



2020 International Mayors Forum Preparatory Webinar Series – Webinar #3: "Delivering basic services to Leave No One Behind – Closing the WASH Gap"

**Date: 8 October 2020
4:00pm (Republic of Korea), 12:30pm (Delhi), 9:00am (Geneva)**

Concept Note

"We need to turn the recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future"
– United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/2RQNeW8>

Background

Access to basic services such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are indispensable in the fight against pandemics such as COVID-19 and other major diseases. Today, many countries are increasing access to WASH as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic locally, but gaps remain especially in vulnerable communities, informal settlements. As the economic impacts of the pandemic weigh in financing progress on WASH for all has become even more challenging.

Strengthening access to WASH is central to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 "*Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*" but growing urban inequalities persist when it comes to access to basic services like WASH. While the gap between richest and poorest in access to sanitation was reduced in 52 countries, it has increased in 22 countries.¹ Three out of ten people lacking access to basic services such as sanitation live in cities, often in informal settlements.² Rapid urban growth rates coupled with striking existing sanitation gaps make this an imperative for local governments in Africa and Asia if the response to pandemics such as COVID-19 is to be effective.³

Local governments are all facing budgetary challenges due to COVID-19's economic impacts. Already, in recent UN data collected through country surveys, the majority of countries noted that while policies and plans are in place for hygiene, they often lack sufficient human and financial resources to implement the plans.⁴ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 6.2.1 measures the proportion of the population with a handwashing facility with soap and water at home. However, out of the 38 countries that reported having basic hygiene targets

¹ https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2019-full-report.pdf

² https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2019-full-report.pdf

³ <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/blog-post/sanitation-developing-cities-imperative-sustainable-urban>

⁴ GLAAS, 2020. Accessed at:

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332267/9789240006751-eng.pdf?ua=1>



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for handwashing facilities on premises with soap, only nine countries (23%) could provide data on current coverage for this target.⁵ The current pandemic has made data collection on WASH coverage a challenge, especially in smaller municipal areas.

The United Nations has launched the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework⁶ which aims to ensure rapid results at scale as part of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and ensure water and sanitation for all. The framework notes that at the local level, aging infrastructure and weak governance slow the achievement of SDG 6 along with institutional and human capacity gaps among local governments and water and sanitation providers, as well as a lack of finance.

With this background, the webinar will explore current trends in the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions, including WASH disparities and effective models for accelerating local progress on WASH amid the current pandemic to leave no one behind.

Objective and Content

This webinar is part of a series of online webinars exploring specific sessions under the 2020 International Mayors Forum. The 2020 International Mayors Forum examines the social, economic and environmental impacts of the current crisis on cities and local governments as well as potential solutions for sustainable response and recovery. The Forum explores how local governments and local actors can work together for an inclusive resilient recovery and sustainable urban future.

This webinar takes place in October 2020, referred to as the 'Urban October', which begins with World Habitat Day on 5 October⁷ and ends with World Cities Day on 31 October.⁸ The Delivering basic services to Leave No One Behind – Closing the WASH Gap webinar is also being held one week prior to Global Handwashing Day⁹ celebrated by communities worldwide on 15 October under the theme of "Hand Hygiene for All" this year. Local governments are currently facing multiple challenges in delivering crucial public services such as water and sanitation as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its complex impacts. This webinar aims to provide local governments and local actors with knowledge that could help them making progress in dealing with those issues, underpinning a swift recovery from COVID-19 and advancing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

Speakers

Moderator: Mr. Jean D'Aragnon, Officer-in-Charge, UNOSD

- Mr. Carlos Carrion-Crespo, Specialist, Public Services, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Ms. Julie Perkins, Officer-in-Charge, Global Water Operators' Partnerships' Alliance (GWOPA), Urban Basic Services Section, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
- Ms. Sareen Malik, Executive Secretary, African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW)
- Ms. Gertrude Rose Gamwera, Secretary-General, Uganda Local Governments Association

⁵GLAAS, 2020. Accessed at:

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332267/9789240006751-eng.pdf?ua=1>

⁶ <https://www.unwater.org/publications/the-sdg-6-global-acceleration-framework/>

⁷ <https://urbanoctober.unhabitat.org/>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/cities-day>

⁹ <https://globalhandwashing.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GHD-2020-Fact-Sheet-English.pdf>

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- Mr. Andrés Hueso, Senior Policy Analyst, Sanitation, WaterAid
- Reflections from Ms Bindu Taylor-Brewer, Chief Resilience Officer, Paynesville, Liberia

Organizer

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

AGENDA (The webinar will last for 1 hour):

- Opening (2 minutes)
- Presentations (40-45 minutes – *8 minutes per presenter*)
 - Mr. Carlos Carrion-Crespo, Specialist, Public Services, International Labour Organization (ILO)
 - Ms. Julie Perkins, Officer-in-Charge, Global Water Operators' Partnerships' Alliance (GWOPA), Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
- *Break for question (2 minutes)*
 - Ms. Sareen Malik, Executive Secretary, African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW)
 - Ms. Gertrude Rose Gamwera, Secretary-General, Uganda Local Governments Association
 - Mr. Andrés Hueso, Senior Policy Analyst, Sanitation, WaterAid
 - Reflections from Bindu Taylor-Brewer, Chief Resilience Officer, Paynesville, Liberia
- Question & Answer and Discussion (10 minutes)
- Final reflections from the speakers (2 minutes)
- Closing wrap-up (1 minutes)

Target Audience

This webinar aims to engage sub-national government representatives, local leaders, national government institutions, civil society representatives, private sector and practitioners across the UN Member States (time zones: Africa, Europe, and Asia-Pacific).

The webinar also seeks to ensure the participation and contribution of non-government experts working in the areas of national to local SDG implementation and WASH areas, as well as all areas of municipal management and territorial development. Experts working on all related areas across sustainable cities and public services are also welcomed to join. The webinar is also open to academia, youth, and other interested stakeholders to ensure an inclusive and integrated discussion on local solutions for accelerating the 2030 Agenda in the remaining decade of action.

Contact Information

For any questions or comments please contact Mr. Jean D'Aragnon, Officer-in-Charge, UNOSD at daragon@un.org and Ms. Sara Castro-Hallgren, Programme Management Expert, UNOSD at sara.castrohallgren@un.org

The webinar will be conducted in English.