



COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE



UN Climate Change Conference (COP29)



Baku,
Azerbaijan



11 November to
22 November 2024



SIDE EVENT

Integrating WASH into Climate and Health Negotiations: A Crucial Nexus for Climate-Resilient Health Systems in Africa.

Venue: Mali Pavilion Date: 18 November 2024

Time: 14:00-16:00PM (GMT+4)

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Water is the primary medium through which climate change influences the Earth's ecosystem and thus the livelihood and well-being of societies. Climate change directly impacts water resources and water services for all economic, social and environmental functions that water supports. Therefore, the impacts reach into many sectorial interests such as health, tourism, agriculture and industry. With water scarcity and extreme weather events becoming the new norm in many parts of the world, it's crucial to note that the effects of climate change would be felt [first and foremost through water systems](#).

According to the [COP29 Declaration on Water for Climate Action](#), 2.2 billion people globally have limited access to safe drinking water, and an estimated 3.5 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation. In Africa, where water and sanitation infrastructures are already strained, the situation is becoming increasingly dire due to growing climate adversities. For instance, the UNICEF/WHO [Joint Monitoring Program](#) on WASH estimates that a total of 411M people in Africa still lack basic drinking water service, 779M lack basic sanitation services (208M people still practice open defecation) and 839M still lack basic hygiene services. Rapid urbanization, concentrated in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, is placing cities and towns in acute stress, forcing people to live in overcrowded slums with inadequate, often non-existent, water and sanitation services. Already, 700M urban dwellers live without improved sanitation and 156M live without improved water services. A total of 24% of urban poor households in India depend on communal or shared sanitation facilities; and 1.2M people living in slums still drink untreated water, while 63% of the households lack access to enclosed drainage systems. As a result, many poor households are forced to ration water and resort to poor hygiene practices.

Extending and securing access to water and sanitation services could play a key role in poverty reduction. Households could benefit through a range of health, educational, nutritional and broader livelihood impacts; local, regional and national economies could also benefit from greater economic activity, spending and investment; and over the longer term, households and economies could benefit through greater resilience to climate change. In monetary terms, the numbers are compelling: combined water supply and sanitation interventions have a combined return of at least US\$4.3 for every dollar invested (Hutton, 2012), if services can be sustained in the face of multiple risks, including that posed by climate change.

The nexus between WASH and climate change has not been thoroughly interrogated and these two concepts have been seen as separate entities yet the two are closely related. Severe funding constraints for climate-related research in Africa, primarily from sources outside Africa, lead to inequalities in research design, participation, and dissemination, and reduce adaptive capacity. Limited research has been conducted on the effects of climate-compromised WASH services on health in Africa. Quantifying these impacts is essential for informing public health interventions and building resilience in vulnerable communities.

Perhaps the biggest milestone for the global community in addressing climate change was in signing of the Paris Agreement which is supposed to be a roadmap which guides our efforts in combating climate change. The implementation of the Paris Agreement is expected to begin in 2020. Many countries submitted their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which indicate the targets for emission reductions and the strategies of implementation. However, most of the NDCs are silent on the water sector which is a serious gap. The NDCs are now due for revision and this presents a good opportunity to incorporate the water sector in the new designs of the NDCs.

While the intersection of climate and health is gaining attention globally and within Africa, WASH remains alarmingly overlooked in discussions on climate change and health. The lack of integration of WASH in these dialogues continues to exacerbate the climate and health risks associated with weak WASH infrastructures in Africa. To address this gap, and be cognizant of the critical role that WASH plays in ensuring climate-resilient health systems, AMREF Health Africa in collaboration with the Pan Africa Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) proposes to host a side event titled “Integrating WASH into Climate and Health Negotiations: A crucial Nexus for Climate Resilient Communities in Africa” during the upcoming COP29.

Objective

1. Deepen the understanding of the nexus between WASH, climate, and health in Africa.
2. Sustain momentum around the Global Goal on adaption UAE Belem framework for developing solid WASH indicators contextualized to African realities
3. Catalyzing inclusion of WASH in NDCs ahead of 2025
4. Advocating for an integrated long-term investment in climate change-resilient health and WASH systems in Africa.

Outcomes

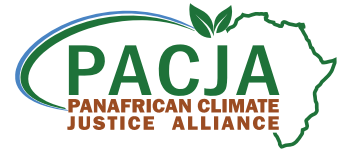
1. Communique on enhanced integration of WASH into climate and health frameworks in Africa
2. Commitments on funding for WASH infrastructures by governments and international donors.

Agenda

Time	Activity
	Overall Moderator: Benson Simba -Director, Social Determinants of Health; Amref Health Africa
45 MINS	Panel Discussion: Holistic Approaches to Climate, Health and WASH in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hon. Ir. Prosper Dodiko-Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock Burundi ▶ H.E Mary Muthoni-Principal Secretary of Health, Government of Kenya ▶ Prof Alhaji Njai- Associate Professor University of Sierra Leone ▶ Dr. Martin Muchangi-AMREF Health Africa ▶ Representative from the donor community
10 MINS	Reading and Adoption of the Communique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Benson Simba- Director, Social Determinants of Health; Amref Health Africa
5 MINS	Closing Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Dr. Mithika Mwenda- Executive Secretary Pan African Climate Justice Alliance



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