



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Healthcare Facilities: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward

Official Side Event of the UN 2023 Water Conference

Friday, 24 March 2023

11:00-12:15 EST

CR 8, UNHQ | In person

Register [here](#).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Healthcare Facilities: Lesson Learned and the Way Forward

UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Date: 24 March Time: 11:00-12:15 EDT Venue: Conference Room 8 (CR8), UN Headquarters

Nearly 2 billion people worldwide lack adequate provision of water in health care facilities; 1.5 billion people lack adequate sanitation services in these facilities, and almost 3 billion people cannot obtain basic hand hygiene services in local health centers. In Least Developed Countries alone, 17 million women give birth in facilities with inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions each year.

In response to this crisis, UN Secretary-General launched a global Call to Action at a special session of the UN General Assembly in 2018, followed by unanimous adoption of a resolution on WASH in Healthcare Facilities at the World Health Assembly in 2019. Under the leadership of WHO and UNICEF, a comprehensive global effort is now underway with ambitious targets to achieve basic WASH services in all health care facilities worldwide by 2030. Member States and UN leadership are joined by international and local NGOs, academics and other key stakeholders in focused efforts to achieve these targets, with genuine progress to report.

WASH in the healthcare environment is a foundation for strong health systems. As we saw with Ebola and COVID-19: hospitals without reliable, meaningful WASH services are breeding grounds for infectious disease and a threat to human health in the community and beyond. WASH services are the most essential means to combat antimicrobial resistance, ensure infection prevention and control, provide safe environments for maternal and childcare, and the most fundamental criterion in achieving the goal of universal health coverage by the year 2030.

Out of 72 countries that have provided information on their actions to achieve the WASH in Healthcare facilities targets since 2020, 92% have commenced and/or completed situation analyses, 85% are updating and implementing standards, including with considerations of climate resilience and sustainability, and 78% are working to incrementally improve infrastructure and operation and maintenance of WASH services. Gaps are greatest for integrating WASH into health systems monitoring and developing and financing costed roadmaps.

This event, led by the co-chairs of the UN Group of Friends of WASH in Healthcare Facilities (Hungary and the Philippines) and supported by the WHO and IFRC, will focus on the progress made towards achieving the targets set out to improve WASH in Healthcare Facilities. With an in-person panel discussion, leading UN experts will outline the scope of the challenge, and representatives of Member States and key NGO's will present the best examples of comprehensive and sustainable local responses.

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AGENDA

Opening Remarks (15 min)

- **Mr. Werner Obermeyer**, Director, World Health Organization Office at the United Nations (*moderator*)
- **H.E. Mr. Péter Szijjártó**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary
- **H.E. Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga**, Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Republic of the Philippines

Country examples (20 min)

- **Bangladesh**: Minister
- **Georgia**: **H.E. Irakli Karseladze**, Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
- **Ghana** (TBC)
- **USA** (TBC)
- **Jordan** (TBC)

WHO reflections on the WASH in Healthcare Facilities report to the World Health Assembly (5 min)

- **Dr Maria Neira**, Assistant Director-General a.i., World Health Organization

Panel Discussion (15 min)

- **Mr. Peter McGuire**, Counsellor and Charge d'Affairs, Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in New York
- **Ms. Kelly Parsons**, Chief Executive Officer, WaterAid America
- **Dr. Gwendolyn Pang**, Secretary General of the Philippine Red Cross

Q&A with the experts (15 min)

Closing (5 min)