The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021

Extended Report

-Goal 6-

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Note: The UN Statistics Division (UNSD) prepares the annual *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*, also known as the glossy report, based on storyline inputs submitted by UN international agencies in their capacity as mandated custodian agencies for the SDG indicators. However, due to space constraints, not all information received from custodian agencies is able to be included in the final glossy report. Therefore, in order to provide the general public with all information regarding the indicators, this 'Extended Report' has been prepared by UNSD. It includes all storyline contents for each indicator as provided by the custodian agencies and is unedited. For instances where the custodian agency has not submitted a storyline for an indicator, please see the custodian agency focal point information linked for further information.

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Indicator 6.2.1: Proportion of population using (a) safely managed sanitation services and (b) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

1 in 3 people still lacked a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home in 2020

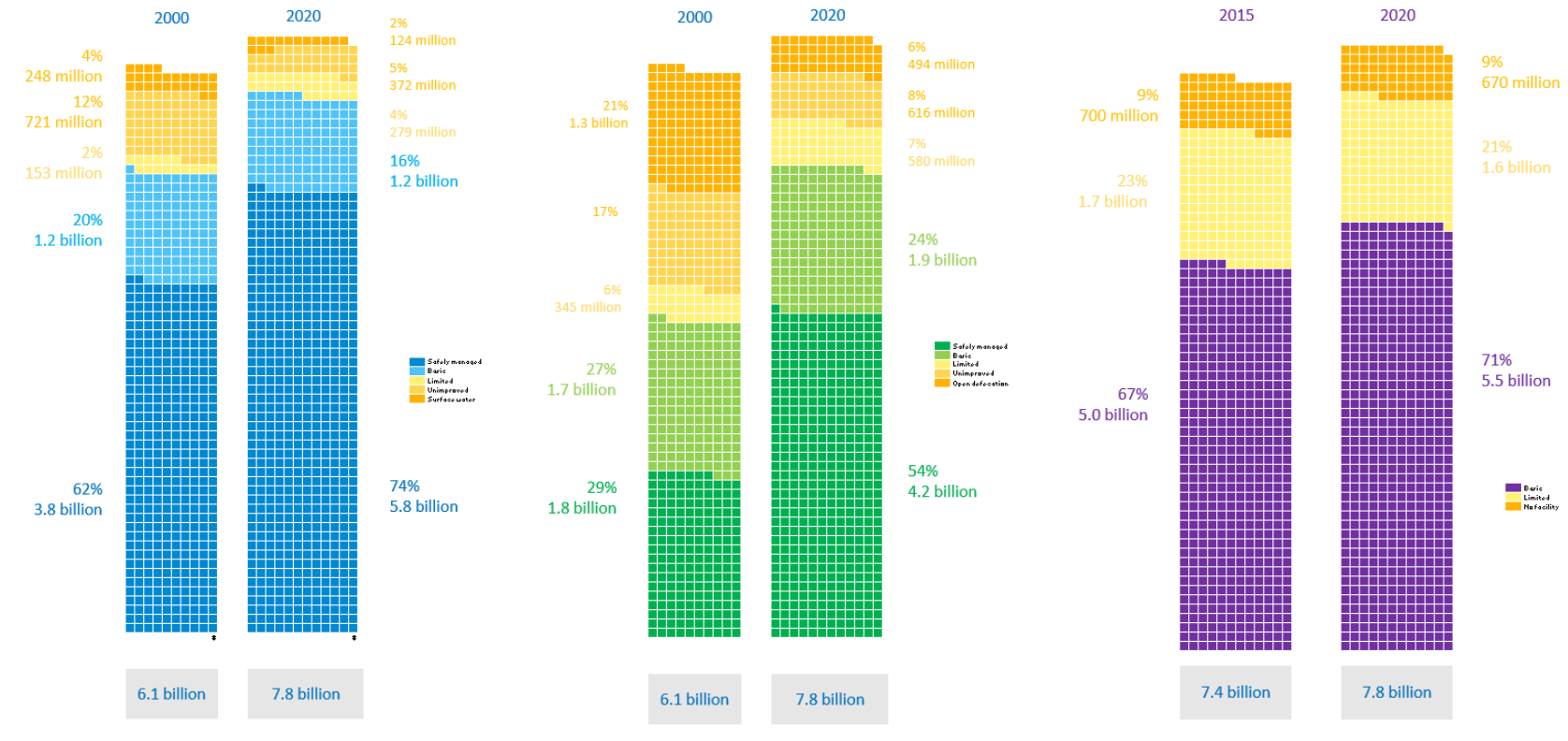
Between 2000 and 2020, the global population using safely managed drinking water services[1] increased by 2 billion, with the largest numbers of people gaining access in Central and Southern Asia. But in 2020, despite progress, 2 billion people around the world still lacked safely managed drinking water, including 771 million who lacked even basic drinking water[2]. Half (387m) of those lacking even basic drinking water services lived in sub-Saharan Africa.

The global population using safely managed sanitation services[3] increased from 1.8 billion in 2000 to 4.2 billion in 2020, with the largest number of people gaining access in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. But, in 2020, despite progress, 3.6 billion people worldwide still lacked safely managed sanitation, including 1.7 billion who lacked even basic sanitation. Among these, 494 million people still practised open defecation, falling from 1.3 billion in 2000. 9 out of 10 (430m) open defecators lived in two regions: Central and Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Between 2015 and 2020, the population with a basic hygiene service rose from 5 billion to 5.5 billion. This means that at the start of the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020, 2.3 billion worldwide still lacked a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home, and 670 million had no handwashing facility at all. Over half (369m) of the 670 million with no handwashing facility at all lived in sub-Saharan Africa.

The SDG targets aim for universal access to WASH which means access to WASH also beyond the household. Globally, 2 out of 3 schools (69% and 63%) had basic drinking water and sanitation services and 3 out of 5 schools (57%) had basic hygiene services in 2019. This means that 818 million children lacked basic handwashing facilities at their school at the start of the pandemic. In Least Developed Countries, just 1 in 2 health care facilities (50%) had basic water services, 2 out of 5 (37%) had basic sanitation services, 3 out of 4 (74%) had basic hygiene services and 1 in 3 (40%) had basic waste management services in 2019, increasing the risk of infection for people seeking medical care.

Billions of people still lacked basic hygiene services and safely managed drinking water and sanitation services in 2020.



Population using different levels of WASH services in 2000 and 2020 (each unit represents 10 million people)

Progress analysis: *See progress chart*

Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2020. Geneva: WHO. World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund; Link: https://washdata.org
- Additional sources/documents: Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in schools: Special focus on COVID-19. New York: UNICEF. United Nations Children's Fund and World Health Organization (WHO); Link: https://washdata.org
- Global progress report on WASH in Health Care Facilities: Fundamentals First. Geneva: WHO. World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund; Link: https://washdata.org

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[1] Drinking water from an improved water source which is located on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination. Improved water sources include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs and packaged or delivered water.
[2] Drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a roundtrip including queuing.
[3] Use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed in situ or transported and treated off-site. Improved sanitation facilities include flush/pour flush to piped sewer system, septic tanks or pit latrines; ventilated improved pit latrines, composting toilets or pit latrines with slabs.

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Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

Indicator 6.3.1: Proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater flows safely treated

Significant quantities of industrial and domestic wastewater are discharged without safe treatment, but large data gaps result in an unclear picture of the global situation.

Wastewater collection and treatment help protect freshwater systems, the oceans and also human health, by preventing harmful pathogens, nutrients and other types of pollution from entering the environment. When properly treated, wastewater can be used to augment freshwater in water-scarce settings.

In 2015, which has the highest data coverage for wastewater generation and treatment over the last decade, 42 countries reported on both total wastewater generated (113,178 million m3) and total wastewater treated (36,732 million m3). Only one third of the total wastewater generated by these countries received some kind of treatment, but not necessarily 'safe treatment'. 'Safe treatment' means that the wastewater undergoes secondary or better treatment, in compliance with local or national standards.

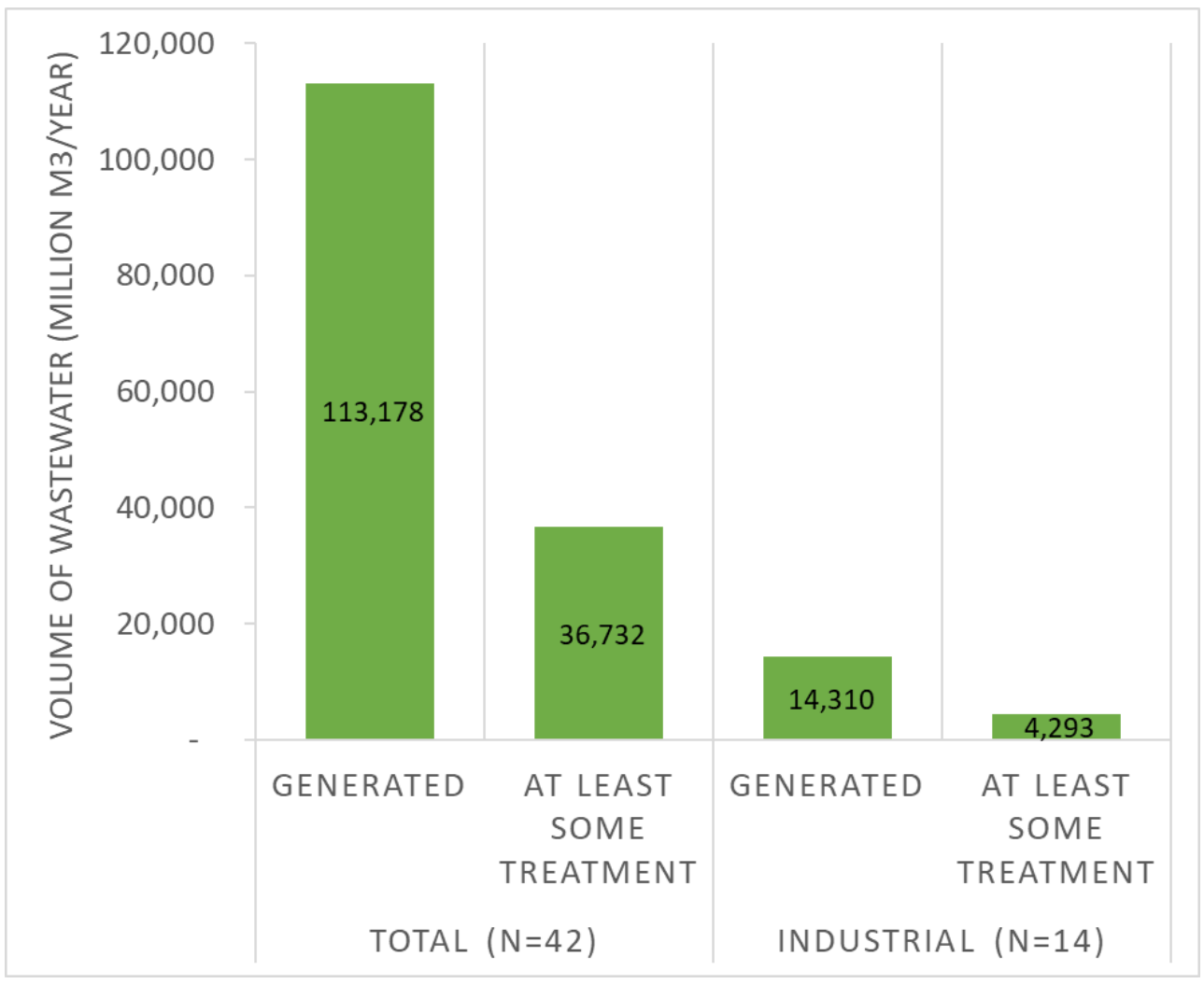
In 2015, 14 countries reported on both industrial wastewater generated (14,310 million m3) and treated (4,293 million m3): only 30 per cent of the industrial wastewater reportedly generated underwent treatment.

Based on data from 128 countries and territories, representing 80 per cent of the global population, all global households were estimated have generated 271,000 million m3 of wastewater in 2020. Of this, 56 per cent (150,000 million m3) was safely treated. An estimated 56 per cent of all household wastewater was collected at centralized wastewater treatment plants, while another 11 per cent was collected in septic tanks for on-site storage before treatment and disposal. Household wastewater not collected in wastewater treatment plants or septic tanks (33%) is not considered to be safely treated. Of the total volume of household wastewater collected in wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks, approximately 88 per cent was safely treated.

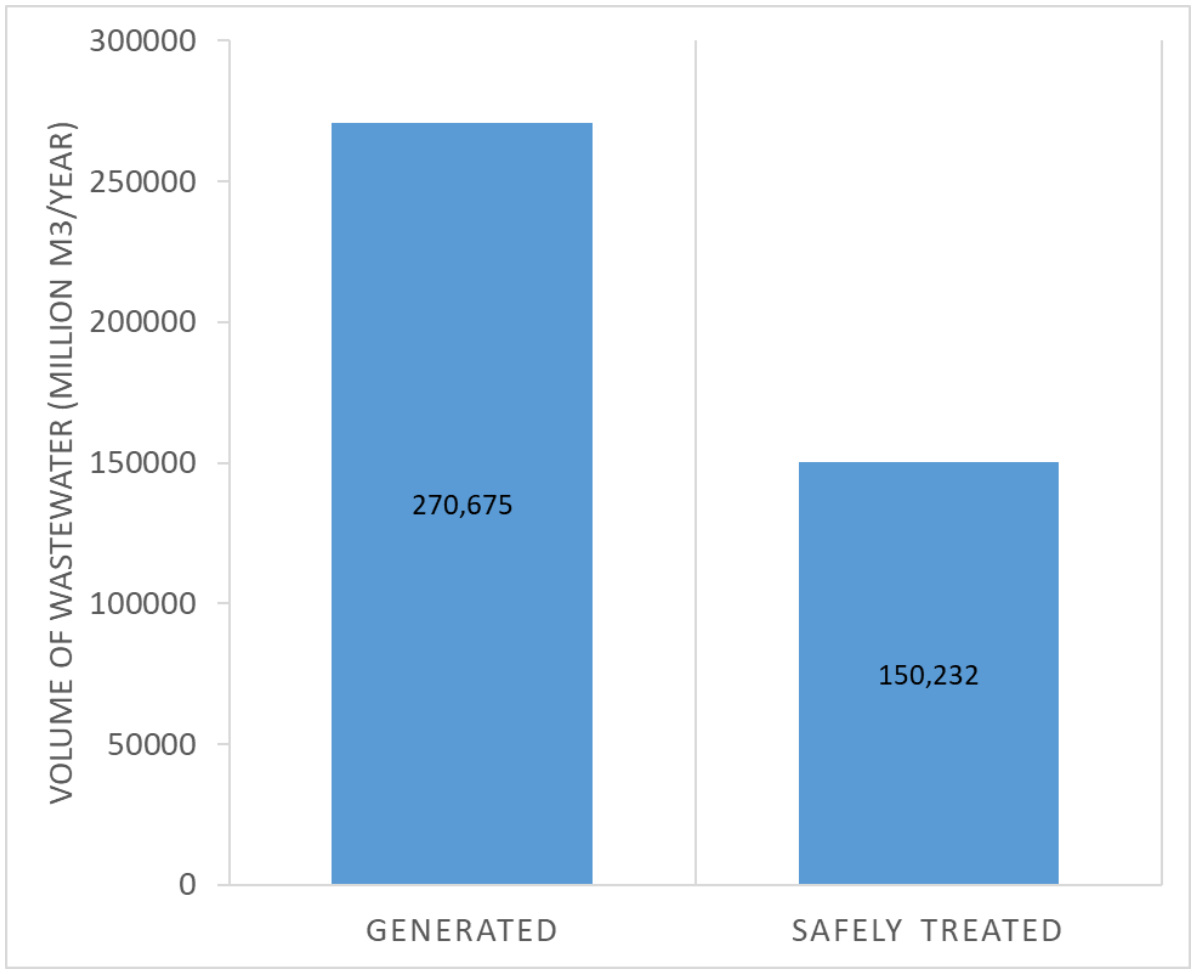
The world would benefit greatly from improved wastewater collection, in particular by increasing the proportion of wastewater contained in sewers and septic tanks, while eliminating direct discharges to water bodies. Direct discharges of untreated wastewater from sewers and septic tanks are likely to be significantly underreported, as these are not commonly measured and may be more prevalent among the 107 countries and territories (typically lower income) where safely treated household wastewater could not be estimated due to a lack of data. More rigorous national-level monitoring and reporting programmes are essential in almost all regions.

Robust monitoring of wastewater quality and quantity supports the development of policies and plans and resource allocation, including sustainable financing. This data can greatly assist the common challenges faced when deciding on on-site or off-site collection and treatment, and the corresponding capital and operation costs. Additionally, wastewater monitoring could promise effective tracking of disease epidemics. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, information about the number of people infected with COVID-19 in a community is essential for managing the response to the pandemic, supporting appropriate public health measures and assessing their success. However, monitoring large portions of the population is challenging, especially in places without the resources or infrastructure to carry out coordinated testing programmes. Analysing wastewater for evidence of COVID-19 in human excreta is a useful tool in managing public health during the pandemic. Indeed, this type of wastewater-based epidemiology has been used for decades to support interventions.

Reported Total and industrial flows of wastewater generated and treated in 2015



GLOBAL ESTIMATES OF domestic (Household) WASTEWATER flows generated and treated in 2020



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Indicator 6.3.2: Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

Countries with robust monitoring systems are improving their environmental water quality

In all world regions many water bodies are still in good condition. 60 per cent of water bodies assessed in 89 countries have good ambient water quality. Protection is easier than restoration, so efforts to protect these water bodies from pollution must be initiated now.

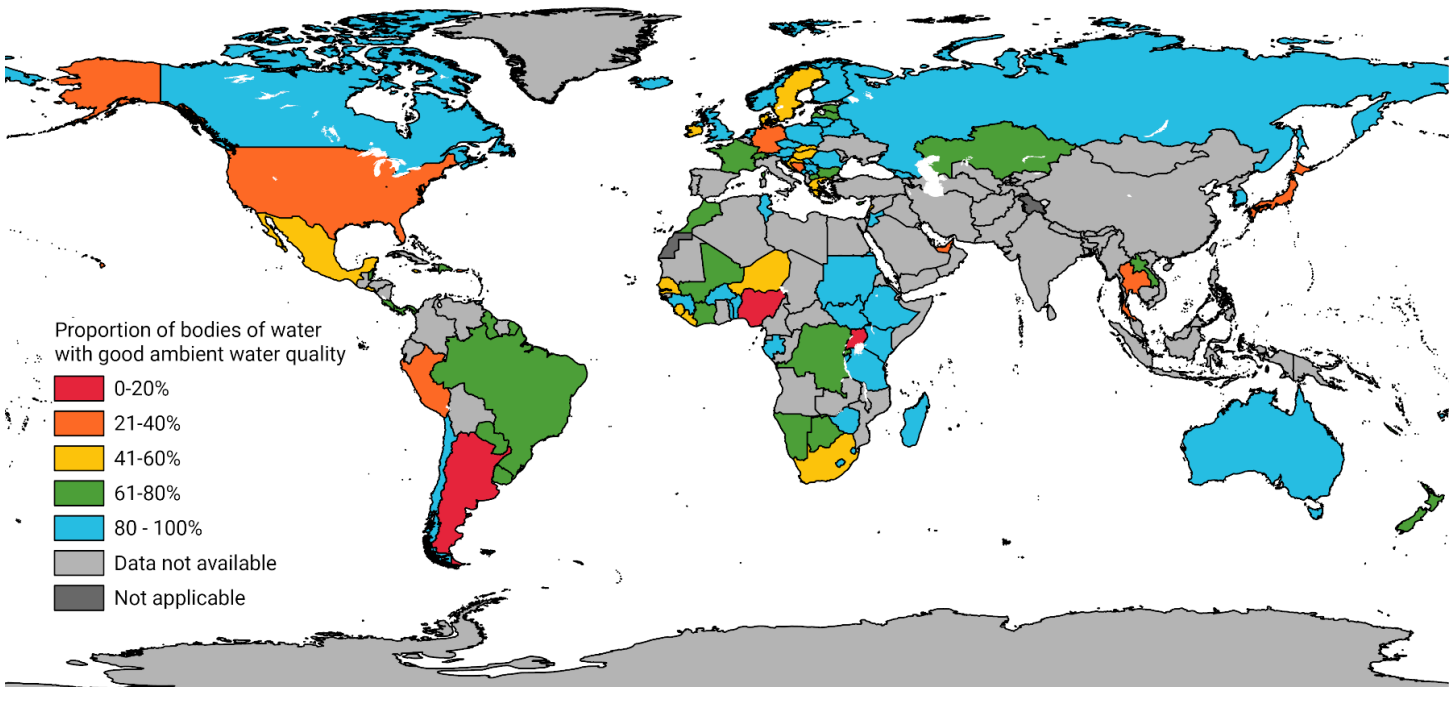
The data shows positive trends for countries with robust monitoring systems. 39 per cent of countries reporting in both 2017 and 2020 are on track to improve water quality, which supports the concept that monitoring is a prerequisite for positive management action. At the same time, a lack of water quality data means that the health of many freshwater ecosystems is unknown and over 3 billion people are at risk . Data on water quality from developing countries lacked detail, with the indicator calculated using relatively few measurements and without suitable environmental water quality standards.

There also is a lack of groundwater data. Only around 60 per cent of reporting countries included information about groundwater, which is problematic because groundwater often represents the largest share of freshwater in a country. Understanding of the hydrogeological environment, the pressures on these resources and how to monitor them effectively is lacking in many countries.

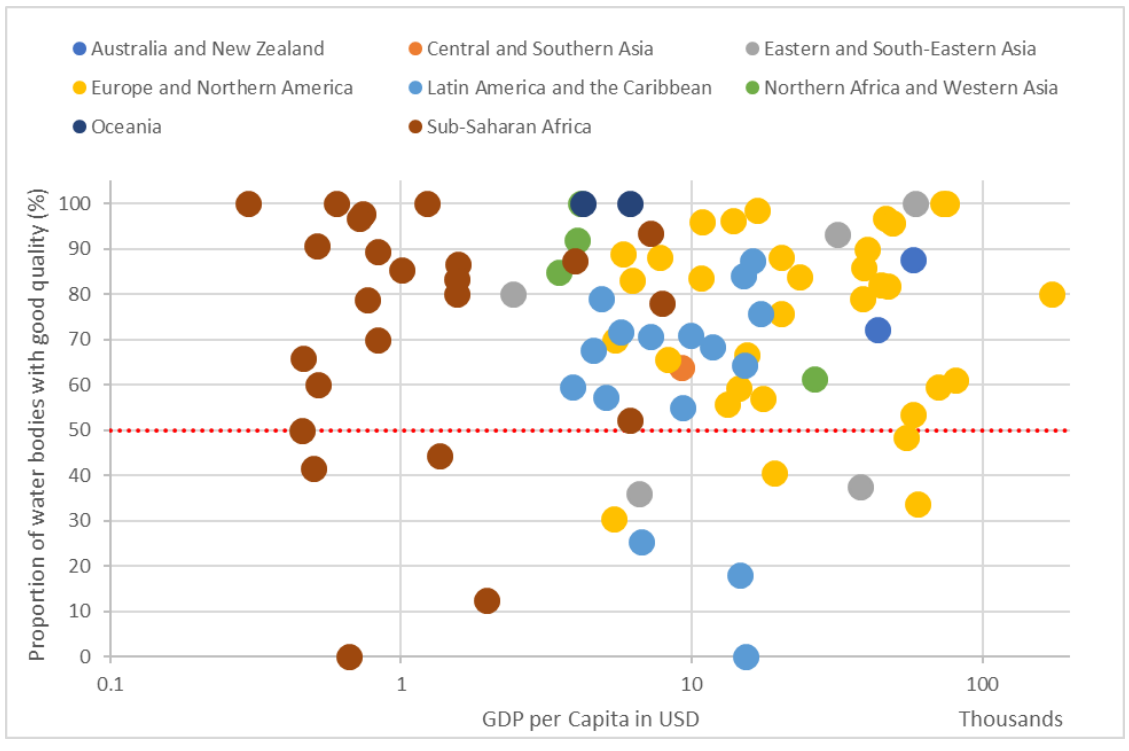
Agriculture and untreated wastewater pose two of the greatest threats to environmental water quality globally and release excess nutrients into rivers, lakes and aquifers which damage ecosystem function. Measurements of nitrogen and phosphorus failed to meet their targets more often than the other water quality parameters of the indicator. Acceleration is needed to enhance farming management practices and improve wastewater treatment rates to protect freshwater quality, especially in regions with high population growth such as in Africa.

Whether the majority of water bodies in a country were reported as being of “good” or “not good” quality was unrelated to the country’s gross domestic product, with low, middle and high income countries reporting both situations. The drivers of poor water quality are likely to be different in poor and rich countries and therefore will require specific management actions. Nevertheless, actions are required in all countries to protect water bodies and improve water quality. As a first step towards accelerated policy action, capacity building and investments are needed in all regions to expand country monitoring networks and establish national water quality standards.

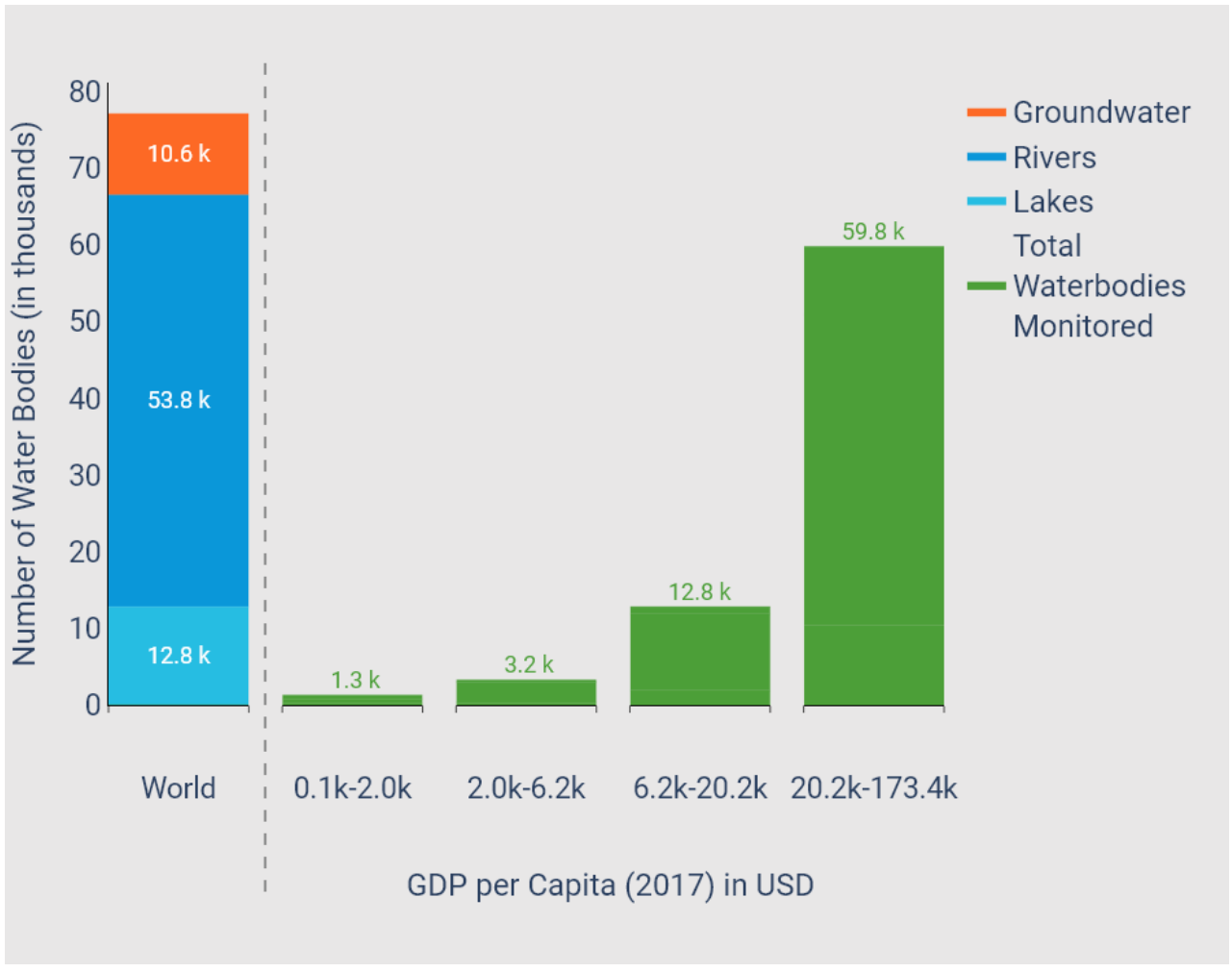
Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality, 2017-2020. In 63 out of 89 reporting countries, 60 per cent or more of water bodies have good quality.



Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality in countries, compared to their gross domestic product per capita (2017-2020); each dot represents a country. The reported water quality situation is not related to GDP.



Monitoring effort of countries expressed as the number of water bodies by water body type partitioned by GDP quartiles. Countries with a low GDP reported on far fewer water bodies than richer countries. The richest 24 accounts for over three quarters of the available information reported for this indicator whereas the poorest 20, accounted for less than 2 per cent.



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- Country Story: Sierra Leone and Capacity Development: https://communities.unep.org/download/attachments/32407814/Case%20Study_Sierra%20Leone_20210201.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1614090533539&api=v2
- Country Story: Australia Flat, Dry and Salty. Implementation of SDG Indicator 6.3.2: https://communities.unep.org/display/sdg632/Documents+and+Materials?preview=/32407814/53411853/Case%20Study_Australia_Long Version_20210324.pdf
- miniSASS – Citizen Biomonitoring for Indicator 6.3.2: https://communities.unep.org/display/sdg632/Documents+and+Materials?preview=/32407814/53411852/Case%20Study_miniSASS_short_20210317.pdf
- Country Story: Liberia and Innovative Data Sources: https://communities.unep.org/download/attachments/32407814/Case%20Study_Liberia_20210128.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1614090578668&api=v2
- 6.3.2 Support Platform: https://communities.unep.org/display/sdg632

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Target 6.4: By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

Indicator 6.4.1: Change in water-use efficiency over time

Improving water use efficiency (WUE) is a key measure to save water and, if coupled with a reduction of total water withdrawals, to reduce water stress. Indicator 6.4.1 tracks the change in water-use efficiency over time, measured as the ratio of dollar value added to the volume of water used.

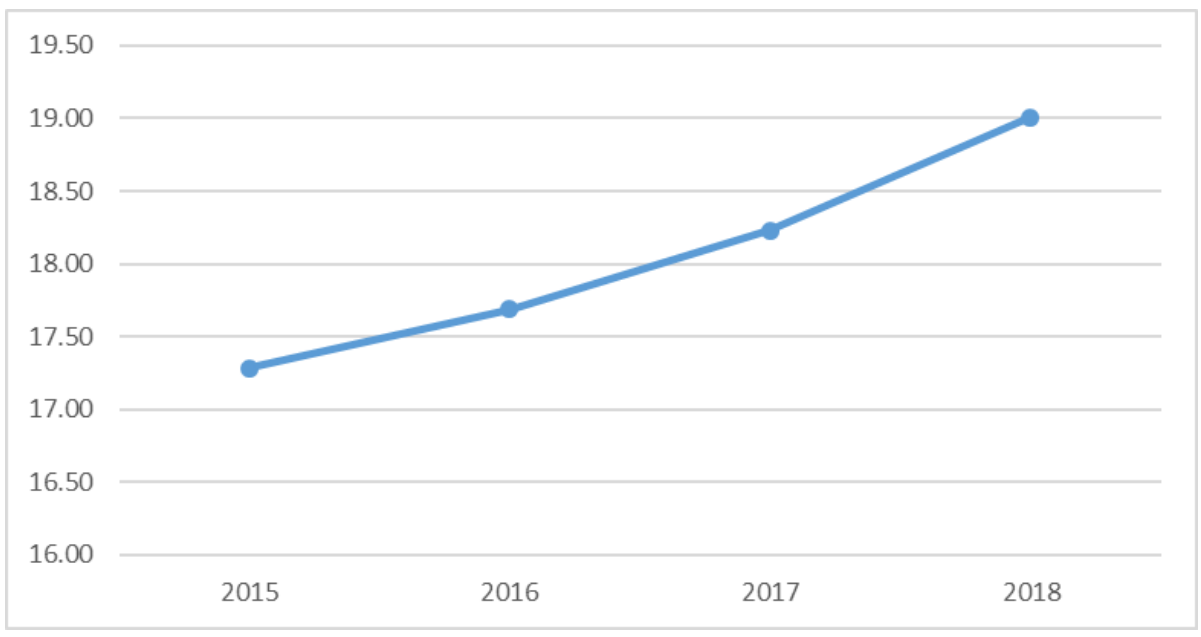
Increasing the efficiency in the use of water over time suggests a decoupling of economic growth from water-use across the main economic sectors – agriculture, industry and services.

Water use efficiency rose from 17.3 USD/m3 in 2015 to 19.0 USD/m3 in 2018 worldwide, which represents a 10 per cent efficiency increase. The proportion of countries generating more than 20 USD/m3 increased slightly from 42 per cent in 2015 to 45 per cent in 2018.

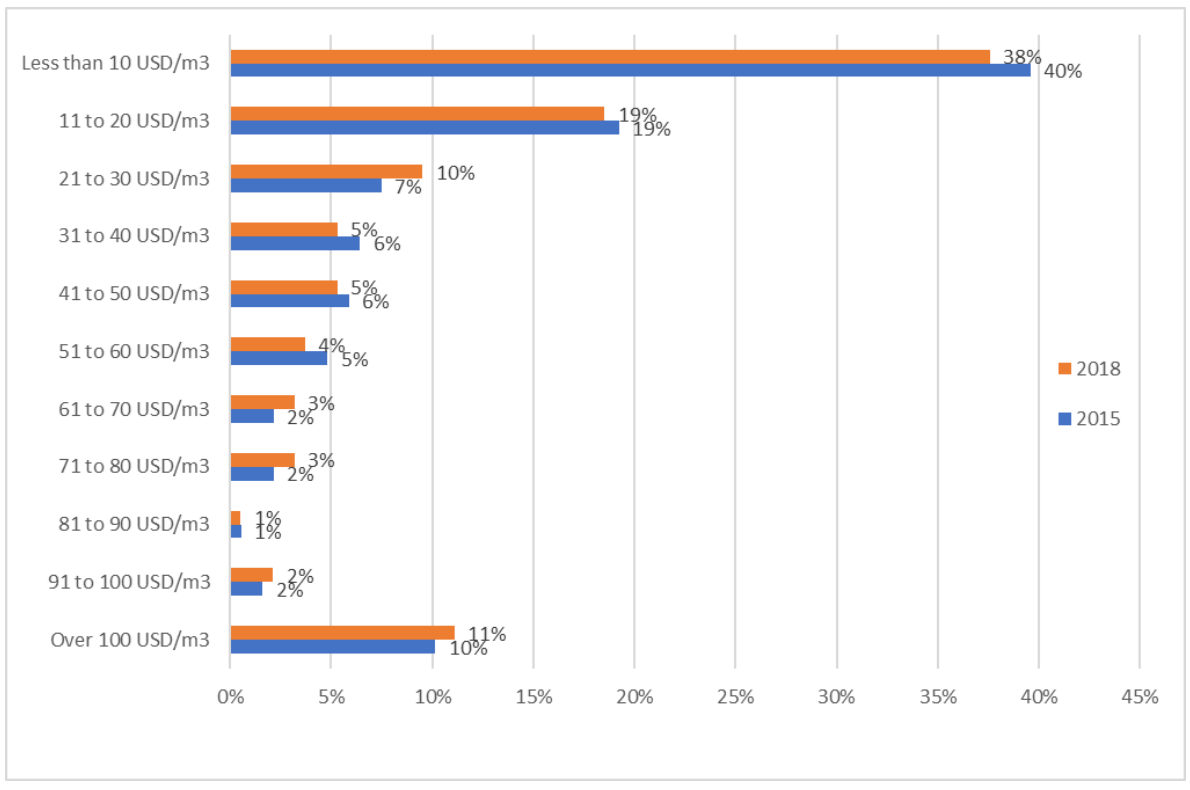
All economic sectors have seen an increase in their WUE since 2015. In 2018, the industry sector had a water use efficiency equivalent to 32 USD/m3, the services sector 112 USD/m3 and the agriculture sector 0.60 USD/m3. Compared to 2015, this represents an in increase by 15 per cent in the industry sector, 8 per cent in the services sector and 8 per cent in agriculture.

Increasing agricultural water productivity, (quantity or value of output in relation to the quantity of water consumed) is a key intervention for improving water use efficiency, particularly in agricultural-reliant countries. This could be achieved e.g. through new crop varieties, efficient irrigation systems and improved rain-fed cultivation. Other important strategies to increase the overall water efficiency include the reduction in water losses, such as by tackling leakages in municipal distribution networks and the optimization of industrial and energy cooling processes.

World water use efficiency: 2015 - 2018



WUE, by USD/m3 range (% of countries)



Progress analysis: 6.4.1_progress analysis.zip

Custodian agency(ies):

FAO

Indicator 6.4.2: Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources

Water stress affects countries on every continent. When a territory withdraws 25 per cent or more of its renewable freshwater resources, it is said to be 'water-stressed'. In 2018, 2.3 billion people lived in water-stressed countries, of which 721 million lived in high and critically water-stressed countries.

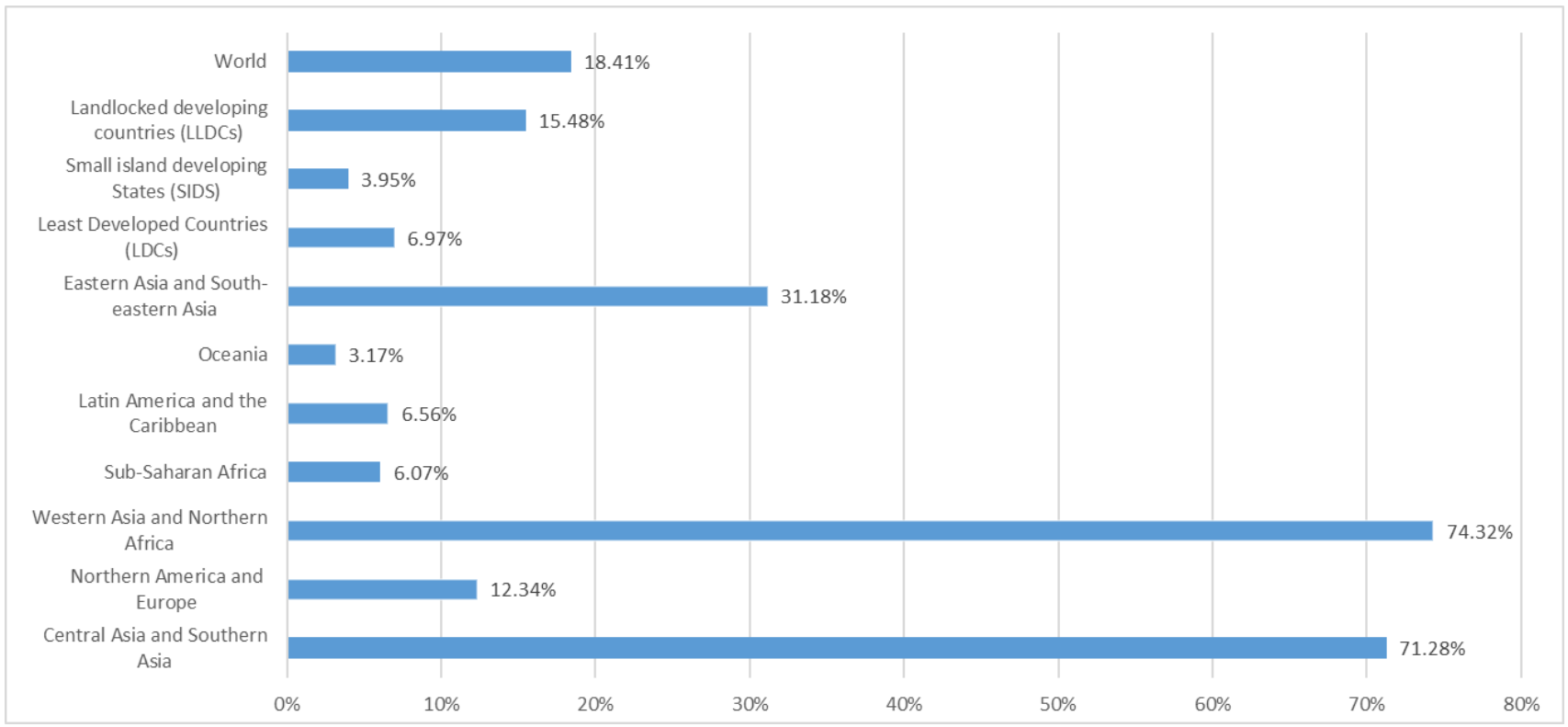
High water stress, which tends to disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged people, has many undesirable consequences, including hindering the sustainability of natural resources and hampering economic and social development.

At the global level, water stress has increased since the year 2015, reaching a maximum of 18.4% in both 2017 and 2018, which marks a relative slowdown of that progress. This value is nonetheless still assessed as a "no stress" zone.

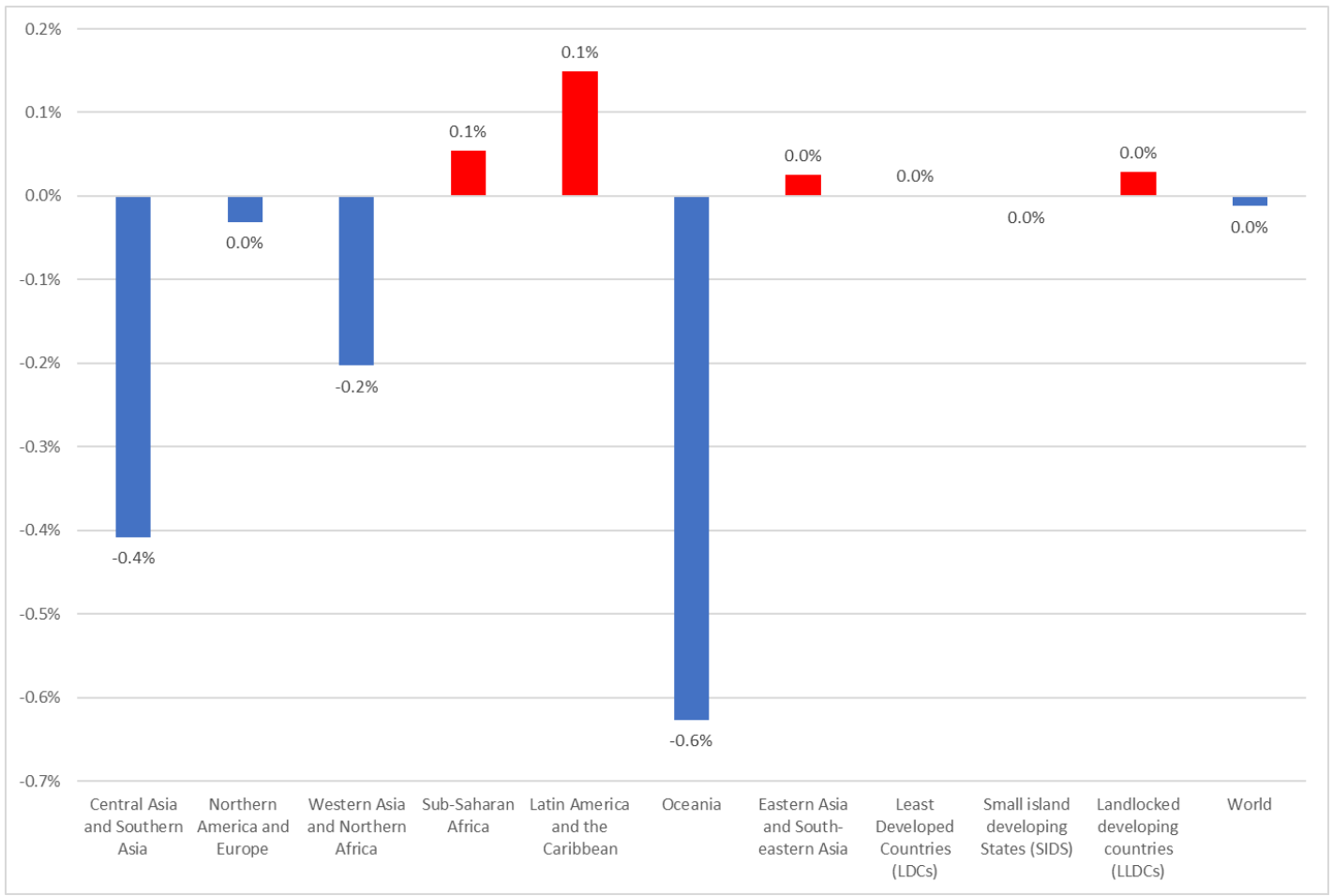
However, the global value hides large regional variations. Some regions such as Western Asia and Northern Africa, and Central and Southern Asia present very high levels of water stress (more than 70 per cent); and water stress in Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa has been on the rise. Conversely, since 2015 two regions have decreased their water stress, Northern America and Europe, and Oceania.

It is urgent that concrete measures are taken to save water and increase water use efficiency, particularly in those regions that still have a high to critical level of water stress (above 75 per cent) or are close to that threshold.

Level of Water Stress 2018



Water Stress Difference 2017-2018



Custodian agency(ies):

FAO

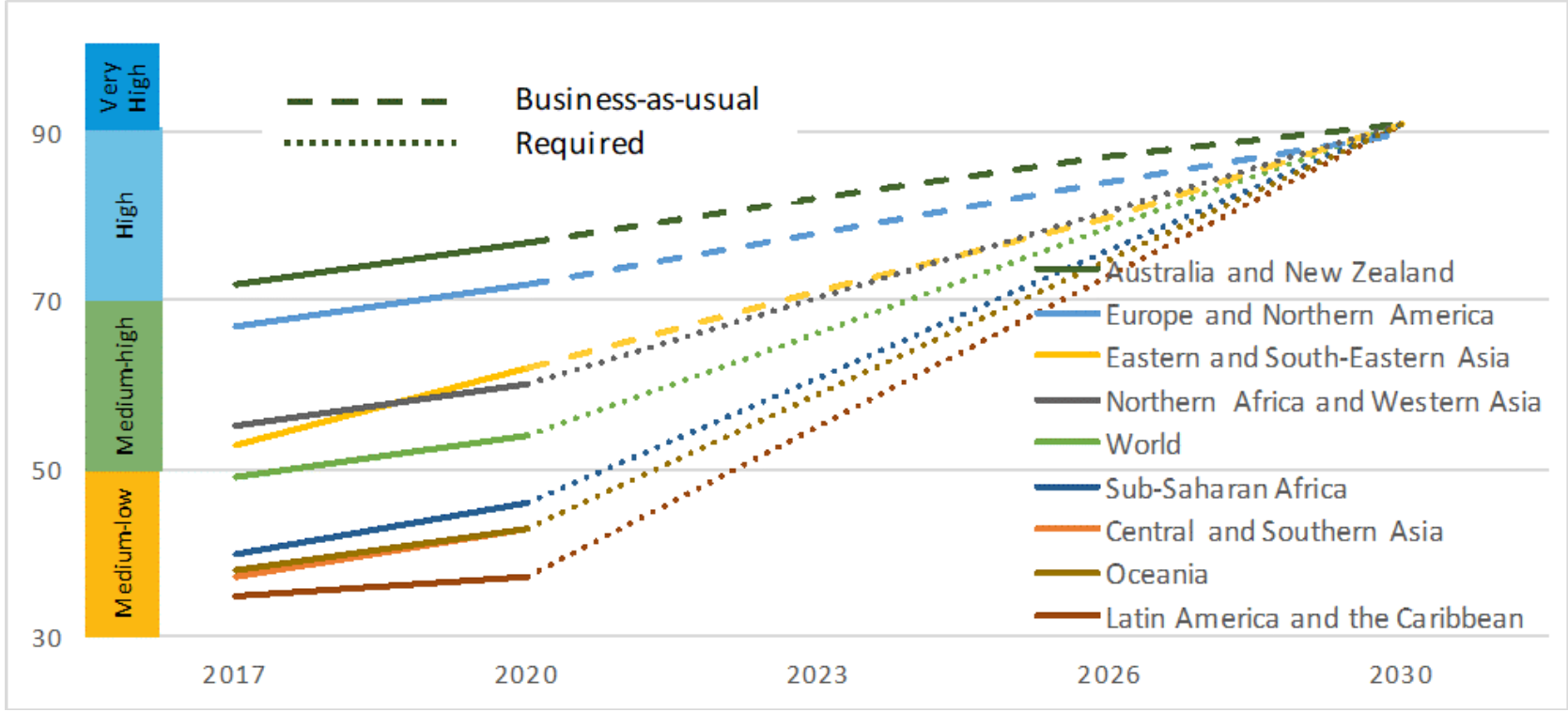
Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

Indicator 6.5.1: Degree of integrated water resources management

Failure to accelerate sustainable water management seriously threatens countries' ability to achieve social, economic and environmental targets

Sustainable, integrated water resources management (IWRM) is vital for long-term social, economic and environmental well-being – the three pillars of the 2030 Agenda – and helps to balance competing water demands from across society and the economy. Many countries have strengthened water laws, developed policies, and reinforced institutions, putting them in a position to scale up implementation, and supporting progress towards many other SDG targets. However, implementation efforts must intensify, particularly in the 87 countries with lower IWRM implementation. Many of these countries are rapidly developing, and can be found in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, Central and Southern Asia, and Africa. Globally, the rate of implementation needs to double, and 129 countries are not on track to hit the target. Regionally, only Australia and New Zealand, Europe and Northern America, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia appear on track. To implement IWRM at all levels by 2030, countries must build on their multi-stakeholder monitoring processes to understand main barriers and identify priority action areas to accelerate progress. In many countries, COVID-19 has actually led to wider stakeholder engagement in water resources management through online consultations. Some of the most common priority areas include: establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for IWRM activities, and improving management and monitoring of basins and aquifers following hydrological – rather than administrative – boundaries.

Current rate of implementation of integrated water resources management (2017-2020) and required rates (2020-2030) to meet the global target (percentage and implementation categories)



Progress analysis: 6.5.1_progress analysis.zip

Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- All baseline reports, country summaries, and results, available through the IWRM data portal: http://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/.

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Indicator 6.5.2: Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation

A significant effort is needed to accelerate progress towards having all transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers covered by operational arrangements by 2030, and demonstrate the wider benefits of transboundary water cooperation in support of achieving the SDGs

153 countries share rivers, lakes and aquifers. However, many of these waters lack the necessary cooperation arrangements to advance the SDGs. Cooperation is essential to ensure water and sanitation for all (SDG6) in a transboundary basin. Progress on transboundary water cooperation can also support other SDGs. It can be an important catalyst for supporting wider regional integration, peace and security (SDG16). For example, some joint bodies, such as the Lake Chad Basin Commission, have a critical role in maintaining regional security and show a capacity to overcome potential challenges; and in several basins, such as Ganges, Indus, Mekong and Senegal, basin organizations have contributed to conflict resolution and reconciliation. Arrangements for transboundary water cooperation can also facilitate climate change adaptation, including increased resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, as demonstrated by the countries sharing the North-Western Sahara Aquifer System (SDG 13). Reaching renewable energy targets to achieve SDG7 will require significant amounts of water, a large portion of which is contained in transboundary basins. Cooperation for the sharing of these resources will be essential for the goal of achieving energy for all. Also, there is a strong link between water cooperation and health (SDG3). The timely and sufficient availability of water of adequate quality within transboundary basins is a prerequisite for the provision of safe water, sanitation and adequate hygiene, which in turn is critical to tackling COVID-19. Thus, considering the large number of countries sharing transboundary basins it is necessary to support the acceleration of dialogues and better coordination between countries.

Despite the fact that transboundary water cooperation contributes to water security and regional stability, only 24 countries have all their transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers covered by operational arrangements and only an additional 22 countries have more than 70 per cent of their waters covered by an operational arrangement for water cooperation[4]. Europe, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa show the greatest coverage of operational arrangements for their transboundary basins. Whereas in other regions ensuring operational arrangements cover all basins by 2030 will require a major acceleration in effort.

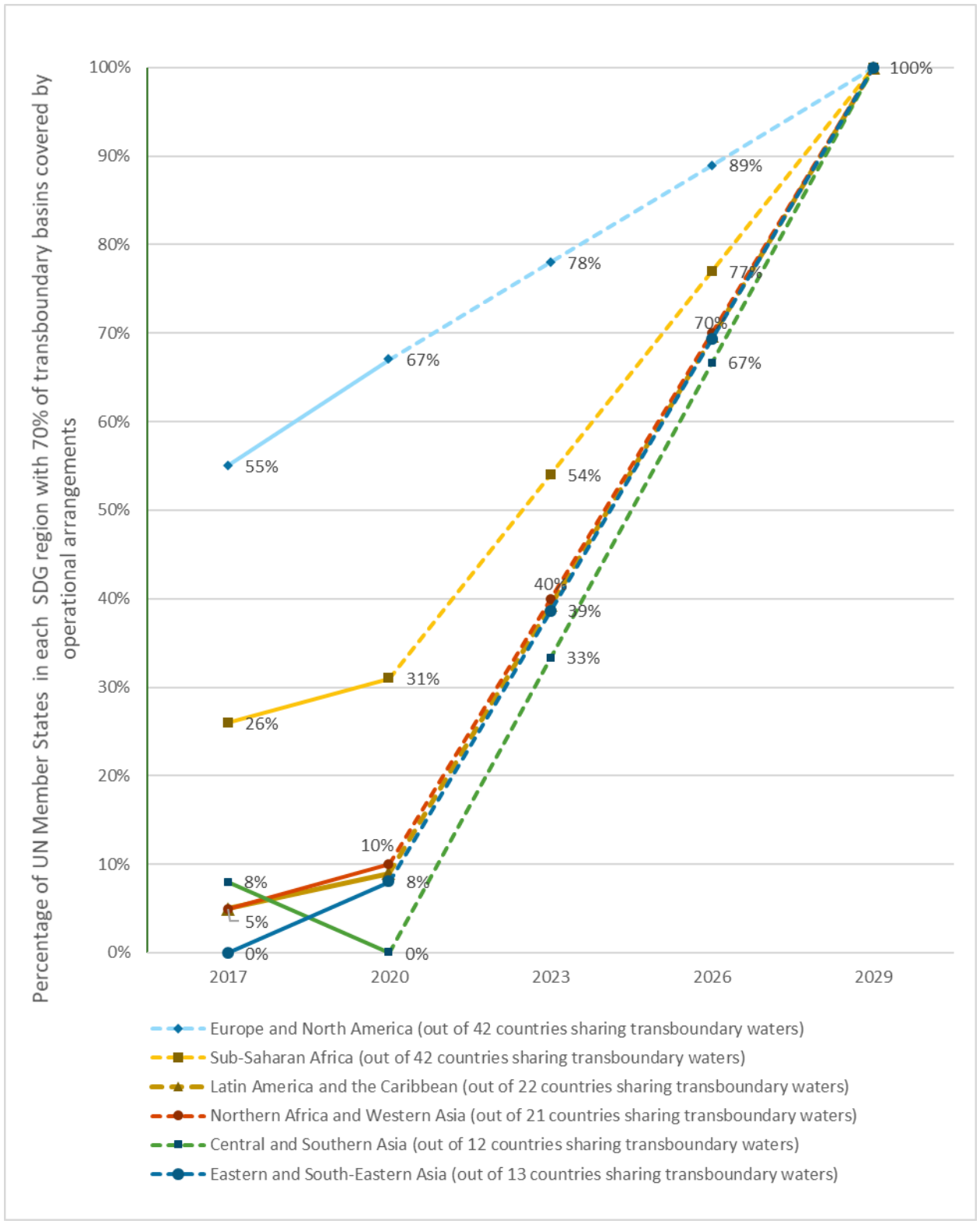
Some positive signs of progress are evident. In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 80 per cent of countries sharing transboundary waters submitted data on transboundary water cooperation, compared with 70 per cent in 2017. This marks an important step forward in monitoring progress on transboundary water cooperation at the global level. Countries that have few or no operational arrangements in place showed a stronger engagement in the second phase of the monitoring of the 6.5.2 indicator. This has in some instances resulted in a more accurate evaluation of the indicator values compared to 2017.

The inclusion in the SDG indicator framework of an indicator related to transboundary water cooperation, together with the SDG6 data gathering process, has in itself already offered an unprecedented opportunity to raise awareness and start to address data gaps, particular in relation to transboundary aquifers, while also identifying further priorities for capacity development. Some countries have taken steps following the first reporting exercise to adopt arrangements and numerous countries are currently negotiating arrangements.

A significant effort is needed to accelerate progress towards having all transboundary waters covered by operational arrangements by 2030. In turn, such progress offers a critical enabler of water for all and plays a catalytic role across many SDGs. Where operational arrangements are lacking, identifying and advancing key factors of operationality, such as holding regular meetings and exchanging data between countries, can result in ‘quick wins’ that accelerate target achievement.

Proportion of UN Member States per SDG region with at least 70% of all transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements for transboundary water cooperation, 2017-2020 and required progress to have high level of cooperation by 2030 (percentage)

[4] Based on 2017 and 2020 data from 101 countries where indicator 6.5.2 value can be calculated.



Note: Chart based on data provided by 101 UN Member States for which the 2017-2020 indicator values are available. As of 1 March 2021, 28 countries in Europe and North America, 13 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Northern Africa and Western Asia each, and 1 country in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia have 70% of their transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements, with none meeting this threshold in Central and Southern Asia.

Progress analysis: 6.5.2_progress analysis.zip

Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- UN-Water SDG6 monitoring: https://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicator-652
- UN-Water SDG6 data portal: https://www.sdg6data.org/indicator/6.5.2
- UNECE SDG 6.5.2 webpage: http://www.unece.org/water/transboundary_water_cooperation_reporting.html

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Target 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

Indicator 6.6.1: Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time

Freshwater ecosystems, and the multitude of goods and services they provide, are changing dramatically in over a fifth of the world's river basins

Many large lakes, serving millions of people, contain very cloudy water, and wetland ecosystems are experiencing a substantial and perpetual loss undermining national progress towards targets on water, climate and land. Freshwater ecosystems including marshes, swamps, peatlands, lakes and rivers sustain humanity and nature. They support our social and economic development through multiple services. They are the source of most of the water we need for consumption, and for growing our food in fisheries, aquaculture, and crop irrigation. They provide services worth around 47 trillion USD a year. Nearly 80 per cent of wetlands have been lost since the pre-industrial era and those remaining are now disappearing three times faster than forests.

Earth observations are used to monitor changes to surface water bodies, such as lakes, large rivers, inland and coastal wetlands, reservoirs, and lake water quality. Knowing if and why changes in the extent of water-related ecosystems are occurring is important for water managers to ensure that freshwater ecosystem services continue to be provided. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems will mitigate and strengthen resilience to climate change, for instance, wetlands trap carbon from the atmosphere and protect coastal areas from storm surges and inland areas from both floods and droughts by retaining water.

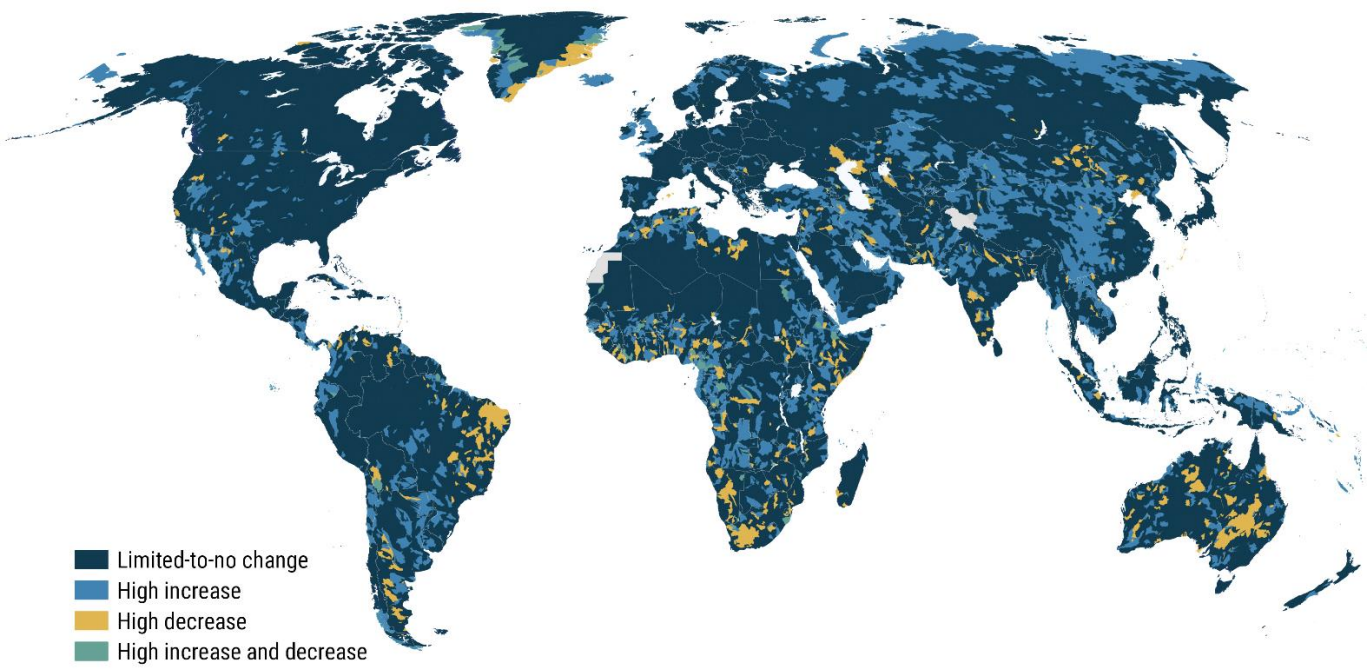
The changes tracked in the area of freshwater within river basins reveal that over a fifth of the world's basins have recently experienced either rapid increases or decreases in their surface water area.

Globally, lake water quality is poor. An assessment of 10 per cent of the world's large lakes show that at least 21 million people, including 5 million children, live within a 5 km radius of lakes with high turbidity (water cloudiness). High turbidity can indicate water pollution and therefore can adversely impact human and ecosystem health. Of the 2,300 large lakes assessed[5] nearly a quarter of them recorded high to extreme turbidity readings in 2019. The world is also witnessing a steady loss of coastal and inland wetlands. More than 80 per cent of wetlands are estimated to have been lost since the pre-industrial era. The area covered by coastal mangroves has declined globally by 4.2 per cent since 1996. Given the massive loss of all types of water-related ecosystems over the last centuries, together with the rapid changes seen over the last decade, countries need to act now. Existing efforts to protect and restore water-related ecosystems must be urgently scaled up and accelerated.

The Global Wetlands Outlook produced by the Ramsar Convention in 2018 found that global inland and coastal wetlands cover over 12.1 million km2, an area almost as large as Greenland. However, natural wetlands are in long-term decline around the world; between 1970 and 2015, inland and marine/coastal wetlands both declined by approximately 35 per cent, three times the rate of forest loss.

Although data on the extent, distribution and trends of wetland types are still incomplete, Contracting Parties started reporting national data in 2018, followed by reports in 2021, thus providing nationally validated data to SDG 6.6.1 that will be updated every 3 years. 150 CPs provided data in their National Reports in 2018 showing the following preliminary data and change between reports in 2018 and 2021: global wetland extent of inland wetlands (natural surface and human made wetlands) drawing on information from 150 National Reports to the Convention to Indicator 6.6.1 in the period 2015-2018 cover over 4.2 million Km2 and in the period 2018-2021, cover 6. 3 million Km2 (Figure 4). Around 88.8 per centare inland wetlands (natural surface) and 11.12 per cent human made wetlands. The largest areas of inland wetlands (natural surface and human made wetlands) are according to the SDG regional grouping in the developing regions, 63 per cent (of the global area), inland wetlands (natural surface) in the Americas 51 percent, and human made wetlands in Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia 9 per cent.

Rapid changes in freshwater ecosystem services

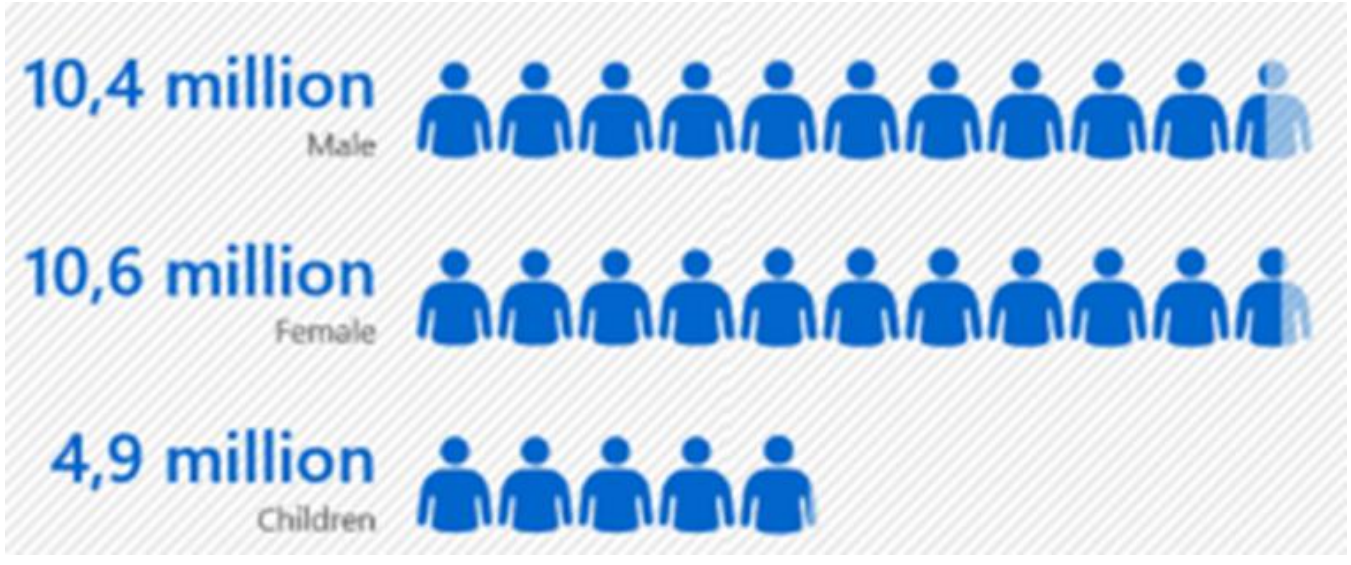


River basins experiencing either high increase or decrease in area of surface water within the last five years (2015-2019) compared to 2000-2019. Areas observed with high increases correspond to a growth in reservoirs and inundated/flooded land areas, while decreasing surface water areas correspond with known drought

[5] The estimated total number of large lakes (10-100 km2) is 23,839. Source: Verpoorter, C., T. Kutser, D. A. Seekell, and L. J. Tranvik (2014), A global inventory of lakes based on high-resolution satellite imagery, Geophys. Res. Lett., 41, doi:10.1002/2014GL060641.

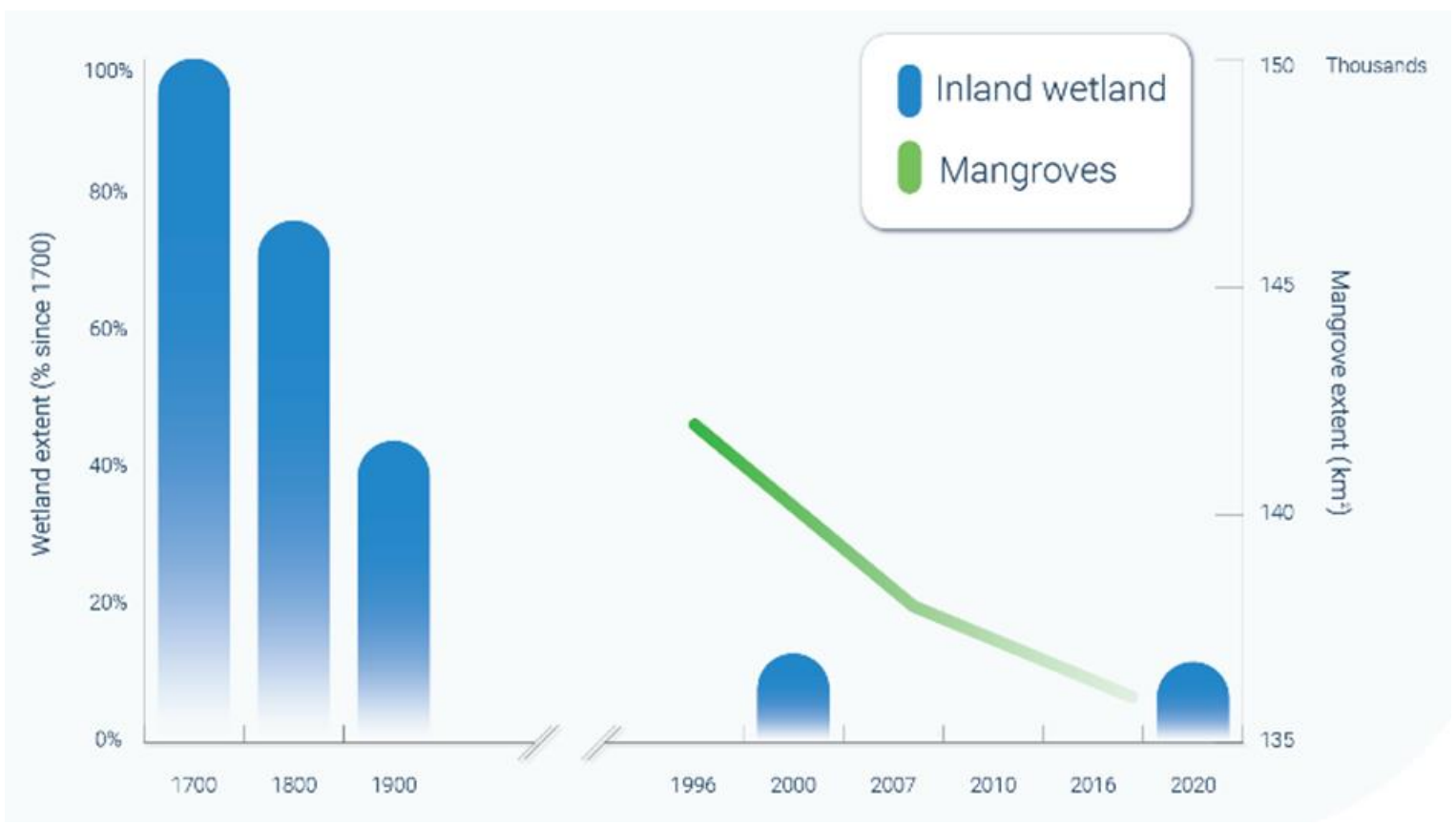
locations. The observed surface water changes may also be indicative of climate change accelerating the drying out of lakes in arid regions and the expansion of lakes from increased glacial melting and increased rainfall.

Number of people living within a 5 km radius of lakes with high turbidity.

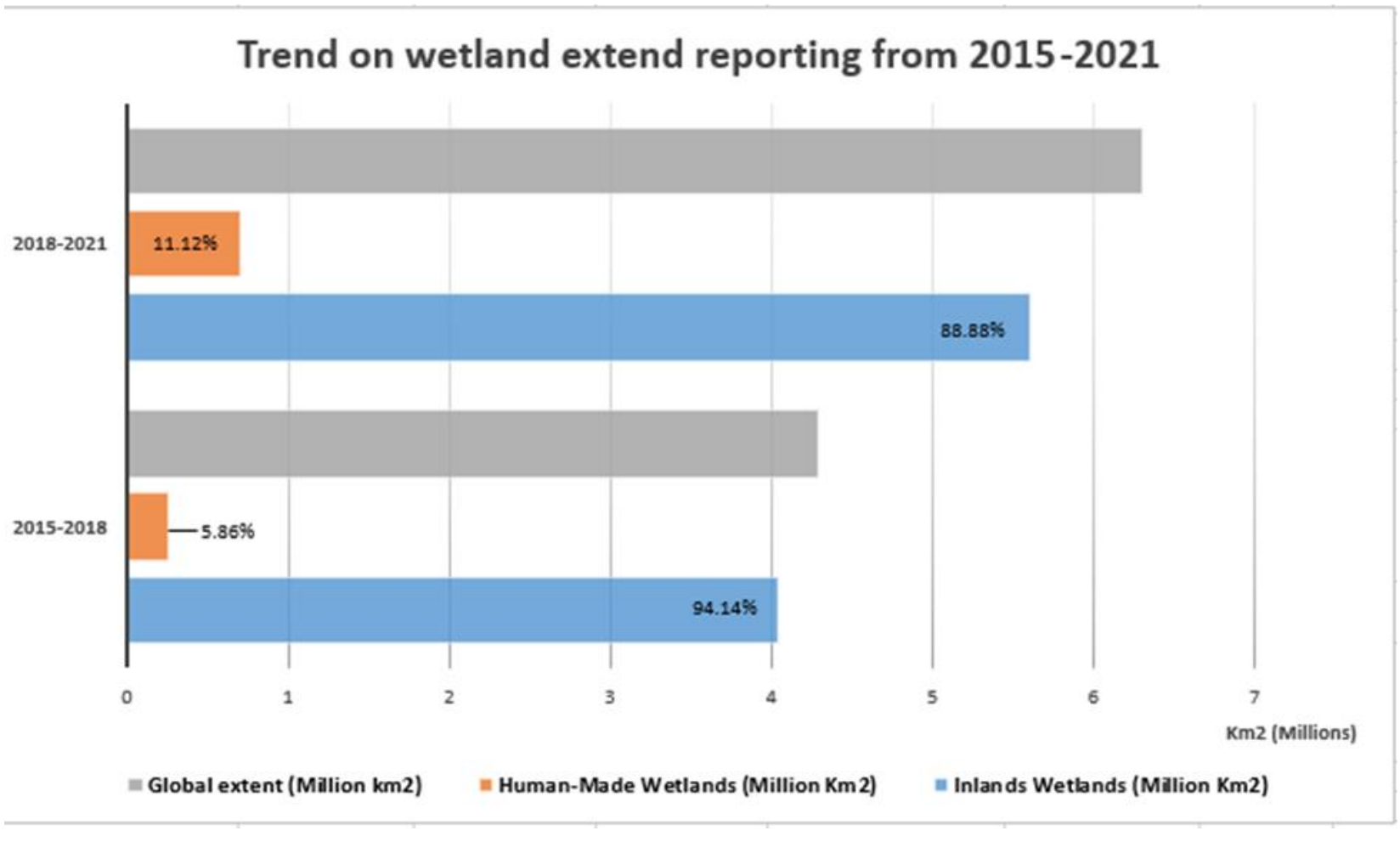


Source population distribution data: www.worldpop.org

Change in global area of wetlands (% change compared to 1700) and mangroves (km2)



Trend on inland wetlands (natural surface and human made) 2015.2021 reported under the Convention on Wetlands in the period 2018-2021



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- The Freshwater Ecosystems Explorer is a free and easy to use data platform providing accurate, up-to-date, high-resolution geospatial data depicting the extent freshwater ecosystems change over time. By helping decision-makers understand dynamic ecosystem changes, the data presented on this open access platform is intended to drive action to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems and enable countries to track progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 6.6. Data can be visualized and downloaded at national, sub-national and river basin levels. Data is available on Permanent and Seasonal Surface Water; Reservoirs; Wetlands; Mangroves and Lake Water Quality.
- Under the UN initiative to undertake voluntary actions to accelerate implementation against the SDGs, the Secretariat registered the Convention on Wetlands Acceleration Action "Wetland inventories to support Contracting Parties to achieve Indicator 6.6.1" under SDG 6 "Water and Sanitation" on the Acceleration Actions page of the SDGs Knowledge Platform[6]. As part of the Acceleration Action, the Secretariat prepared and launched a new toolkit for National Wetlands Inventories and undertook training sessions for Contracting Parties https://www.ramsar.org/news/a-new-toolkit-for-national-wetlands-inventories.

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[6] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgactions

Target 6.a: By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

Indicator 6.a.1: Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan

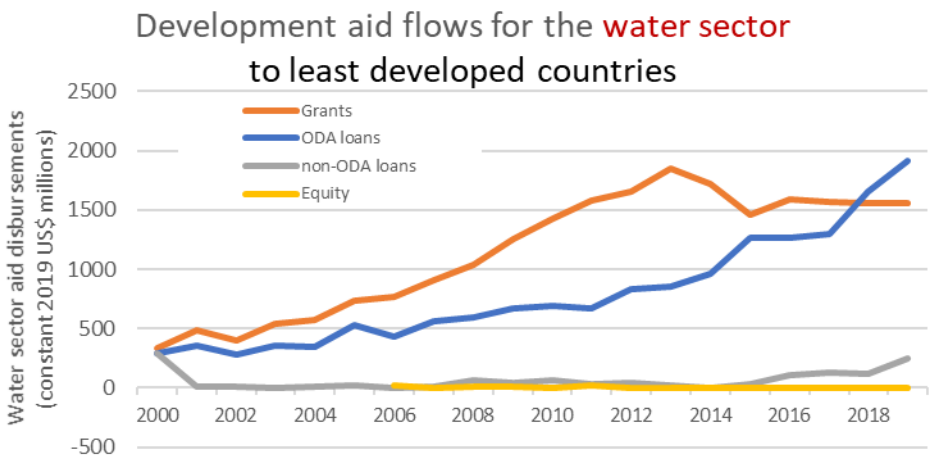
Concessional lending is increasing faster than grants for least developed countries

From 2015 to 2019, official development assistance (ODA) disbursements to the water sector stayed stable on US$ 8.8 billion. Most water sector ODA goes to drinking water and sanitation: disbursements specifically for drinking water and sanitation comprised 62 per cent of total water sector ODA in 2019 (US$ 5.5 billion). Sub-Saharan Africa received the largest share of disbursements of any SDG region (35 per cent) and show an increasing trend: disbursements to the region increased from US$ 2.8 billion in 2015 to US$ 3.1 billion in 2019 (in constant 2019 US$ million), including an increase of 58 per cent in aid to large water and sanitation systems and a 4 per cent increase in aid for water sector policy and administrative management.

ODA commitments to the water sector rose 9 per cent from 2015 to 2019. For least developed countries, where the need for development assistance is greatest, more and more ODA is disbursed as concessional loans rather than grants: concessional lending increased by 52 per cent from 2015 to 2019 (to US$ 2.0 billion), while ODA grants have increased only 7 per cent during the same time period and have generally stagnated since 2012. While there has been a trend toward increasing concessional loans compared to grants across all countries, loan repayment for low income countries may pose a higher burden and risk if institutions are weak and measures for cost recovery are not in place in these countries.

In 2016, the gap between ODA funds committed and those disbursed for the water sector had narrowed to US$ 80million. In 2019, this gap had grown to over US$ 2.5 billion. Several factors can influence the lag in disbursements including 1) limited capacity to disburse or absorb aid funding, 2) procedural complexities for aid disbursements or procurement, and/or 3) the length of time to carry out infrastructure-related, multi-year commitments.

Development aid flows for the water sector in least developed countries, 2000-2019. Grants and ODA loans count as ODA. In recent years, more and more ODA is disbursed as loans.



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1

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Target 6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Indicator 6.b.1: Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

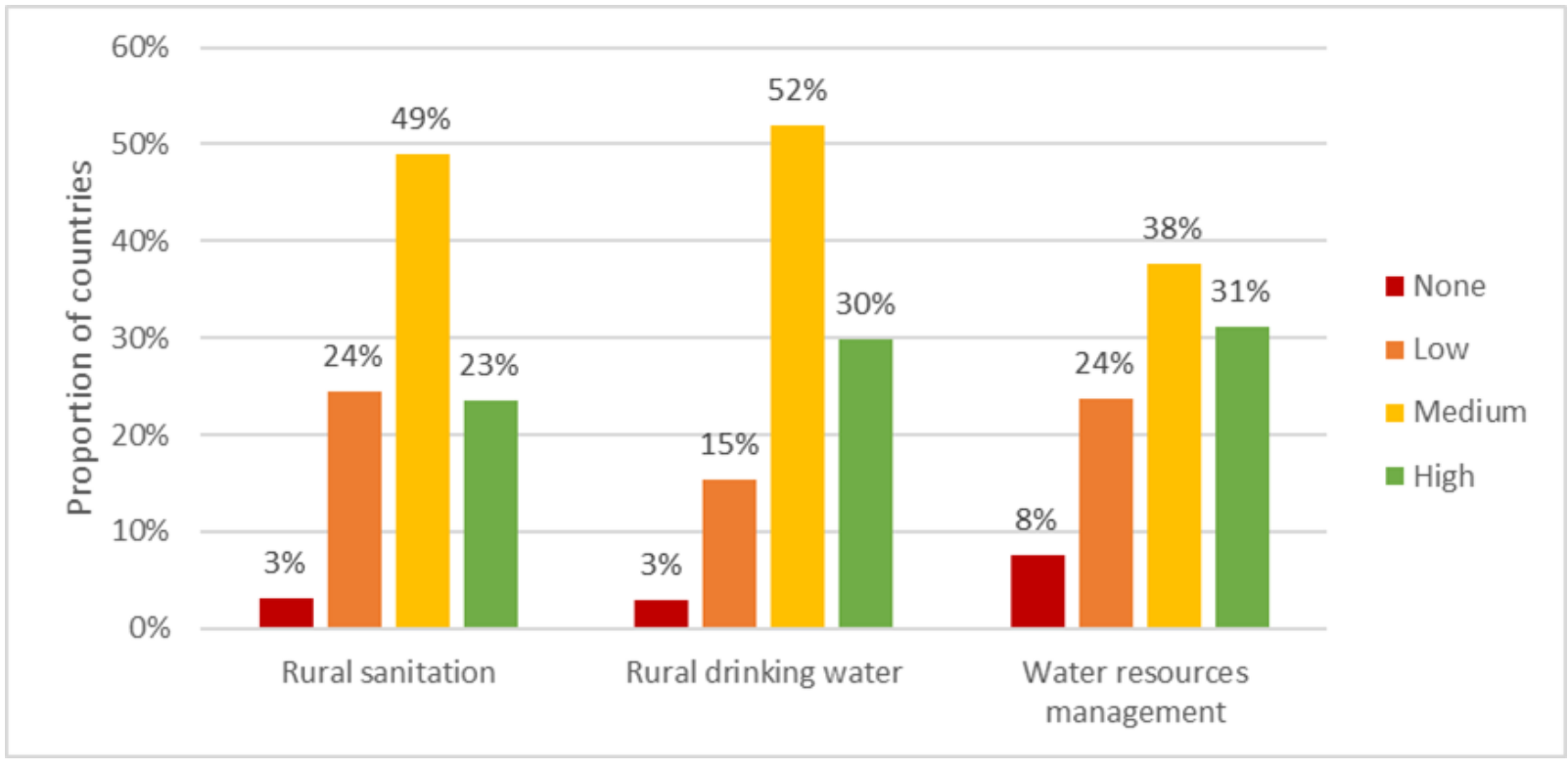
Fewer than half of the reporting countries have laws or policies that specifically mention women's participation in rural sanitation or water resources management

Two thirds of the 109 reporting countries have participation procedures that are defined in laws or policies in all six sub-sectors (drinking water (rural and urban), sanitation (rural and urban), hygiene promotion and water resources planning and management). Fewer than half of the reporting countries have laws or policies that specifically mention women's participation in rural sanitation or water resources management.

Across all sub-sectors, only 14 out of 109 countries report high levels of community and user participation for collaborative management and decision-making. For rural drinking water and sanitation and water resources management, most countries report medium levels of user and community participation. This entails users and communities that are occasionally or regularly consulted, but not to the extent of collaboration or representation in decision-making processes.

The implementation of participation procedures under SDG 6 is limited by a lack of financial and human resources. Approximately 6 in 10 countries reported that human and financial resources were less than 50 per cent of what is needed to support community participation. The situation is especially critical in rural areas, where over three-quarters of countries report insufficient financial resources to support participation.

Proportion of countries reporting high, medium and low levels of participation by users and communities by sub-sector



Levels of participation: None: No communication between government and communities/users on policy, planning and management; Low: Communication – information on policy, planning and management is made available communities/users; Medium: Consultative – Government authorities occasionally or regularly request information, experiences and opinions of communities/users; High: Collaborative or representative – regular opportunities for communities/users to take part in relevant policy, planning and management processes.

Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health/monitoring-and-evidence/wash-systems-monitoring/un-water-global-analysis-and-assessment-of-sanitation-and-drinking-water
- http://www.oecd.org/water/regional/

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