

FACT SHEET

Water, sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria

Updated April 2010

The situation

Nigeria now has 12 million more people without access to safe water and another 40 million people without access to improved sanitation than it had in 1990. Of the estimated population of 150 million, nearly 65 million people do not have access to water that is safe to use. Over 100 million people have no access to improved sanitation like latrines or toilets, and a large population practises open defecation. It is not sufficient to provide communities with a supply of safe water and latrines, however: hygiene promotion is crucial if people are to use facilities properly and avoid water- and sanitation-related diseases. By adopting basic hygiene practices such as handwashing with soap at critical times, families can reduce diarrheal diseases in children by as much as 44 percent. Studies also report reduction in acute respiratory infections including pneumonia by 25%.

The inadequacy of improved water and sanitation facilities is revealed by the prevalence of water- and sanitation-related diseases such as Guinea worm, cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery. Diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children in Nigeria, responsible for about 17 percent of child deaths every year, the majority (88% globally reported) of which is attributed to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene.

Lack of water and sanitation is not just a health issue; it affects girls' education and security. Women and girls are the major haulers of water, especially in rural areas, walking long distances and encountering associated security hazards. In most rural households, women and girls spend more than one hour per day fetching water for their families' needs. This can result in girls missing school while boys are free to attend their classes.

In addition, girls who are able to enroll in school are not always able to complete primary or secondary school as they mature, due to the lack of sanitation facilities at the school. Absenteeism rates reportedly reach 10%–20 % of school time when there are no proper sanitation facilities.

Data

Improved drinking water supply

The 2010 report of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation estimated that 58 percent of the population had access to improved drinking water supply, up from 47 percent in 1990. In rural areas there has been an increase in the percent of population with access to a supply of improved drinking water from 30 percent in 1990 to 42 percent in 2008. There has been a slight drop in urban areas, falling from 79 percent in 1990 to 75 percent in 2008. People in rural areas are two and a half times less likely to have access to safe water than those living in urban areas. Improved water sources include household connections, public standpipes, boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, and rainwater collections. Unimproved water sources are unprotected wells, unprotected springs, vendor-provided water, bottled water (due to uncertain quality) and tanker truck-provided water. With the Nigerian population nearly 150 million, this represents about 64 million people without access to improved drinking water—a situation that could be attributed to inadequate investments in the sector, natural population growth, inadequate systems including lack of operation and maintenance regime.

Improved sanitation facilities

Just about a third of the population (32 percent) had access to improved sanitation facilities (technologies which provide a barrier between the faeces and human, animal and fly contact) in 2008, which has actually worsened since 1990 when 37 percent had access. Improved sanitation facilities include connection to public sewers, connection to septic systems, pour-flush latrines, simple pit latrines and ventilated improved pit latrines. Not considered as improved sanitation are service or bucket latrines (where excreta are manually removed), public latrines and open latrines. The sanitation situation is worse in rural areas (28 percent) than in urban areas (36 percent). Altogether, over 45 million people in urban areas and 56 million rural people had no access to improved sanitation facilities in 2008. Globally, since 1990, open defecation practices declined by 32% while for Nigeria the decline has been a mere 12%, leaving nearly 33 million people practising open defecation at 2008.

On the water and sanitation front, Nigeria is severely off track. To reach its MDG targets for water and sanitation, Nigeria will require enormous resources/investment in addition to a strong political will. Nigeria's failure to attain MDG targets will affect the attainment of MDG targets for Africa as a whole.

	Situation in Nigeria in 2008	MDG 7 target for 2015
Population with access to safe drinking water	58%	75%
Population with access to basic sanitation	32%	63%

UNICEF's Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) programme in Nigeria

UNICEF collaborates with governments at all levels to set standards for water and sanitation systems and supplies, and supports them with innovative approaches such as Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), a no-subsidy approach to promoting improved household sanitation (such as latrines). It also helps water authorities improve provision of water facilities (boreholes and protected hand-dug wells depending on geology of the area) to schools and rural communities. One of UNICEF's priorities is to encourage governments to expand these systems so that more Nigerians have access to sanitation and safe water.

At the same time, UNICEF works with all stakeholders to inculcate good hygiene practices among children, their care-givers and teachers to learn and adapt hygiene practices.

Children themselves can contribute to the effective management of water and sanitation facilities both in the schools and within the community. UNICEF helps schools to set up and run environmental health clubs. UNICEF trains the children along with members of community water and environmental sanitation committees on water and sanitation systems—why they are important, how they work, how to maintain them, and how to encourage their proper use—ensuring that the systems remain functional and everyone in the community uses them. More than 25 percent of the members of these committees are women.

Community artisans receive UNICEF-funded training in operating and maintaining water supply systems, enhancing their skills to keep the sources working in the long term. UNICEF has also designed a village-level operation and maintenance system that helps communities and schools manage their water systems well.

The WASH programme boosts child survival and development by providing a safer environment and reducing waterborne and sanitation-related diseases. It protects the health of pregnant and older women, whilst freeing up young girls to attend school. It also relieves women and children of some of the drudgery and work associated with collecting household water, which is traditionally their responsibility. UNICEF recognizes the implications of climate change and its potential adverse impact, especially on women and children, by actively addressing climate change issues in its WASH program: studies aimed at determining the impact, preparedness and response to climate change, projects to promote climate change adaptation and review of sector policy documents are planned.

WASH targets for 2012

- A 5% increase in the proportion of the population that has access to and uses improved water sources (2007 baseline) in the 13 high-burden states
- A 3.5% increase in the proportion of the population that has access to and uses improved sanitary and hygiene facilities in the 13 high-burden states (2007 baseline)
- To equip an additional 800 schools with safe water sources and sanitation facilities
- For 2000 communities to have permanently adopted good hygiene and sanitation practices
- For Nigeria to be certified Guinea worm-free.

WASH achievements in 2008 and 2009

- With UNICEF support, state WASH policies were drafted, being finalized or being implemented in Katsina, Benue, Anambra, Cross River, Ekiti, Bauchi, Nassarawa and Kogi States.
- UNICEF-supported projects have provided access to improved water to over 1.6 million people from motorized boreholes, hand pump-equipped boreholes, rain water harvesters and rehabilitated sources.
- Nearly 320,000 people who did not have access to sanitation facilities before now have access to improved sanitation facilities.
- UNICEF helped nearly 340,000 pupils get improved sanitation facilities at their schools, with separate facilities for boys and girls. Included in this number are disabled children in four states who gained access to specially adapted latrines. In addition 166 health centers were equipped with and now use improved sanitation facilities.
- 31 million people received hygiene and sanitation messages through hand-washing campaigns and rallies organized with UNICEF support. In addition approximately 200,000 pupils, health workers and adults washed their hands during the 2009 Global Handwashing Day commemoration in the country. UNICEF supported hygiene promotion in 451 primary schools in all the 36 states and FCT. In

addition, 20,135 pupils in school environmental health clubs learned to promote hygiene messages and manage WASH facilities at their school and in their community.

- WASH departments/ units were established in Katsina, Benue, and Ebonyi states. Eighty-seven LGA WASH units are functional and 1,065 WASHCOMs now manage their community interventions effectively.
- A UNICEF/WATERAID regional CLTS sensitization and capacity-building workshop for West African countries was organized in Benue State.
- Approximately 3,500 state and LGA officers, and community-level WASHCOM members and local artisans were trained for effective WASH delivery and monitoring in 2009.
- UNICEF also supported emergency responses to outbreaks of cholera and gastroenteritis in Adamawa, Borno, Taraba and Jigawa states and in Niger Delta.

Guinea worm eradication

A major success of UNICEF WASH programme is its contribution to the eradication of Guinea worm in Nigeria. In 1988, a total of 653,620 cases were recorded, and almost all the states of Nigeria were affected. In 2009, no cases of Guinea worm were reported anywhere in the country, and if this trend is sustained, Nigeria is on the way to being certified Guinea worm-free.

UNICEF's activities in communities where Guinea worm was endemic included

- providing or rehabilitating safe water sources, particularly hand pump boreholes;
- developing springs and dug wells;
- supporting advocacy and community mobilization activities as well as providing supervision, surveillance, monitoring, and documentation of interventions to increase access to improved water supply;
- capacity building and training at all levels of programme implementation;
- developing communication materials and supporting local governments' WASH units/departments to deliver hygiene education and promotion programmes at community level;
- providing vehicles (pick-up vehicles and motorbikes) to increase mobility of partners at all levels for programme supervision and monitoring;
- producing and distributing straw filters;
- ensuring case containment and management (where a case of Guinea worm is reported, actions are taken to isolate the case in the person(s) from the community's water source, thus preventing the spread of the disease to others);
- providing bicycles, hygiene materials and filters (straw and material) to community-based workers.

Funding and donors

- The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) was a major donor to the UNICEF WASH programme from 2002 to July 2009. Its contribution of US\$32.2 million funded a six-year programme of interventions in eight states: Benue, Enugu, Ekiti, Jigawa, Ebonyi, Kwara, Zamfara, Borno.
- UNICEF has just embarked on a new project with a £20 million (over US \$30 million) contribution from DFID for 2009–2014. Key features of the project include the adoption of a "total sanitation" approach LGA-wide to accelerate access to sanitation in 12 LGAs spread over 4 states—Bauchi, Benue, Jigawa and Katsina. Hygiene promotion, improvements to water supply facilities, capacity building, and social policy support will be an integral part of the project. Nearly 1.9 million people including school children are expected to directly benefit from the project.
- The European Commission (EC) has allocated €30 million (over US\$38 million) to UNICEF in support of the Rural Water and Sanitation Project. The project will provide safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities to over 2 million Nigerians in 1,400 communities in six states (Cross River, Osun, Anambra, Kano, Jigawa and Yobe).
- UNICEF Nigeria channels resources provided by the United States Fund for UNICEF to the National Onchocerciasis Control Programme in 10 states.
- Japan has allocated \$1.5 million towards promoting an integrated approach to climate change adaptation in Nigeria.

For further information

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