



State of the World's DRINKING WATER

An urgent call to action to accelerate progress
on ensuring safe drinking water for all



World Health
Organization



WORLD BANK GROUP

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for every child

State of the world's drinking water: an urgent call to action to accelerate progress on ensuring safe drinking water for all

ISBN 978-92-4-006080-7 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-006081-4 (print version)

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Publication design by Blossom.

Acknowledgements

This report is the result of collaboration between a large number of contributors, reviewers and editors. The development of the report was led by Jennifer de France (Team Leader, Drinking-water Quality and Safety, WHO) in coordination with Jorge Alvarez-Sala (Senior Advisor for Water and Climate Resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) a.i., UNICEF) and Chloe Viola (Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank). It was developed under the overall direction and guidance of Bruce Gordon (Coordinator of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health, WHO) and Kelly Ann Naylor (Director, Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) & Climate, Environment, Energy, and Disaster Risk Reduction (CEED), UNICEF). Thanks are due to Jennifer Sara and Saroj Jha (former and current Global Director for the Water Global Practice at the World Bank, respectively) for contributing to and supporting the conception of this report. Clarissa Brocklehurst acted as lead writer and managing editor and Simon Mead as editor.

This document benefited from the valuable contributions of Betsy Engebretson, Fiona Gore, Rick Johnston, Batsirai Majuru and Angella Rinehold at WHO; Tom Slaymaker at UNICEF and Joel Kolker and Gustavo Saltiel at the World Bank.

The authors are grateful to the many others who assisted with contributions and review including Ashanti Bleich, Joanna Esteves Mills, Mark Hoeke, Rory McKeown, Oliver Schmoll and Nghia Ton at WHO; Jose Gesti Canuto, Guy Hutton and Nicolas Osbert at UNICEF; Sarah Keener and Si Gou from the World Bank's Water Global Practice; Zehra Shabbir and Rich Thorsten at Water.org; Tara Bartnik, Vincent Casey, Md Khairul Islam, Md Tahmidul Islam and Hasin Jahan at WaterAid; Marieke Adank, Juste Nansi and Stef Smits at IRC; Karl Linden at the University of Colorado Boulder; Rob Hope at the University of Oxford; Guy Howard at the University of Bristol; and Harold Lockwood and Bill Twyman at Aguaconsult.

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Foreword

Every day, millions of women and school-age children - almost always girls - spend hours walking long distances to fetch water, which may be of poor quality, limited quantity or unaffordable.

For hundreds of years, efforts to improve the delivery of safe drinking water have led to gains in public health and huge reductions in child mortality. In the last two decades, two billion people gained access to safe drinking water. The returns on investment for health, productivity and other factors are estimated at more than three times the cost in urban areas, and more than six times the cost in rural areas.

So why do we need another report urging action?

The first reason is that we face a crisis. Despite our understanding of the benefits of safe drinking water and the progress we have made, an estimated two billion people, one quarter of the world's population, still go without. Unsafe drinking water is a driving factor behind the more than 1.5 million people who die every year from diarrhoea, most of them infants and small children. Every one of these preventable deaths is a tragedy. Meeting the Sustainable Development Goal target of universal access to safe

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