

Coalition for Climate Resilient Sanitation: Integrating sanitation into climate policies

With less than a decade to the deadline, efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) must ramp up to meet the targets of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for all by 2030.

Climate change is threatening progress made as floods, droughts and extreme weather affect the water cycle and disrupt WASH services.

Despite the proven impact and interrelationship between sanitation and climate change, sanitation is still not part of the climate conversation. It must be, not only to ensure the resilience of the infrastructure, communities, and ecosystems that we depend on in the face of a global climate emergency, but also to harness effective and under-utilized greenhouse gas mitigation possibilities and build the resilience of communities by providing them access to safe sanitation services.

Sanitation is more than just toilets and the safe disposal of human waste, although these are severely lacking in many communities and households. Managing the increasing levels of sanitation-related pollution in our waterways, which are amplified by increasing climate risks, such as flooding and sea level rise, is also critical.

1. The effects are not limited to humans. Entire species and ecosystems suffer from our inadequate sanitation systems.
2. Wetlands and coastal areas, including coral reefs, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poorly managed sanitation, affecting the communities and ecosystems that depend on them. If our waterways aren't healthy, we can't be healthy.
3. Unmanaged sanitation is not only a factor in poor health and the spread of diseases such as cholera, it is also a significant contributor to the climate crisis. Wastewater treatment is estimated to contribute at least 5% to global methane emissions, and new evidence indicates this may be an underestimate. These emissions largely come from anaerobic digestion in pit latrines and septic tanks that are not emptied frequently, and from sewage treatment plants that do not capture methane. Active and safe sanitation management can reduce these emissions.

The 1.5 hrs webinar will aim to address the following questions, through case studies from Burkina Faso and Bangladesh:

- How are climatic conditions impacting water, sanitation and hygiene practices?
- What actions can be undertaken by various stakeholders to address climate induced WASH problems?
- Why is climate-resilient sanitation also important for healthy ecosystems?

Panellists

- Sanitation Learning Hub, Institute of Development Studies
- WaterAid Bangladesh
- WaterAid Burkina Faso
- UNICEF
- AU representative

Draft agenda

00:10	Opening remarks
00:10 - 00:40	Case study presentations from Bangladesh and Burkina Faso
00:40 – 01:20	Panel discussion
01:20 - 01:30	Closing remarks