



Seventy-eighth session

Agenda item 125

Global health and foreign policy**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 18 December 2023***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/78/L.14)]***78/130. Sustainable, safe and universal water, sanitation, hygiene, waste
and electricity services in health-care facilities***The General Assembly,*

Reaffirming its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights² and the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

¹ Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

² See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.



Recalling also the 2023 political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly (Sustainable Development Goals Summit),³

Recalling further the 2023 political declaration of the high-level meeting on universal health coverage,⁴ which reaffirms the right of every human being, without distinction of any kind, to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and recognizes the importance of water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and electricity services in health-care facilities for health promotion, disease prevention and the safety of both patients and health workers,

Recalling the Declaration of Astana of the Global Conference on Primary Health Care, which envisages strengthening primary health care as the most inclusive, effective and efficient approach to enhance people's physical and mental health, as well as social well-being, and that primary health care is a cornerstone of a sustainable health system for effective universal health coverage and health-related Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling also the 2023 political declarations on universal health coverage and on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response,⁵ which recognizes that infection prevention and control, including hygiene, and access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services, particularly in health facilities, are essential for preventing the emergence and spread of infectious diseases,

Recalling further the 2016 political declaration of the high-level meeting to tackle antimicrobial resistance⁶ through the five overarching strategic objectives of the World Health Organization global action plan on antimicrobial resistance,⁷

Reaffirming the call to promote zero-waste initiatives and support Member States in sustainable waste management,

Reaffirming also the importance of promoting the resilience of new and existing critical infrastructure, including water, hospitals and other health facilities, to ensure that they remain safe, effective and operational during and after disasters in order to provide life-saving and essential services,

Recalling its resolution [76/153](#) of 16 December 2021 on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation,

Recalling also its resolution [69/2](#) of 22 September 2014 on the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and the commitment therein to ensure equal access to high-quality services such as water and sanitation and other economic and social programmes, and the recognition of the importance of Indigenous Peoples' health practices and their traditional medicine and knowledge, in this regard stressing the importance of working with Indigenous Peoples to improve water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity in Indigenous health-care facilities, and in this regard welcoming the establishment of the World Health Organization Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India,

Welcoming the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International

³ Resolution [78/1](#), annex.

⁴ Resolution [78/4](#), annex.

⁵ Resolution [78/3](#), annex.

⁶ Resolution [71/3](#).

⁷ World Health Organization, document WHA68/2015/REC/1, annex 3.

Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023,

Recognizing that, without sufficient and safe water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities, countries will not accelerate needed progress to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals,

Recognizing also that the provision of safe water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services is fundamental for achieving universal health coverage, strengthening primary health care, improving quality care, and saving lives by ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths, as well as reducing costs of health care-associated infections and spread of antimicrobial resistance,

Deeply concerned that the latest data indicate huge gaps in services: globally, one in five health-care facilities lacks basic water, one in five has no sanitation, one in two lacks basic hand hygiene; one in four does not segregate health-care waste, and, furthermore, 1 billion people access health-care facilities without reliable electricity or without electricity access at all, underscoring the grave implications of not having these basic services, especially the 8 million people that die annually from poor-quality care, resulting in 6 trillion United States dollars in losses,

Deeply concerned also that the lack of access to adequate water and sanitation services, including for menstrual health and hygiene management in health-care facilities, negatively affects gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their enjoyment of human rights, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and recognizing the specific hygiene needs of women and girls during menstruation, and that women have specific hygiene needs during pregnancy, childbearing and rearing and throughout the life course,

Noting the importance, in accordance with international humanitarian law, of respecting and protecting, in situations of armed conflict, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, and hospitals and other medical facilities, which must not be unlawfully attacked, and ensuring that the wounded and sick receive, to the fullest extent practicable and with the least possible delay, the medical care and attention required,

Taking note of the work of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund through the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, and their global leadership and coordination of efforts to improve water, sanitation, hygiene and electricity in health-care facilities, and of the baseline reports and progress updates for the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation in health-care facilities, and the articulation of evidence-based actions and tools to improve services, including Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement,

Taking note of World Health Assembly resolution 72.7 of 28 May 2019 on water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities⁸ and subsequent global progress reports highlighting the large gaps in services as well as the reports on the practical actions, while noting that progress is greatest in establishing baselines and strengthening standards and least in integrating these with health systems, including through improving water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, training and education,

Emphasizing the importance of a coordinated, strategic response that accelerates action and investments at the global, regional and national levels, taking into consideration, as appropriate, the main recommendations contained in the most recent global progress report of the World Health Organization and the United Nations

⁸ See World Health Organization, document WHA72/2019/REC/1.

Children's Fund on water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity in health-care facilities,⁹ and the outcomes of the Global Summit on WASH, Waste and Electricity in Health Care Facilities, held in Amman from 13 to 15 June 2023,¹⁰

1. *Encourages* all Member States to integrate water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity in health-care facilities and to mainstream these efforts, as appropriate, into national health planning, programming, financing, monitoring and evaluation, and to empower the health workforce to demand, appropriately use and maintain such services, in accordance with national standards and contexts, including by:

(a) Facilitating cross-sectoral engagement through intersectoral task forces, joint sector reviews and joint planning and funding;

(b) Establishing, updating and implementing, according to national context, standards for safe, sustainable water, sanitation, hygiene, health-care waste, electricity and infection prevention and control, taking into consideration the impact of extreme events on health-care settings and integrating such standards into accreditation and regulation systems; and establishing accountability mechanisms to follow up on their efforts to reinforce standards and practice;

(c) Developing, resourcing and implementing national road maps, so that every health-care facility can have and maintain safe and sustainable water and sanitation supplies, hygiene services and practices, waste management, and electricity services for all;

(d) Ensuring adequate budgets and resourcing for water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services for all facilities across all relevant sectors, including for operation, maintenance and workforce capacity-building, with regular tracking and reporting;

(e) Integrating harmonized water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity indicators into national monitoring and evaluation systems, and regularly collecting, analysing, reviewing and disseminating data findings at the national level;

(f) Developing and capacitating structures to enable local and national coordination mechanisms, where relevant, for the provision of water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services, including by engaging community health workers in supporting such efforts and linking between hygiene practices in health-care facilities;

2. *Invites* international and regional organizations, international and regional financial institutions and development agencies engaged in the provision of water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity support, as appropriate, to enhance the coordination of their strategies and engage with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund as the co-coordinators of global efforts on water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity in health-care facilities alongside other core partners continuing to increase data coverage through the inclusion of global indicators in facility and programme surveys;

3. *Urges* Member States to strengthen international cooperation to support efforts to finance, build, strengthen and maintain capacity in developing countries to

⁹ World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, *Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, Waste and Electricity Services in Health Care Facilities: Progress on the Fundamentals* (Geneva, 2023).

¹⁰ The World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund Global Summit brought together 35 countries to share approaches, strategies and develop the Global Framework for Action (2024–2030): Water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in all health care facilities achieves essential quality health services. The meeting report and presentations are available at www.washinhcf.org/resource/global-summit-meeting-report-amman-jordan/.

improve water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities;

4. *Recognizes* that health financing requires global solidarity and collective effort, and urges Member States to strengthen international cooperation to support efforts to build and strengthen capacity in developing countries, including through enhanced official development assistance and financial and technical support and support to research, development and innovation programmes;

5. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system to promote the optimum use of resources and to support developing countries, at their request, in the acceleration of efforts to improve water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity in health-care facilities;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the Director General of the World Health Organization and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as core partners such as the World Bank and other relevant organizations, to strengthen and support, as appropriate, within their mandates, the existing global initiatives co-led by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, to provide assistance to Member States, upon their request, towards the achievement of universal, safe, sustainable water, sanitation, hygiene, waste and electricity services in health-care facilities as a core measure to achieve universal health coverage, primary health care and the related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals;¹¹

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide, in consultation with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other relevant international organizations, within existing resources, a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution in 2025 during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, which will serve to inform States and the United Nations development system, and in this context invites all States to contribute to the report of the Secretary-General, including by providing data through the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme on water, sanitation and hygiene in health-care facilities.

*48th plenary meeting
18 December 2023*

¹¹ See resolution 70/1.