

# GLAAS 2010

**UN-WATER GLOBAL ANNUAL ASSESSMENT  
OF SANITATION AND DRINKING-WATER**

Targeting resources for better results



World Health  
Organization

UN WATER

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# FOREWORD

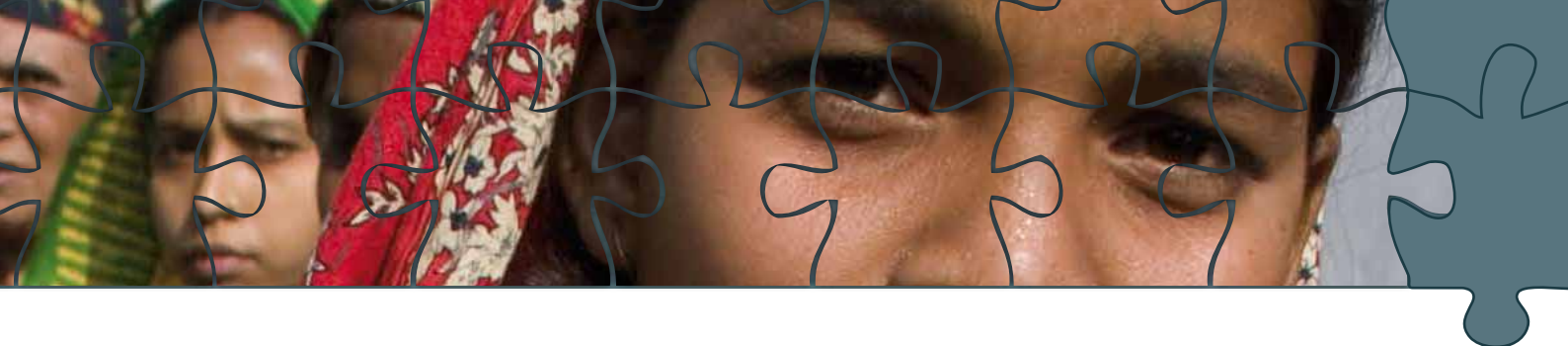
In 2008, over 2.6 billion people were living without access to improved sanitation facilities, and nearly 900 million people were not receiving their drinking-water from improved water sources. These stark figures are the headlines presented in *Progress on Sanitation and Drinking-water: 2010 Update*—the latest report of the World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP), published in March 2010. It describes a situation that is particularly grave with regard to sanitation, with less than half of the world's rural population and only three quarters of its urban population using improved facilities.

Not surprisingly, diarrhoea is the second leading contributor to global burden of disease—ahead of heart disease and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Two and a half billion cases of diarrhoea occur in children under five years of age every year, and an estimated 1.5 million children die from it annually. Diarrhoeal diseases impose a very significant burden on the public health resources in countries where unsanitary conditions prevail, overwhelmingly the poorer countries of the world. Diarrhoeal diseases also affect the nutritional status of children, indirectly adding to the disease burden. It is a burden carried by individual households (not least in economic terms), by the health services (which often are literally overburdened) and by national economies. Not without reason, the WHO Commission on Macroeconomics and Health rated the extension of access to safe drinking-water and basic sanitation as a highly cost-effective health intervention.

The JMP report gives us the hard facts: statistics about the global situation and about the important disparities between regions, between rural and urban populations and between different socioeconomic strata. One might ask why this unsatisfactory situation continues when the problems associated with poor sanitation and unsafe drinking-water have been known for so long and solutions seem readily at hand.

The big question is: Where are the real bottlenecks? Are they in the formulation and implementation of policies? In the process of optimizing institutions and the arrangements between them? In the translation of political will into action? In the decision-making on the allocation of resources at national and international levels? Or in the current education and training programmes for professionals working in water and sanitation? The answer may be: "All of the above."





The **UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)** was established to enhance our evidence base for answering the above questions and to inform the actions undertaken by UN-Water members and partners. GLAAS is expected to elucidate where efforts stagnate in achieving the Millennium Development Goal Target 7.C—to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking-water and basic sanitation. It also highlights the challenges that need to be addressed by the United Nations system to collectively support its Member States. These challenges are duly recognized by UN-Water, which seeks to inform ongoing global policy dialogues about available solutions and to support Member States in overcoming them.

The first GLAAS report brings together survey data from 42 countries and 27 external support agencies and overlays this information, together with information from other databases, on the data presented by JMP on access to and use of basic sanitation and safe drinking-water. This composite information source is quite central to the actions undertaken by UN-Water members and partners and is facilitating action by the development partners. For example, the new initiative Sanitation and Water for All: A Global Framework for Action, which aims to bring sanitation and drinking-water issues “to the top table of development”, will bring the GLAAS report as a key information source to the attention of decision-makers at the highest level.

This GLAAS report initiates a series that will increasingly reach out to more Member States in the coming years. We hope that you will find it interesting and stimulating, and that it will inform your decisions and actions to bring safe water and basic sanitation to everyone who is currently without access.

Maria Neira  
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Public Health and Environment  
World Health Organization

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Chair, UN-Water  
Director  
Institute for Water, Environment and Health  
United Nations University



### UN-Water

UN-Water is a mechanism to strengthen coordination and coherence among all United Nations (UN) bodies dealing with a variety of water-related issues, such as health, farming, environment, energy, food, climate, sanitation and disasters. UN-Water was set up in 2003 through a decision by the High Level Committee on Programmes of the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination. The Chair of UN-Water is chosen from one of the UN agencies for a two- to three-year term (the current chair is with the UN University), whereas the Secretariat is hosted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. UN-Water evolved from many years of close collaboration among UN agencies and a firm belief that still more can be done to strengthen the UN system in its efforts to work more effectively on water and sanitation issues, which are among the most urgent challenges of our time. UN-Water is not another UN agency. Instead, UN-Water adds value to existing UN programmes and projects and fosters more cooperation and information sharing among UN agencies and their partners.

UN-Water web site: <http://www.unwater.org>





#### UN-Water fosters coordination

UN-Water GLAAS and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) worked together to ensure that there would be no duplication of data collection efforts in Asia and the Pacific in 2009. In 2008, UNESCAP carried out a survey on sanitation in the framework of the International Year of Sanitation (UNESCAP, 2009). In 2009, UNESCAP was asked to contribute to the planned Asian Development Bank (ADB) report, *Asian Water Development Outlook 2010*, on household water security (ADB, in press). WHO and UNESCAP agreed that instead of a separate survey for Asia, the GLAAS survey could provide an evidence base for UNESCAP's work and UNESCAP could facilitate GLAAS data collection in its region.



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