

UNICEF: Environmental Mandate & Activities

United Nations Children's Fund

Environmental mandate

More than 2.6 billion people, forty per cent of the world's population lack basic sanitation facilities, and over one billion people still use unsafe drinking water sources. As a result, thousands of children die every day from diarrhea and other water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases and many more suffer and are weakened by illness.

The lack of access to safe water and sanitation has many other serious repercussions. Children and particularly girls are denied their right to education because they are busy fetching water or are deterred by the lack of separate and decent sanitation facilities in schools. Women are forced to spend large parts of their day fetching water. Poor farmers and wage earners are less productive due to illness, and national economies suffer. Without safe water and sanitation, sustainable development is impossible.

UNICEF works in more than 90 countries around the world to improve water supplies and sanitation facilities in schools and communities, and to promote safe hygiene practices. We sponsor a wide range of activities work with many partners, including families, communities, governments and like-minded organizations. In emergencies we provide urgent relief to communities and nations threatened by disrupted water supplies and disease. All UNICEF water and sanitation programmes are designed to contribute to the Millennium Development Goal for water and sanitation: to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation.

Environmental activities

- Promoting enabling environments to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of all water and sanitation programmes.
- Community and household water security by promoting a range of appropriate, low-cost sanitation, water and hand-washing facilities
- Water, Sanitation and Education focusing the resources on improving the health of school children by providing water, sanitation and hand-washing facilities in schools.
- Water and Sanitation in Emergencies by providing timely, effective water and sanitation services and facilities to the most affected people in times of need and following up with support to large-scale rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes.

