

Water and Sanitation

DESCRIPTION

Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs are targeted to the poorest countries with the greatest need. WASH is a critical development intervention that alleviates poverty and improves human health by equitably managing and improving access to water resources, reducing open defecation by constructing adequate toilets and changing behavior, and providing hygiene education and kits such as handwashing stations with soap.

WHAT DOES THIS BUY?

Funds are provided to partners through grants, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms to provide access to safe drinking water, construct and drill wells in rural communities, establish toilets and handwashing stations in schools, teach and educate communities about the need for using a toilet and handwashing to protect health and safety, and strengthen local countries' capacity to leverage domestic resources.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST

- **From FY 2008 to FY 2016 U.S. funds provided 37.3 million people with improved drinking water services**, 24.1 million with improved sanitation services, 6.8 million with improved agricultural water management, 500,569 women and girls with drinking water, and 1.8 million women and girls with sanitation services.¹
- For every dollar invested in water and sanitation, there is a \$4.30 return in the form of reduced health care costs for individuals and society.²
- **Nearly 2 billion people around the globe still drink unsafe water.** In 2015, the total cost to the global economy due to lack of access to sanitation was \$222.9 billion, up from \$182.5 billion in 2010 - an increase of 22%.
- 35% of the world's population lack access to basic sanitation and 892 million people still practice open defecation,³ which is an affront to dignity, a safety issue for women and girls, and a risk to children's nutrition and community health.
- **Each year as many as 842,000 deaths from diarrheal diseases could be prevented** by improved water, sanitation, and hygiene. This means 1,000 children die unnecessarily every day.⁴

U.S. INTEREST

- A report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence shows that **“water problems will contribute to instability in states important to U.S. national security interests.”** It also highlights the importance of U.S. leadership in moving developing countries toward sound water management policies at the local, national, and regional levels.⁵
- Investment in WASH programming enhances U.S. national security by working to prevent pandemic disease and conflict over water resources, aiding regional stability. It also addresses governance issues, opens new markets for U.S. exports, aligns market access, and promotes U.S. job creation.

Looking to the Future

Water and Sanitation – TITLE VII

BOLD VISION

- The World Bank estimates that hygiene is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available, with a return of \$4 in increased economic productivity for every \$1 invested.
- Additional investment could improve service delivery and overall access, as well as governance and capacity building, which could accelerate the rate of transition of developing countries from donor dependence.
- Additional investment could allow WASH interventions to be included in other sector programs such as food security, nutrition, maternal and child health, and building resilience to intense weather events such as flooding and drought, leading to more development gains.

IMPACT OF CUTS

- Cuts could cause countries important to U.S. strategic interests to face instability and risk state failure due to water issues.
- Cuts could translate into fewer healthcare workers and services, putting communities at increased risk of disease outbreaks, including Ebola and cholera. The risk of a cholera outbreak is primarily linked to insufficient access to safe water and proper sanitation. Its impact can be more dramatic when there is a massive displacement of people where the provision of potable water and sanitation is a challenge.
- Cuts could destabilize regions and increase fragility, resulting in mass migration as occurred in Syria.

1 “Global Water and Development,” USAID. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/Global-Water-and-Development-Report-reduced508.pdf>.

2 “UN- Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS) 2014 Report,” UN Water.

3 “Key Facts from JMP 2015 Report,” World Health Organization. http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/JMP-2015-keyfacts-en-rev.pdf?ua=1.

4 Idid.

5 “Global Water Security: Intelligence Community Assessment,” Office of the Director of National Intelligence. https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/ICA_Global%20Water%20Security.pdf.

5 YEAR FUNDING HISTORY

■ House ■ Senate

Funding levels may not accurately reflect those in the appropriations bills and/or reports due to rounding.

