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## For Immediate Release

### **More Than Two Billion People Lack Access to Safe Drinking Water**

End Water Poverty (EWP) would like to applaud UNICEF and WHO for being consistent in producing the Joint Monitoring Programme report and for being bold in measuring safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene for the first time.

The report states that 2.1 billion (or 3 in 10) people lack access to safely managed water services worldwide. This estimated coverage was based on available data from 95 countries (35 per cent of the global population). And 4.5 billion (or 6 in 10) people, lack safely managed sanitation.

#### **Leave no one behind?**

This year's report has laid bare the challenges we face in the sector and also exposed the complexities of the sector. This report has also exposed the lack of government attention on the provision of safely managed services to rural communities, nomads, mountain and slum dwellers. The 2017 JMP report also demonstrates the lack of accurate data on intra-household inequalities such as sex, age or disability. Gathering this data is a major contributor in achieving the SDGs by 2030.

#### **Laying pipes and building toilets and sewerage systems is not enough**

As civil societies, we have always been concerned about the quality of water and sanitation service provisions in middle income and developing countries. The low coverage could be due to a number of reasons;

- In some countries, extensive mining and industrial activities are polluting both ground and surface water bodies (e.g. China, India, Ghana and Mexico), making them unsafe.
- The discharging of raw sewage into water bodies or the use of poorly constructed septic tanks, causing major underground water pollutions (e.g. India).

#### **Is safely managed water and sanitation a pipedream?**

The report will be raising difficult conversations within the corridors of power and in the offices of development agencies regarding the practicality of measuring and the delivery of safely managed water and sanitation services. We are struck by the poor coverage of services where data *is* available. For example, based on **Uganda's** six per cent coverage of safely managed water, the country would not reach the SDG target within the next seven centuries.

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### **Our recommendations**

Again, EWP would like to state its appreciation of this report. The report is a good start in contributing towards achieving goal 6 and the human rights to water and sanitation.

However, the report could be improved by:

- Proactively engaging more institutions such as the UN Habitat to provide and use their data on slum dwellers for this report.
- Reaching out to civil society organisations to lobby their governments to improve their data collection, which is disaggregated (e.g. sex, gender and disability etc.).
- Proactively reaching out to service providers (governments and non-governmental organisations) to use the criteria for safely managed services when building new infrastructure.
- All stakeholders to use this report as an advocacy tool to call for the protection of water bodies from mining, agricultural use and other polluting industrial activities.
- Increasing the scale of investment in order to meet such ambitious goals. We urge governments to use their tax policies to increase domestic resource mobilisation as a key source of financing this goal.
- Increasing investment levels and accelerating disbursement from development partners, which does not burden the public sector.
- Employing transparent methodologies by national governments in contract awarding and utilisation of government revenue.

Business as usual will not deliver goal 6 and will not provide safely managed water for future generations. EWP will continue to advocate and campaign for safely managed water and sanitation for all.

Issued by End Water Poverty and signed by Al-hassan Adam (Coordinator)

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**Note to editors:**

**Future global figures may decline**

The report puts global coverage of safely managed water services at 71 per cent. This estimated coverage was based on available data from 95 countries (35 per cent of global population). Regarding sanitation, 39 per cent of the global population used a **safely managed** sanitation service.

The likelihood of a decline of the global coverage figure is high, particularly when more countries provide real data as opposed to exploration. Another factor, which could contribute to its decline, is when JMP starts collecting data on safely managed water and sanitation services for urban slum dwellers, which is currently missing from the data.

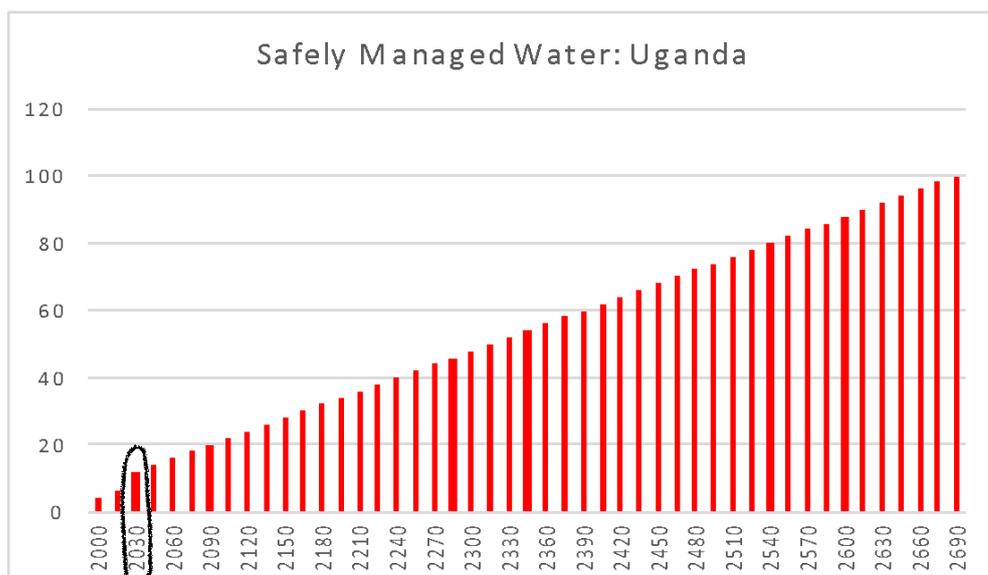
**Definitions**

Safe water or safely managed water means water supply services that is located on premises, available when needed and free from contamination.

Safe sanitation or safely managed sanitation means toilets whereby excreta are treated and disposed of safely.

WHO/UNICEF JMP Report 2017: [https://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_96632.html](https://www.unicef.org/media/media_96632.html)

Below is a chart showing progress in Uganda if access to safely managed water is going to be achieved through a business as usual approach.



Source: UNICEF/WHO JMP Report 2017