

WORLD TOILET DAY 2025: FACTSHEET



Quick facts about World Toilet Day

- **World Toilet Day is held every year on 19 November.** It has been an annual United Nations Observance since 2013.
- **World Toilet Day raises awareness** of the 3.4 billion people living without access to safe toilets.
- **World Toilet Day is about accelerating action to tackle the global sanitation crisis** and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6): water and sanitation for all by 2030.
- **The World Toilet Day global campaign**, coordinated by UN-Water, is live at www.worldtoiletday.org and on social media with the hashtag #WorldToiletDay. Individuals, organizations, governments, companies and schools around the world take part online and through real-life events.
- **World Toilet Day celebrates a different theme each year**, proposed by UN-Water – the United Nations' coordination mechanism on water and sanitation. Explore past themes [here](#).

World Toilet Day 2025 campaign: 'We'll Always Need the Toilet'

This year's campaign – 'We'll Always Need the Toilet' – calls for action to protect and expand access to sanitation in the face of mounting challenges: ageing infrastructure, rising demand, low investment, and the impact of climate change.

Here we unpack the key messages of the campaign:

"In a changing world, one thing is constant: we'll always need the toilet. No matter what lies ahead, we will always rely on sanitation to protect us from diseases and keep our environment clean. Today, billions of people still live without a safe toilet – with the poorest, especially women and girls, worst affected."

- A "safe toilet" is shorthand for 'safely managed sanitation', which means a toilet that is not shared with other households, that either treats or disposes of human waste on site, stores it safely to be emptied and treated off site, or connects to a functioning sewer and treatment plant.
- Sanitation is a human right – entitling everyone to affordable and accessible sanitation services, in all spheres of life.
- Inadequate sanitation lets human waste and wastewater contaminate the environment, especially in densely populated areas. Children are particularly vulnerable to diseases, such as cholera, which are spread by exposure to untreated waste.
- Unsafe or absent sanitation endangers people and perpetuates inequalities. Without access to clean, functional, lockable, gender-segregated toilets, women, girls, older people and people with disabilities cannot fully participate in public spaces, workplaces and education.
- Lack of safe, private toilets and washing facilities in schools contribute to many girls regularly missing school days, particularly during menstruation.



- Human waste, if untreated, can contaminate rivers, lakes, and groundwater with harmful pathogens and nutrients, and contribute to water scarcity by making water unsafe to use.

“As time goes by, the pressure on sanitation is only increasing. Across the world, ageing infrastructure is failing. Investment hasn’t kept pace with demand. And climate change is reshaping our world – with glaciers melting, weather worsening, and sea levels rising.”

- Ageing sanitation infrastructure is failing in many parts of the world. Systems built decades ago are breaking down under pressure from growing demand and extreme weather.
- Climate change is making water more scarce and unpredictable. Glaciers, ice caps and snow fields are rapidly disappearing. Volatility of meltwater flows can affect the regulation of freshwater resources for vast numbers of people in lowland areas, disrupting and damaging sanitation services.
- Increased flooding and rising sea levels can inundate and damage sanitation infrastructure, such as toilets, sewerage and wastewater treatment facilities, contaminating land, water resources and local ecosystems with faecal matter.
- Poorly managed wastewater and sanitation systems are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions, particularly methane and nitrous oxide, contributing to the effects of the climate crisis, such as accelerating glacial loss.

“We urgently need to invest in ‘future-ready’ sanitation today. Together, we must ensure toilets are: accessible to all; resilient to floods, droughts and other climate shocks; minimize greenhouse gas emissions; and, are supported by strong systems and sustained investment.”

- Safely managed sanitation is essential for a resilient and more sustainable society, and drives progress across the 2030 Agenda, particularly in health, gender equality, livelihoods and environmental protection.
- Sanitation services must be resilient to climate-related disasters – able to withstand and be sustained during and after these events or recover quickly to protect public health.
- Safely managed sanitation, including safely reusing treated wastewater as a source of water, nutrients and energy, is critical to reducing emissions, protecting ecosystems, and building a circular economy.
- Local and national authorities should allocate and increase sustained funding to sanitation and include it in plans for emergency response and climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Governments have a duty to protect sanitation workers by ensuring legal protections, safe working environments, and fair wages. Employers should provide training, safety equipment, and access to healthcare.



Key facts

The figures below are based on the latest available data from international sources. In some cases, the statistics may reflect conditions from previous years due to reporting cycles and data availability.

The Global Sanitation Crisis

- 3.4 billion people still live without safely managed sanitation services – that’s nearly half the world’s population. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))
- 354 million people still practise open defecation, increasing the risk of disease and harm, especially for women and girls. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))
- Only 58% of the global population use a safely managed sanitation service – which means an improved toilet that is not shared, and has excreta safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2025](#))

Sanitation and Health

- 22% of schools worldwide have no access to basic sanitation services, affecting learning, dignity, and attendance, especially for girls. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2024](#))
- Inadequate sanitation and hygiene are linked to the transmission of diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A, and typhoid. ([WHO, 2023](#))
- Unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene are responsible for the deaths of around 1,000 children under five every day. ([WHO, 2023](#))

Sanitation and Environment

- 44% of household wastewater is not treated properly, damaging ecosystems and human health. ([WHO, 2025](#))
- Only 38% of industrial wastewater is safely treated (based on limited data from 22 countries). ([WHO, 2024](#))
- The untapped potential for safe wastewater reuse is around 320 billion m³ per year, with the potential to supply more than 10 times the current global desalination capacity. ([UNEP, 2023](#))

Sanitation and Climate Change

- By 2050, around 1.6 billion people will be at risk of floods, potentially disrupting or destroying sanitation services as well as dislocating populations so they no longer have access to safely managed sanitation, and up to 3.2 billion people will live in potentially severely water-scarce areas, negatively impacting sanitation services. ([United Nations, 2020](#))
- Increased glacier melting, exacerbated by methane emissions from sanitation, contributes significantly to global sea-level rise, with today’s sea level about 20 cm higher than in 1900, risking inundating coastal sanitation infrastructure and services. ([IPCC, 2020](#))

Achieving Sanitation for All

- At the current rates of progress, 3 billion people will still be living without safe toilets in 2030. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2023](#))



- Globally, to achieve SDG target 6.2 –sanitation for all by 2030 – will require a six-fold increase, on average, in the rate of progress on sanitation. In low-income countries, rates need to increase 13-fold for basic sanitation, and 21-fold for safely managed sanitation. ([WHO/UNICEF, 2023](#))

How can I take action?

Learn:

- **World Toilet Day website:** Explore the theme, get involved, and read stories from around the world at www.worldtoiletday.org
- **UN-Water website:** Find out how sanitation is connected to key issues, including climate change, peace, health, food and energy [here](#).
- **UN-Water SDG 6 Data Portal:** How many people have access to a toilet in your country, and how does it compare to other places in the world? Go to www.sdg6data.org to find out.

Share:

- **#WorldToiletDay campaign resources:** Use the hashtag #WorldToiletDay. Share social media posts and videos, and download social media banners, posters, branded materials and logos on the campaign [Trello board](#).
- **Get in touch:** Are you already working in a field related to sanitation, particularly innovation and climate resilience, and would like to get involved in the campaign? Send us an email to campaigns@unwater.org.
- **Water Action Agenda:** Make a commitment, or browse over 800 commitments made by governments, civil society and other stakeholders to accelerate progress on water and sanitation [here](#).

Act:

- **Use the Activation Kit:** These fun, educational activities can be adapted for any age or group. Download the kit [here](#).
- **Inspire others:**
 - Make art, music or a short video based on the issues.
 - Organize a talk in your school, university, community, office or organization – and accompany it with a quiz based on this factsheet.
 - Host a concert, play or sports event around World Toilet Day.
 - Organize or propose a lesson based on the campaign theme.
 - Visit a wastewater treatment plant and learn how sanitation systems work.
 - Organize a photo contest or local exhibition focusing on sanitation issues.
 - Contribute to or launch citizen science participatory projects.



Stories

FAO: An overview of FAO's initiatives to implement Sanitation Safety Plans in countries like Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, and Libya, aiming to manage health risks associated with wastewater reuse. <https://www.fao.org/platforms/water-scarcity/news/detail/fao-advances-sanitation-safety-planning-at-the-7th-arab-water-forum/en>

ILO: The story of Shafique Massih, a sewer worker in Lahore, Pakistan, whose daily life is full of dangers as he works to provide an essential service. <https://voices.ilo.org/stories/as-a-sewer-worker-i-want-respect-and-safer-working>

ILO: This blog delves into the often-overlooked labour force responsible for wastewater treatment, discussing conditions, challenges, and the critical role these workers play in achieving sustainable development. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/the-unseen-workforce-behind-wastewater-management/>

UNESCAP: This blog highlights how rising global temperatures are accelerating glacier melt in the 'Third Pole' region, threatening water security and increasing the risk of floods and landslides. <https://www.unescap.org/blog/era-extreme-heat-teleconnections-glacial-risks-arctic-third-pole>

UNFPA: This story highlights the empowerment of women sanitation workers in India, showcasing initiatives that provide them with better working conditions, safety measures, and recognition for their crucial role in public health. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/fresh-start-women-sanitation-workers-india>

UN-Habitat: This report provides a comprehensive overview of sanitation and wastewater management challenges and solutions in urban areas, emphasizing the need for sustainable and inclusive infrastructure. <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/global-report-sanitation-and-wastewater-management-cities-and-human-settlements>

UNICEF: A photo story detailing how UNICEF's intervention provided clean water and improved sanitation facilities to the community of Kalwana, Uganda, enhancing health and education outcomes. <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/clean-water-healthy-communities-how-unicefs-intervention-transformed-community-kalwana>

UNICEF: In Shabaa, Syria, UNICEF's sewage rehabilitation project provided 50,000 people with access to safe wastewater systems and sanitation. <https://www.unicef.org/syria/stories/protecting-children-and-families-contaminated-water-and-diseases-shabaa>



Explore more

Learning resources:

WHO Academy course: For a healthier world – safely managed sanitation. https://web-staging.lxp.academy.who.int/coursewares/course-v1:WHOAcademy-Hosted+H0048EN+H0048EN_Q4_2024?source=edX

WHO Academy course: Safely Managed Onsite Sanitation (SMOSS): Why It Matters and How We Monitor It (due in August)

WHO Academy course: Technical Training on SMOSS Data Collection, Analysis and Use (due in October)

WHO: Sanitation Safety Planning – Learning Hub. <https://ssp-learninghub.creation.camp/>

Publications and content:

FAO: *Mainstreaming gender in national drought plans, national action plans and national policies*. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/de7f675c-b705-4904-aad7-88d0175ac4c5>

GCF: *Practical guidelines for designing climate-resilient sanitation projects*.

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-water-project-design-guidelines-part-3>

SuSanA: Climate Resilient Sanitation Coalition.

<https://www.susana.org/community/themes/climate-resilient-sanitation-coalition>

Toilet Board Coalition. “Meet Entrepreneurial Solutions for Sanitation and Water”.

<https://www.toiletboard.org/meet-entrepreneurial-solutions-for-sanitation-and-water/>

UNICEF, et al: *Ensuring access to climate-resilient sanitation services for 3.6 billion people by 2030: A call to action for acceleration*.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/129896/file/Call%20to%20Action%20on%20CRS.pdf>

UNICEF: Game Plan to Reach Safely Managed Sanitation 2022–2030.

<https://www.unicef.org/documents/sanitation-game-plan>

United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation.

<https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-system-wide-strategy-for-water-and-sanitation>

United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR) 2025: *Mountains and glaciers - Water towers*. <https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2025>

UN-Water: SDG 6 Data Portal. <https://www.sdg6data.org/en>

UNU-EHS: *Interconnected Disaster Risks – Turning Over A New Leaf*.

<https://interconnectedrisks.org/>

UN Women: *Mainstreaming gender equality in water resources management: Global status and 7 pathways to progress*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2025/03/policy-brief-mainstreaming-gender-equality-in-water-resources-management>

WASH Regulation Call to Action: <https://www.washregulationcalltoaction.org>

WaterAid: Video: “Climate-resilient sanitation in the Green Climate Fund”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smmnqt9l4Ag>

WHO: *Safe, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities: an overview*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/B09119>

WHO: *A roadmap for advancing sanitation regulation*.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240107489>

WHO/IWA: *Call to Action on Strengthening Water and Sanitation Regulatory Systems*.

<https://iwa-network.org/publications/washcalltoaction>



WHO: *Technical brief on water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and wastewater management to prevent infections and reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).*

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240006416>

WHO: GLAAS white paper: *Improving monitoring of the means of implementation for water and sanitation.* <https://glaas.who.int/>

WHO: *Progress on safe treatment of domestic wastewater: 2025 update*

WHO: *World report on social determinants of health equity.*

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240107588>

WHO: *Wastewater and environmental surveillance.*

<https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health/sanitation-safety/wastewater>

WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP): *2025 report on household drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene.* <https://washdata.org/>

WHO/UNICEF: *Sanitation inspections: user guide.*

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/sanitation-inspections-user-guide>

WHO/UNICEF: *Steps to achieve universal access to safely managed sanitation.*

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240103009>

WHO/UNICEF/WaterAid: "Why we need strong systems to ensure progress on safely managed sanitation". <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/blog/strong-systems-ensure-progress-safely-managed-sanitation>

WHO/UN-Water: GLAAS data portal. <https://glaas.who.int/>

WMO: *State of the Global Climate 2024 report.* <https://wmo.int/publication-series/state-of-global-climate>

