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Guaranteeing basic human rights – ensuring access to safe drinking water for all



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Access to water and sanitation are recognized as human rights – fundamental to everyone’s health, dignity and prosperity. However...

2.3 million people have died from water borne disease so far this year

2.2 billion still lack safely managed drinking water

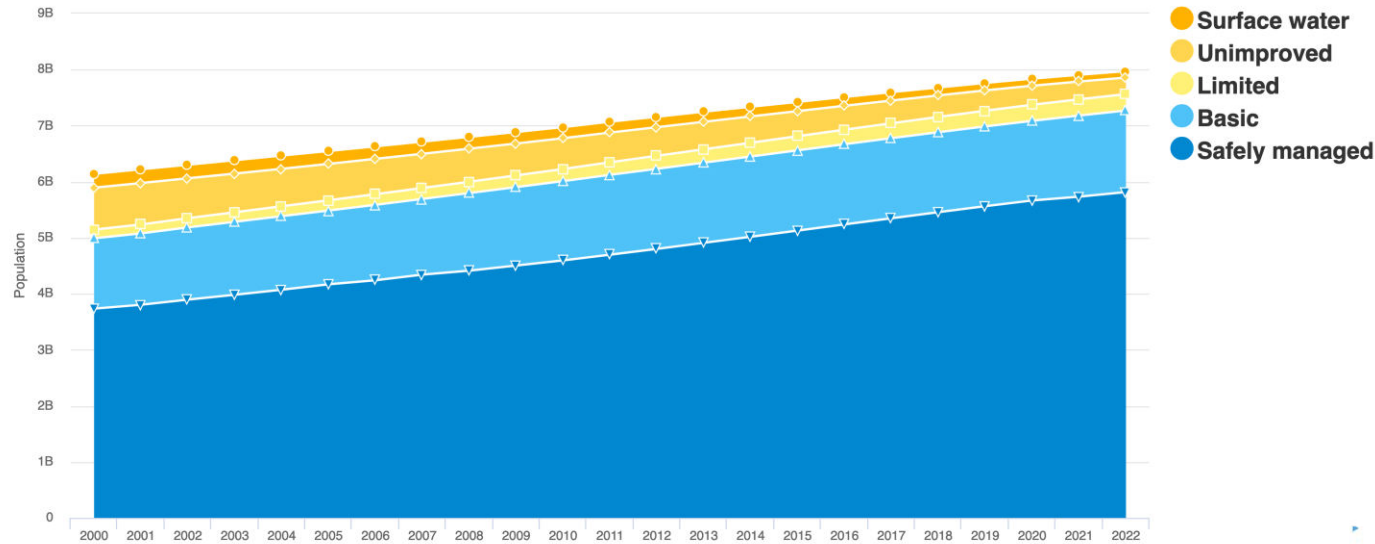
3.5 billion still lack safely managed sanitation

2 billion still lack basic hygiene services

1.8 billion people still do not have drinking water on-premises, and in two out of three households, women are primarily responsible for water collection

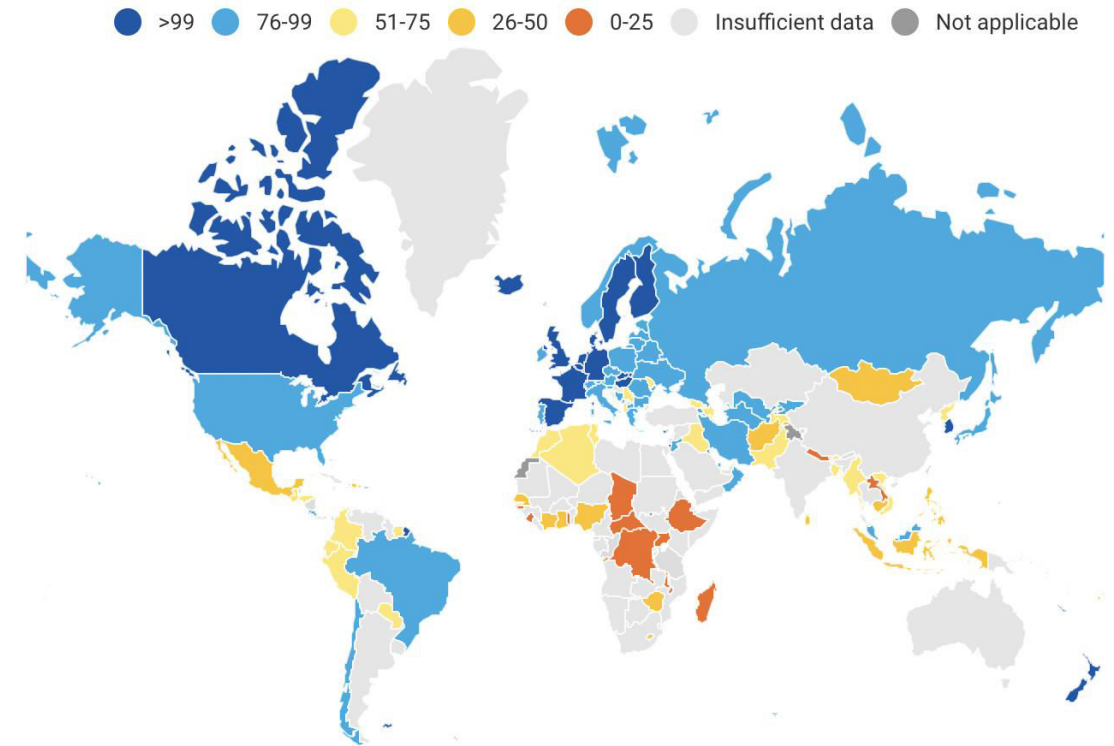
SDG 6.1: “By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all”

Household data - Drinking Water - World - Service Levels



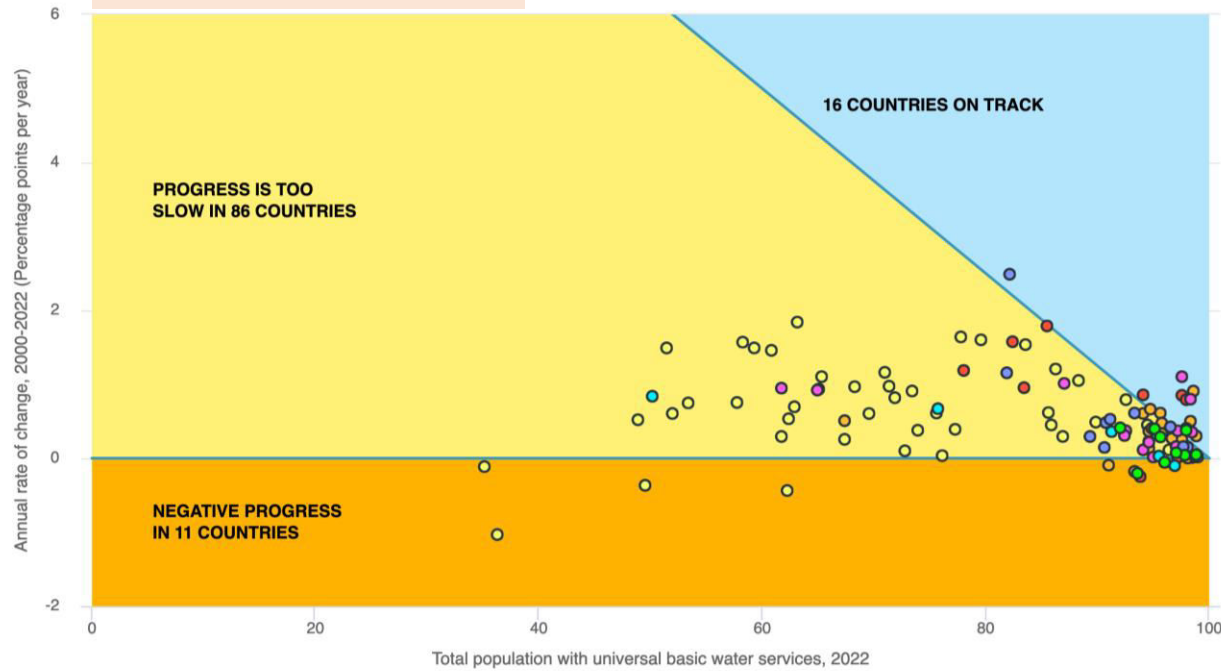
- 73% of the global population
- 94% in Europe and Northern America
- 31% in sub-Saharan Africa

- **Considerable increase in access** from 62% in 2000 to 73% in 2022 - 2 billion people globally gained access to safely managed drinking water services.
- **Despite this progress**, there are wide geographical disparities, and 2 billion people still do not use safely managed drinking water.



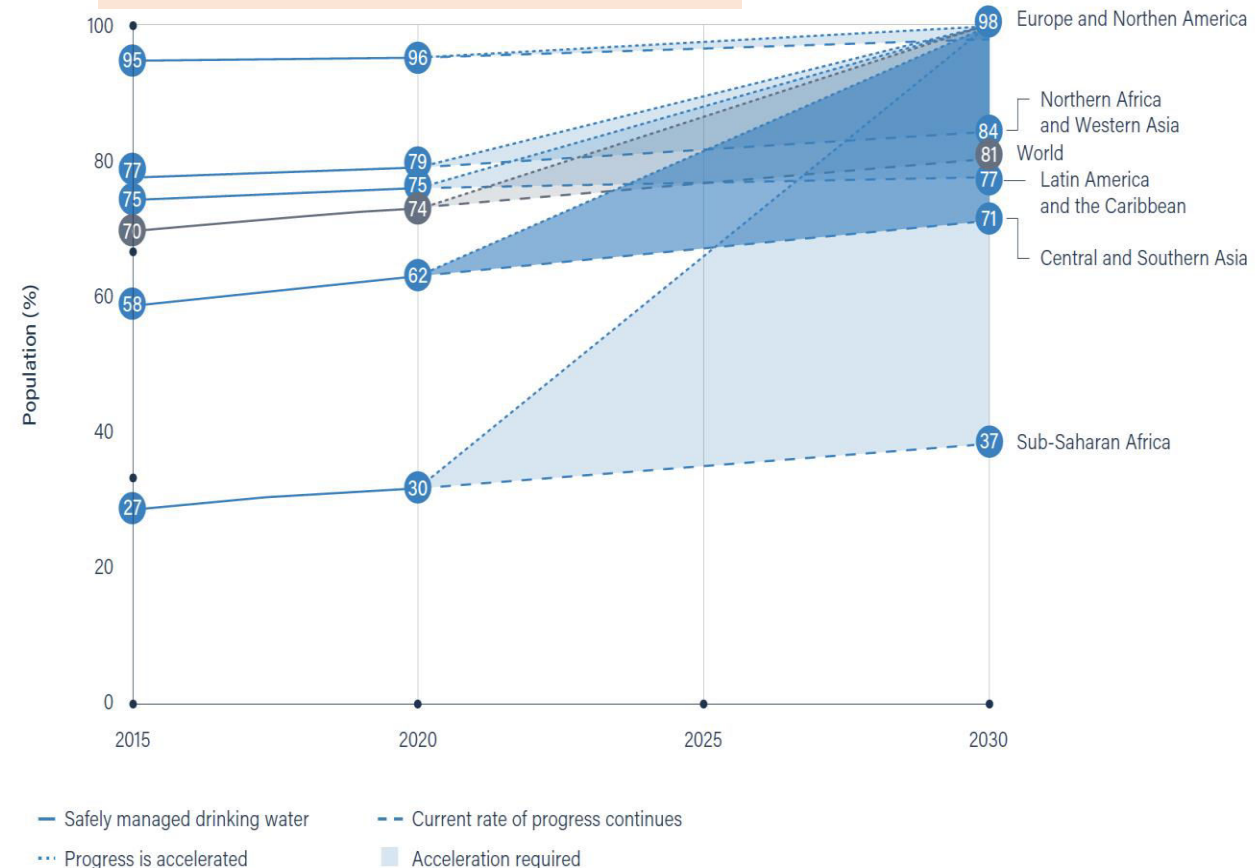
Basic water services

Source: WHO/UNICEF JMP 2023



Acceleration is required to meet SDG 6.1

Safely managed water services



- The world **is not on track** to meet the SDG 6.1 by 2030
- **16 countries** below 99% coverage are **on track** to achieve universal basic water services by 2030; in **86 countries** progress is **too slow** and in **11 countries** with **negative** progress
- Achieving SDG targets in low-income countries will require current rates of progress to increase **6 times** for basic water and **20 times** for safely managed water services

Five accelerators to achieve SDG 6

The SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework has identified five accelerators:

- **Governance:** cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration, clear roles, stakeholder involvement and effective and inclusive institutions
- **Financing** from the public sector, private sector and donors must increase dramatically, water service providers must improve efficiency and performance to ensure funds are used optimally, and governments should provide a stable and transparent administrative, regulatory and policy environment that encourages investment
 - Investment in water services generates a quantifiable, positive return on investment through saved medical costs and increased productivity: \$3 return for every \$1 invested in urban basic drinking water and \$7 to \$1 invested rural basic drinking water
- **Capacity development:** inclusive human and institutional capacities at all levels
- **Data and information:** Build trust through data generation, validation, standardization and information exchange for decision-making and accountability
- **Innovation:** Leverage and scale-up innovative practices and technologies



The Protocol on Water and Health – realizing the human rights to water & sanitation

Globally, the only legally-binding treaty on water, sanitation and hygiene to reduce water-related diseases through improved water management.

Obligation to set targets and report on them to ensure access to safe drinking water, sanitation as human rights

27 Parties
50 countries participate

Joint secretariat:
UNECE, WHO/Europe

Identifying equity challenges

Geographical disparities: Certain areas of a country (rural areas, poor urban neighborhoods) have no physical access or have access of lower quality than other areas

Social disparities: within areas with good access, certain groups (vulnerable and marginalized groups) do not have access

Economic disparities: Within areas with good access, the water and sanitation bill represents too large a share of disposable income for some households (affordability)



→ Setting the framework



→ Assessing the situation



→ Defining action

- Since 2005, the Protocol has provided a pan-European **policy platform on environment and health**, triggering the **creating of national inter-ministerial working groups** working **across sectors** in alignment with SDGs;
- The Protocol has been **supporting countries to address their needs** by providing **tailored technical and policy support through its guidance tools**, which **can be applied globally**, such as the Equitable Access Score-card.

UNECE- led work under the Protocol on Water and Health



Improving governance for water and health through the Protocol's mandatory target-setting and reporting process



Increasing resilience of water and sanitation infrastructure to climate change



Equitable access to water and sanitation to warrant human rights and implement EU Directives on water and sanitation

Improving equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region

Selected measures taken to address gaps identified through equitable access self-assessments carried out in 2011-2022



FRANCE

Equitable access action included in the 2015-2019 National Plan on Health and Environment. New law adopted to improve affordability of water and sanitation services



BELARUS

Results of the assessments were used to update targets under the Protocol such as providing the population with centralized water supply systems



HUNGARY

National Building Code amended to reflect the minimum requirements and standards for access to water & sanitation in buildings.



SERBIA

Action plans (2019-2021) to ensure equitable access in the regions of Sumadija and Pomoravlje endorsed by the Inter-ministerial body



UKRAINE

Amendments regarding sanitation incorporated into the final version of the Drinking Water Law



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Plumbing systems built to supply safe drinking water 24 hours a day to 67,000 villagers in rural areas



PORTUGAL

Affordability indicator included in the annual report of the water & sanitation regulator



AZERBAIJAN

Water supply established in 316 rural and urban secondary schools



NORTH MACEDONIA

Improvement of facilities for menstrual hygiene management in cafés, bars and restaurants in Skopje



SPAIN

Seven public fountains installed in the city of Castello to guarantee access to drinking water



BULGARIA

Development of a regulatory framework for sanitation in schools by the National Working Group under the Ministry of Health



ARMENIA

National 2018-2020 Equitable Access action plan endorsed, which contributed to the definition of vulnerable and marginalized communities in the amendments to the new Water Code

Conclusion

- **Progress is possible** if political commitment are enhanced, actions accelerated and funds secured
- **International cooperation and partnerships** continue to be critical in tackling public health and water management challenges as global concerns