

Situation update

w/c 18 May 2020



The latest programme updates from across our work during COVID-19



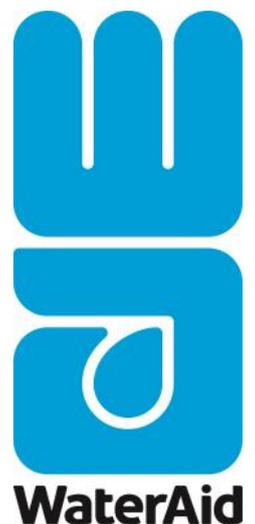
WaterAid/ Eliza Powell

Public health is impossible without access to clean water, soap and hygiene services for frontline health workers, their patients and communities. WaterAid calls on world leaders to wake up to the importance of WASH.



WaterAid/ Ben Roberts

Musicians including KT Tunstall performed in their bathrooms online to raise money and awareness of the crucial role of clean water and good hygiene in the fight against COVID-19.



World leaders must wake up to water and hygiene's role in stopping COVID-19



WaterAid/ Eliza Powell

At this year's virtual World Health Assembly we called on world leaders to ensure urgent investment in hygiene and public health is central to any COVID-19 strategy.

After intense lobbying to secure the inclusion of water, sanitation and hygiene into the draft resolution, we welcomed its final inclusion in the 2020 Resolution passed on May 19.

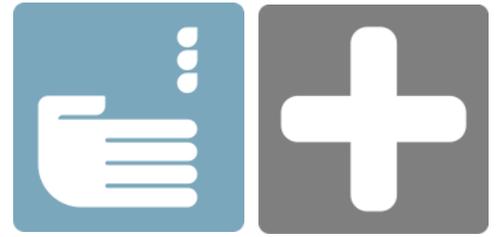
Responding to the news, Tim Wainwright, CEO at WaterAid UK, said: "Despite this, we are yet to see any significant action, with hardly any additional money released and

When Ernesta Culpa, maternity nurse, started work here in Mossuril, Mozambique, there was no running water in the health centre. She would have to collect it herself during work.

hygiene mostly absent from the large number of commitments made by donors. Vaccines and therapeutics are clearly essential in ending this pandemic, but until they are available the only defence we have against COVID-19 is prevention."

What's the global situation?

Good hygiene remains the first line of defence against COVID-19, especially crucial



without a vaccine, and handwashing is one of the most effective disease prevention methods. But neither are possible without clean water and soap. Some three billion¹ people (two out of five) lack soap and water at home, and in health centres the situation needs urgent attention, commitment and investment:

- 2 in 5 lack hand hygiene facilities at the point of care;
- 1 in 4 have no clean water on site;
- 1 in 5 have no decent toilets².

Without WASH services for frontline health workers, patients and communities, public health will remain impossible and global health security dangerously flawed.

What did we do?

- We issued a **global press release** ahead of the Assembly raising the alarm about the lack of WASH in the resolution. The May 12 draft then incorporated a specific 'operative paragraph' on WASH, and a mention of WASH in healthcare facilities.

- We launched a global action plan: **'Hygiene: the missing first line of defence against COVID-19'** urging world leaders to ensure that urgent investment in hygiene and public health is central to a COVID-19 response and



Messages demanding global action to support the World Health Assembly resolution went out across social media in the UK and our country teams.

rebuild strategy. We also called on all our country teams to begin lobbying their ministers of health. This was published on the [WHO website](#).

- We launched a **new hub** on our website to promote the urgent need to invest in WASH as well as to guide key stakeholders on the core issues at the Assembly.

¹WHO/UNICEF (2019) Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017.

Joint Monitoring Programme. Geneva: World Health Organisation; ²WHO/UNICEF (2019) WASH in Healthcare Facilities: Global Baseline Report. Joint Monitoring Programme. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Global overview and country programme updates



The latest COVID-19 global status

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases now stands at 4.45m across 215 countries/territories, an increase of about 600,000 since the previous week, or 95,000 cases a day. A third of those cases, or 1.44m, are in the USA where more than 10m tests have been conducted. Globally, there have been 304,000 deaths, an increase of 30,000 over the previous week. Some 1.6m people have recovered from COVID-19 since Johns Hopkins began tracking data.

Some countries have begun to ease stay at home restrictions on the assumption they have passed the peak. Germany, South Korea and China all raced to increase surveillance and testing after new clusters of COVID-19 emerged. The UK, Spain and France announced plans to start enforcing

quarantine for anyone arriving by air. Norway said it would keep its travel restrictions until August.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said it has “positive data” on some treatments that reduce the severity or length of the disease. The WHO is also tracking more than 70 vaccines in pre-clinical development, with eight of those already in clinical trials.

The latest global statistics on COVID-19 can be found from [Johns Hopkins University](#).

WaterAid country update

All of the countries in which we work are seeing an increase in cases. In Africa, cases of COVID-19 increased 43% during the past week to 78,194 cases. Although numbers are still low (about 2% of overall global cases), testing and surveillance is poor which WHO has said accounts for the low numbers. Meanwhile the United Nations (UN) has warned that cases could peak in the next three to six months.

WaterAid Madagascar’s Country Director Odile Randriamananjara with Health Minister Ahmad Ahmad during Monday’s World Health Assembly. She emphasised the need to pay global attention to access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.



Country programme updates



While all global teams are working from home, many governments have begun to ease stay-at-home restrictions, either due to economic or political pressure. This has resulted in mini spikes in several countries. In **Pakistan**, there was an increase of 1,500 cases in one 24-hour period, while in **Ghana**, cases increased by 900 during the course of two days. **Nepal** has also seen an increase in cases, despite a strict lockdown.

Lockdowns and COVID-19 responses are also becoming political, increasing the security risk. **Tanzania**, which has never had a lockdown, has stopped announcing cases amid a dispute with the head of the laboratory carrying out the tests and reports that hospitals were struggling. The last announcement by the Tanzanian government about the case load was April 29. Tanzanian truck drivers are also testing

positive in **Uganda** and **Zambia**. Zambia has now closed its border with Tanzania, with cargo and trucks stuck at the border. In **Malawi**, a lockdown is being contested in the High Court and a re-run of the presidential election scheduled for early July. Opposition forces are already rallying huge crowds and accusing the government of lying about infection rates to stop people going out to vote.

In **Ethiopia**, **Rwanda**, and **Uganda**, police and volunteers have stepped up the enforcement of stay at home and physical distancing restrictions, announcing heavy fines, as well as detentions. In Uganda, not wearing a mask in public can carry a six-month jail term.

With our country teams preparing to partially re-open offices and return to some field-based programming, we have developed a set of critical security, safeguarding and financial guidance.



WaterAid Sierra Leone are in the field distributing handwashing stations, soap and hygiene materials to Health Care facilities in our program areas to help control the spread of COVID-19.

Country programmes in action



East Africa

The teams in Tanzania and Ethiopia are focusing on a new hygiene project. WaterAid Uganda is advocating for greater investment in WASH; WaterAid Rwanda is installing handwashing stations in healthcare centres and communities.

Southern Africa

WaterAid, together with South Africa's Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, and the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** is launching a COVID-19 hygiene campaign focusing on women and girls in domestic violence refuge centres.

The team in Malawi is starting its advocacy drive with WASH civil society networks urging the government to increase its budget allocation to WASH.

WaterAid Zambia is planning to use drones to reach densely populated communities with COVID-19 hygiene messages.

West Africa

The team in Liberia is providing water and hygiene kits to quarantine centres and increasing its media campaign using social media and radio.

Nigeria's team is reaching 2.5m with its radio campaign; developing new illustrations for hygiene behaviour change visual prompts and increasing advocacy with government demanding greater investment in WASH.

WaterAid Mali is targeting 65 healthcare facilities and 750 households with hygiene messaging.

South Asia

Teams in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India are conducting rapid research into handwashing due at the end of the month.

WaterAid Myanmar is preparing guidance for WASH in quarantine centres, exploring how markets can be re-arranged to make them safer and include handwashing stations, and advocating for all restaurants to have handwashing stations.

Pakistan launched the Reckitt Benckiser funded COVID-19 project with 804 TV messages; and is exploring third party monitoring of construction, including using mWater.

New or updated programme guidance

- Guidance for our country teams has been produced on WASH in urban settlements which is complemented by the Bangladesh manual on WASH in urban settlements.
- The WASH in Schools network has launched '**10 immediate WASH in School actions**' to advise school head teachers.

News and views



Prioritising soap and water for workers

WaterAid has launched new advice for businesses worldwide to make sure they prioritise the water, sanitation and hygiene their workers will need to safely return to work and keep their businesses running. ***COVID-19 Guidance: Prioritising hygiene for workforce health and business resilience*** helps businesses understand the sustainable changes they need to make within their supply chains to improve resilience and productivity.

News in brief

- Voices from the Field Officer Mani Karmacharya shares stories of **life under lockdown** in Nepal.
- WaterAid features in a blog by the **Water Integrity Network** on accountability during COVID-19
- WaterAid policy experts write about **financing WASH**.
- Musicians including KT Tunstall performed for WaterAid's 'Bathroom Sessions' on Facebook during May. Visit: facebook.com/clashmagazine
- WaterAid's **Love Water** campaign has been celebrating technicians, engineers and operators across the world who are keeping our taps running and our toilets flushing. Including our very own founders - the UK water industry, who are keeping us safe and healthy in the UK as well.



WaterAid has been working with tea plantation owners to make sure they provide WASH services for their workers, such as Ritu Modi, in Sylhet District, Bangladesh.

Our next situation update will be available from the week commencing Monday 1 June.

For the latest updates: wateraid.org/global-covid-19-response