



**Issue 142 April 18, 2014 | Focus on Sanitation and Water for All
High Level Meeting**

This issue features the April 2014 Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting (HLM). Major commitments at the HLM included over 260 concrete actions by over 50 countries to strengthen institutions, improve planning, and increase domestic spending and donor investment in water and sanitation. Seventeen countries committed to end open defecation by 2030 or earlier, while over 20 countries went even farther and pledged to achieve universal access to water and sanitation within the same period. Other March and April 2014 WASH sector events and resources featured in this issue are a sanitation webinar, an online course on WASH policy, an update on WASH indicators and a study on geographical inequalities in the use of improved drinking water supply and sanitation across Africa.

EVENTS

April 11, 2014 - Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting. | [Meeting webcast](#) | [Meeting website with key documents](#) | [UNICEF press release](#) |

The meeting was attended by Ministers of Finance from developing country partners, accompanied by their ministers responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene, and by ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, plus senior representatives from development banks, foundations and civil society. At the HLM developing countries, donors and development banks will report on the progress made on commitments tabled at the 2012 HLM and table new and more ambitious commitments for the period up to 2016.

March 24-28, 2014 - WASH for Everyone Everywhere 2014 Conference, Brisbane. [\(Conference presentations\)](#) | [\(Conference homepage\)](#) |

This conference was organized by the WASH Reference Group. The WASH Reference Group is a community of practice of non-governmental organizations and research institutions who are working together to enhance Australian-based sanitation and water initiatives overseas. The conference program included featured speakers from UNICEF, World Bank, the University of North Carolina and others. The conference presentations discussed multiple issues under the sub-themes of equitable access, universal services; achieving health outcomes with WASH; and sustaining services and outcomes.

April 29, 2014 - SuSanA/SEI Webinar on "Adding Missing Links in Sanitation Value Chains" with BMGF Grantees. [\(Link\)](#)

The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA), with assistance of a team led by Stockholm

Environment Institute, is conducting its 7th webinar with Gates Foundation sanitation grantees. Three grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will present their research results.

May 27-29, 2014 – Asian Development Bank - 3rd Asian Sanitation Dialogue, Manila, Philippines. ([Link](#))

For the 3rd Asian Sanitation Dialogue, the conference will emphasize a comprehensive approach to sanitation, and focus more on packaging on-site sanitation, wastewater and septage management projects as viable business opportunities.

COURSES

Water Supply and Sanitation Policy in Developing Countries, May 2014.

(Coursera.org)

This six-week University of Manchester online course will examine current conditions and trends in water and sanitation services in the Global South. It will take a critical look at the underlying political, economic, social, and technical reasons why almost a billion people lack access to improved water supplies and almost 2 billion still do not have improved sanitation services.

MARCH/APRIL 2014 ARTICLES & REPORTS

Editorial: Water and Sanitation: Addressing Inequalities. *Lancet*, Apr 2014. ([Link](#))

Beyond direct health outcomes, investing in water and sanitation is essential to achievement of post—2015 sustainable development goals. The *Lancet* highlights four areas going forward. First, the poor must remain central to all planning, because they pay the highest individual cost in health and finances in efforts to access safe drinking water and sanitation. Donors and governments must target and urgently address open defecation in particular. Second, girls and women must be prioritized. They travel long distances to fetch water, and the lack of private sanitation facilities at schools to ensure their dignity and safety risks absenteeism and drop out. Third, in fragile states and situations, access to health services, clean water, and sanitation must be secured, rapidly and without question. The supply of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities can be the difference between life and death, not to mention risks to personal security. Fourth, and finally, with the rapid and uncontrolled growth of urban slums, climate change, conflict over water resources, and growing global demand for products and food that require water for production, all sectors beyond health must develop governance mechanisms to ensure that access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, is a right for all.

Geographical Inequalities in Use of Improved Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Across Sub-Saharan Africa: Mapping and Spatial Analysis of Cross-sectional Survey Data, *PLoS Medicine*, Apr 2014. R Pullan. | [Link to article](#) | [Science Daily summary](#) | [Voice of America summary](#) | [Blog post by Rachel Pullan](#) |

Understanding geographic inequalities in coverage of drinking-water supply and sanitation (WSS) will help track progress towards universal coverage of water and sanitation by identifying marginalized populations, thus helping to control a large number of infectious diseases. This paper uses household survey data to develop comprehensive maps of WSS coverage at high spatial resolution for sub-Saharan Africa. This study identifies important geographic inequalities in use of WSS previously hidden within national statistics, confirming the necessity for targeted policies and metrics that reach the most marginalized populations. The presented maps and analysis approach can provide a mechanism for monitoring future

reductions in inequality within countries, reflecting priorities of the post-2015 development agenda.

WASH Targets and Indicators Post-2015: Recommendations from International Consultations, Updated April 2014. WSSCC. ([Link](#))

This document summarizes the latest proposals for post-2015 targets developed by global WASH stakeholders. The Joint Monitoring Programme will be hosting further technical consultations to refine the corresponding definitions and indicators for the purpose of global monitoring.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH): A Critical Component for Sustainable Soil-Transmitted Helminth and Schistosomiasis Control. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, Apr 2014. S Campbell. ([Link](#))

Progress towards achieving global control of helminths crucially depends on sustainable solutions that move beyond treating symptoms towards reducing exposure. With that in mind, it is necessary to augment chemotherapy with WASH and other interventions such as health promotion to achieve a cumulative impact of preventing reinfection and providing the greatest and most sustainable gains for helminth control and elimination. The authors believe that a strong justification exists to revise the WHO guidelines in the face of the abovementioned shortcomings. Such revision will result in a much-enhanced document that covers the full spectrum of short- and longer-term interventions for more holistic soil-transmitted helminth and schistosomiasis control.

Handbook on Human Rights to Water and Sanitation, 2014. United Nations. ([Link](#))

The UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque, is developing a handbook to provide practical guidance to states and other stakeholders on how the rights to water and sanitation can be incorporated into law, policy, budgets, and service provision.

Why “Improved” Water Sources Are Not Always Safe. *WHO Bulletin*, Apr 2014. A Shaheed. ([Link](#))

Existing and proposed metrics for household drinking-water services are intended to measure the availability, safety and accessibility of water sources. However, these attributes can be highly variable over time and space and this variation complicates the task of creating and implementing simple and scalable metrics. In this paper, authors highlight those factors—especially those that relate to so-called improved water sources—that contribute to variability in water safety but may not be generally recognized as important by non-experts.

Bridging the Divide: Using Aid Flows to Tackle Inequality in Water and Sanitation Access, 2014. WaterAid. ([Link](#))

This briefing paper identifies the major inequalities that persist in the water and sanitation sector today. It contrasts these inequalities with the latest data on Official Development Assistance and shows that the greatest volume of aid rarely goes to the places where there is the greatest need.

From Promise to Reality: The Urgent Need for Southern African Leaders to Deliver on Their Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Commitments, 2014. WaterAid. ([Link](#))

These five case studies focus on budget tracking and identify some of the key financing issues that face the Southern Africa region. Although relevant and clear information and data is not always available or easily accessible, together the studies make a case for urgent action:

above all for sufficient, equitable and sustainable resourcing. Adding to the urgency are the current and future challenges that the continent faces from population growth, rapid urbanization and climate change. The Zambian case study describes government policy in peri-urban areas as a fire-fighting approach in the provision of water kiosks, when what is required is comprehensive housing development through settlement up-grading and in-house connections to water and sanitation services. Investment in decent homes, including social housing for rent, is one of the much-needed policy responses to rapid and unplanned urbanization.

The Problematic Nature of Measuring the Health Impact of Water and Sanitation Interventions, 2014. WP Schmidt, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. ([Link](#))

In this editorial it is argued that decades of research into the health effect of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions have produced few credible results. This unfortunate situation is not due to researchers in the field being generally incapable but to almost insurmountable methodological challenges that come along with epidemiological research into interventions that take years to implement and even longer to produce an effect. Nevertheless, results of these studies are used to make at times drastic policy decisions. The Global Burden of Disease study is perhaps the culmination of efforts to make sense of data that make no sense in themselves. Using almost absurd assumptions and by ignoring long term health effects and many important water and sanitation related disease other than diarrhea, the estimated contribution of inadequate access to water and sanitation to the global burden of disease becomes negligible. The author argues that no evidence may be better than bad evidence, and that investment into water and sanitation can easily be justified by a range of non-health benefits alone.

Sanitation and Water for All -- Because We Must. *Huffington Post*, Apr 2014. S Wijesekera, UNICEF. ([Link](#))

"We are also using social media to generate awareness of issues in WASH. Like the hugely successful 'Take poo to the loo' campaign in India, which leads people to talk about the unmentionable subject of feces and defecation through their various online platforms, and agree that a problem exists and the solution is in their hands."

The Vital Role of Business in Tackling the Water and Sanitation Crisis. *The Guardian*, Mar 2014. D Hillyard, WaterAid. ([Link](#))

Universal access to safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene will add \$220 billion a year to the world economy, explains Dave Hillyard, head of major partnerships at WaterAid.

WASHplus Weeklies will highlight topics such as Urban WASH, Indoor Air Pollution, Innovation, Household Water Treatment and Storage, Hand Washing, Integration, and more. If you would like to feature your organization's materials in upcoming issues, please send them to Dan Campbell, WASHplus Knowledge Resources Specialist, at dacampbell@fhi360.org.



About WASHplus - WASHplus, a five-year project funded through USAID's Bureau for Global Health, supports healthy households and communities by creating and delivering interventions that lead to improvements in access, practice and health outcomes related to water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and indoor air pollution (IAP). WASHplus uses at-scale, targeted as well as integrated approaches to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under five years of age globally. For information,

visit www.washplus.org or email: contact@washplus.org.