

Manifesto for the Working Group on WASH and Climate Change

The Working Group on WASH¹ and Climate Change is made up of a group of non-profit organisations with interest and expertise in the links between climate change and impacts on water management needs of poor and vulnerable people. The group, hosted by the Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) includes: UNICEF, Tearfund, IRC (International Water and Sanitation Centre, group coordinator), IWA (International Water Association), WaterAid, the Co-operative Programme on Water and Climate (CPWC) and the Inter American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS).

This manifesto sets out the key advocacy messages of the Working Group on WASH and Climate Change.

Focus

First, the Working Group advocates for more emphasis on the impact of climate change on water management services for poor and vulnerable people. In order to respond to this, climate change adaptation measures must be developed that serve to reduce the vulnerability of these communities in relation to access to WASH services and in their broader water management activities. Adaptation efforts should:

- Be undertaken within the sector, and not be established as a separate effort, and;
- Contribute to the strengthening of governance and capacity within the WASH sector, especially at critical levels of decision making, to enable an already pressurised sector to adequately adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Working Group aims to develop a better understanding of what these activities may entail, and how these can be planned for and carried out.

Advocacy principles

Policy makers at a national and international level must:

- Recognise that, as climate change impacts will be felt first and foremost through changes in the water cycle, the water sector must be a priority for adaptation action.
- Recognise that the WASH sector must adequately address adaptation action as part of the overall objective to ensure potable domestic water supply for those currently unserved.
- Integrate adaptation measures within existing WASH and broader water policy frameworks at local, national and international levels, to ensure water security in water services as well as adequate risk management provisions to deal with climate variability and climate change.

¹ Acronym for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Acknowledge that climate change related impacts on water will affect the poorest and most vulnerable populations first and foremost. As such, steps must be taken to develop and apply vulnerability assessments to identify the most vulnerable hot spots, such as sub-Saharan Africa, deltaic and low lying coastal areas, fragile mountainous areas and small islands.
- Ensure that the adaptation needs of these vulnerable populations are prioritised, by strengthening adaptive capacity at the local level, and supporting existing localised adaptive water management approaches.
- Place an emphasis on considering the impacts of climate change on sanitation and environmental health, within a climate risk based approach to water and sanitation sectoral policy planning and implementation.

Governance

- Approach climate change adaptation within the WASH sector as part of a wider 'linked-up' cross-sectoral approach to water resources management planning (e.g.: effective integration with land, agricultural, power and mining sectors).
- Ensure institutional strengthening and capacity building within the WASH sector, especially at critical levels of decision making, to enable the sector to adequately respond to the impacts of climate change.
- Support local adaptive capacity by ensuring the appropriate institutional frameworks are in place to enable access of information and knowledge about expected local impacts of climate change.
- Ensure that the voices of people, particularly unserved, poor and marginalised groups, are taken into account in policy and planning processes, including the development of NAPAs, since they are worst hit by the impacts of climate change.

Financing

- The funds required for climate change adaptation will be significant. Climate change adaptation financing for water should be **additional** to existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) for water. Financing must be available and accessible for the poorest and most vulnerable groups and in the form of grants, not loans. Funds for water-related adaptation should ideally be managed by the water sector itself.

Information

- Climate information is essential for coping with climate change. The WASH sector must work with the climate science community to determine climate information requirements and ensure the provision and accessibility of this information, under the recently established Global Framework for Climate services to be developed under World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) coordination.