

Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



What is Goal 6?

The greatest need for survival by human, animal and plant life on our planet is clean drinking water.

Water is also used in agriculture and industry and is necessary for cleanliness and cooking. The lack of water in areas of desertification, following natural disasters or climate change, leads to people driven away from their homes, becoming internally displaced persons and refugees. Many preventable deaths worldwide are caused by water-borne diseases affecting particularly vulnerable populations like children and the elderly, who succumb to diarrhea, cholera and parasites.

According to the UN Millenium Development Report 2012, “One of the most important recent milestones has been the recognition in July 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly of the [human right to water and sanitation](#). The Assembly recognized the right of every human being to have access to **sufficient** water for personal and domestic uses (between 50 and 100 litres of water per person per day), which must be **safe, acceptable** and **affordable** (water costs should not exceed **3 per cent** of household income), and **physically accessible** (the water source has to be within 1,000 metres of the home and collection time should not exceed 30 minutes).”

Goal 6 addresses these issues by taking the subject of water and sanitation beyond the targets in the Millenium Development Goals. MDG 8 halved the number of people on the planet without access to safe drinking water five years before the end date of 2015. The results were notable, but still left 11 million people worldwide without adequate or safe drinking water, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. The results in the area of sanitation were much worse, with nearly 1 billion people “practising open defecation, which is one of the clearest manifestations of poverty and extreme poverty” according to UN GA RES/70/169.

These conditions are leading to a crisis of profound social, environmental and health dimensions which is preventable through simple technologies, education and continuous monitoring and through sustainable use of water, avoiding water waste and prevention of pollution.

What Are The Targets?

- By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
- By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
- By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
- By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
- By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
- By 2020, protect and restore waer-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
- By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Means of Implementation

- By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
- Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management



Is This Possible?

Local communities educating citizens and building infrastructure for the activities and programmes included in the targets for Goal 6 can achieve better water quality and sewage treatment in their areas, both in developing states and disadvantaged areas in developed states. Technology transfer and capacity-building are necessary supports for this effort, and financing necessary to provide basic services.

Linked to this goal is the recognition of human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation as components of the right to an adequate standard of living. These rights were recognized in UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/169 of 17 December 2015 along with the responsibility of states and non-state actors, including business enterprises, to protect and promote these rights for all.

Issues to be addressed include privatization of clean drinking water, equitable allocation for multiple and sustainable uses of water, recycling, use of grey water for irrigation, and conservation of fresh water in rivers, lakes, and aquifers.

Global partnerships for sustainable development and promotion of women's leadership and their full, effective and equal participation in decision-making on water and sanitation management are means to achieve Goal 6. International cooperation and continual monitoring will support national initiatives and plans of action to achieve the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, an end to open defecation, and overcoming barriers to safe access to water and sanitation faced by women and girls.



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