* Ensure that all healthcare workers are given **professional training and support** to practise and promote good hygiene.

**Further information**

* WaterAid (2015) [*Healthy Start: the first month of life*](http://www.wateraid.org/what-we-do/our-approach/research-and-publications/view-publication?id=02c3b5d6-4ffd-4844-8d5a-0083e8e522ff)
* WHO (2015) [*Water, sanitation and hygiene in health care facilities: status in low- and middle-income countries and way forward*](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/wash-health-care-facilities/en/)

(Country-by-country statistics on coverage of water, sanitation and hygiene in healthcare facilities in Annex 4)

* WHO and UNICEF (2015) [*WASH in healthcare facilities: global action to provide universal access by 2030*](http://www.washinhcf.org/home/)
* A range of WaterAid resources including infographics, reports and briefs are available at [www.wateraid.org/healthystart](http://www.wateraid.org/healthystart)