

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



As the United Nations lead agency on international development, UNDP works in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. UNDP's mandate is to end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions. UNDP helps countries to develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and to build resilience to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP's work is concentrated in three focus areas:

WHAT IS UNDP?

Sustainable development

Democratic governance and peace building

Climate and disaster resilience

The UNDP helps countries achieve integrated, climate-resilient, sustainable and equitable management of water resources, and universal access to safe water supply and sanitation. Focusing on water governance, UNDP supports the enabling environments and long-term and comprehensive partnerships for the sustainable use and protection of freshwater and the efficient and equitable provision of related services.

UNDP AND WASH

UNDP currently supports more than 200 projects that promote equitable access to basic services like water and sanitation. Some highlights include:

UNDP's support to transboundary water management involve Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses followed by the development and ministerial adoption of a mutually agreed Strategic Action Programme to be implemented jointly by the countries in the shared basin. In collaboration with GEF-International Waters, UNDP is currently supporting the ecosystem-based management of 27 shared rivers, lakes and aquifers.

Water security has emerged as a key challenge in Maldives, particularly for the remote outer islands, many of which rely on emergency deliveries shipped from the capital during the dry season. To address this, the Government, with backing of UNDP and the GCF is establishing a decentralized water supply system across the seven northern atolls, integrating rainwater and desalinated water in an affordable manner.

Many of UNDP's water- projects involve biodiversity and nature-based solutions. UNDP's Equator Prize recognizes innovative initiatives from local communities and Indigenous peoples that demonstrate exceptional achievements in nature-based solutions for local sustainable development.

UNDP supports countries to tackle complex development challenges and achieve the 2030 Agenda through SDG integration.

UNDP AND SDGS

The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

As the lead development agency, UNDP has a special role vis-à-vis SDGs 1 and 10 on the reduction of poverty and inequalities. As a custodian agency, UNDP reports on indicators related to SDGs **5**, **16** and **17** on gender, governance and partnerships.

UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN AND WASH

Anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to the principles of universality, equality and leaving no one behind, the UNDP vision is to help countries achieve sustainable development by eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks.

The [Strategic Plan](#) proposes a series of signature solutions that can be combined and configured to respond to the development settings. Examples which are relevant to WASH are:

Signature solution 1: Keeping people out of poverty.

This signature solution targets the barriers and vulnerabilities that keep people in poverty or that push them back into poverty, including when shocks and crises occur. It uses a mix of solutions including improving rural and urban livelihoods, strengthening gender equality, building social protection, ensuring access to water, clean energy and other basic services and strengthening financial inclusion, in order to help build resilience to economic, environmental or health shocks.

Signature solution 4: Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet.

Biodiversity and terrestrial and marine ecosystems provide the foundation for human societies and a safety net of resources and ecosystem services for billions of people. UNDP applies integrated actions developed to address biodiversity loss by tackling market, policy and governance failures that lead to ecosystem degradation and loss of livelihoods.

THE WAY FORWARD

Biodiversity is the best indicator of the health and functions of ecosystems on which the drinking water of riparian communities depends. Also, the quality of drinking water is closely related to the health and state of the ecosystem. I believe that UNDP's work on sustainable and equitable management of water resources and a nature-based approach is closely linked to my mandate and my vision. In addition, I look forward to a close collaboration with UNDP during my mandate.



Pedro Arrojo-Agudo,
UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

*The Special Rapporteur held a meeting with UNDP representatives on 11 January 2021