

*This resolution was drafted by hundreds of young leaders in over thirty countries across the globe through an unprecedented series of debates and consultations in multiple languages. Through the vehicle of the resolution, these young leaders are demanding concrete action by all governments and other relevant actors to ensure that everyone on earth has access to clean water, basic sanitation and hygiene, and essential pandemic protection by no later than 2030. The youth leaders call on the United Nations General Assembly to turn these principles into meaningful and transformative action.*

# **Resolution**

(draft released September 23, 2021)

*The General Assembly,*

*Whereas* our common experience has shown us that the fates of one and all are connected in our interdependent world, and that we are only as safe as the most vulnerable among us,

*Calling attention to* the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatens and impacts all people everywhere, was exacerbated by our decades-long collective failure to ensure universal access to clean water, safely-managed sanitation and hygiene services, and essential public health support,

*Noting* the November 2020 WHO and UNICEF “State of the World’s Sanitation” Report, which revealed that 1 in 3 people globally, about 2.2 billion people, lack access to safe drinking water; over half the world’s population, or 4.2 billion people, still lack access to basic safe sanitation; and, 2 out of 5, or 3 billion people, lack basic hand-washing facilities; all of which pose major health care risks in fighting pandemics and maintaining basic human health care,

*Noting* that Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (“WASH”) services are an essential part of preventing illness and protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks, and realizing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the need for greater pandemic protection (“PAP”) and a concerted global effort, drawing lessons from the COVID-19 experience, to minimise the

multi-faceted fallouts of future pandemics, and *expressing* the utility of these concepts through the term “WASHPAP”;

*Emphasizing* its resolutions 68/157 of 18 December 2013 and 70/169 of 17 December 2015, wherein the UN twice declared that access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a human right, and *recognizing also* its resolution 64/292 of 28 July 2010 explicitly stating that water and sanitation are human rights and are foundational for the realization of all human rights, all of which highlights the need for a combined WASHPAP resolution proposing solutions to the lack of progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 6 together and as interconnected issues;

*Recalling* that although past, limited, WASH campaigns have spurred the creation of several foundations and movements, they did not create a systematic approach to reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 6 calling for universal access to safe drinking water by 2030, suggesting the need to create a new and truly comprehensive and actionable step-by-step plan to address these issues on local, national, and international levels, and *affirming* that, with the mutual cooperation of all Member States at a systems level, the solutions to these global challenges are within reach;

*Reaffirming* its resolution 75/212 of 29 December 2020, whereby it noted that the UN is not currently on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 6 of ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. The resolution held that safe sanitation and access to clean water were crucial to mitigating death and illness due to communicable diseases, and implored Member States to seek novel methods for ensuring sustainable solutions for our world’s water crisis, as is now exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic,

*Recalling* also its resolutions 73/226 of 20 December 2018 and 61/192 of 20 December 2006, in which it stressed the importance of utilizing the contributions of all stakeholders, including

youth, women, elders, and local communities, in implementing the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” and requested developed states to make voluntary contributions for the sake of promoting sanitation in low resources settings as an investment in their nations’ public health,

*Acknowledging* the 2020 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ “One Water One Health” concept, which recognizes the value of water in promoting the health of people, animals, and our ecosystem, and *bearing in mind* that a nation can only reach Open Defecation Free status when all communities and individuals have access to reliable sanitation,

*Emphasizing* the 2020 UN Water Global Acceleration Framework and the 1 December 2020 UN-Water Joint Statement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which called on leaders to work towards solving global water crises, mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic, and building resilience in future pandemics, through the creation of sustainable water infrastructure, safe and universal water and sanitation services, and improved financing, data and information, capacity development, innovation, and governance,

*Reaffirming* its resolutions 65/154 of 20 December 2010, 67/204 of 21 December 2012, and 74/141 of 18 December 2019 encouraging international and inter-agency cooperation in prioritising sustainable water goals and recognising the critical importance of assuring the human right to safe water and sanitation facilities for those in rural areas—with particular consequences for women and children—so as to adequately protect citizens during future pandemics,

*Affirming* the unequivocal link between the availability of clean water, safely-managed sanitation and hygiene services, essential pandemic protection resources and human health, and that, in the context of our deep global interdependence, ensuring these services for everyone on earth as soon as possible is not a matter of charity but is among the smartest investments we can make in a safer future for all,

*Highlighting* the calls by the World Health Organization and global leaders on 30 March 2021 for an international pandemic treaty regarding the necessity for legally ensuring pandemic protection for all citizens across the world, and *stressing* the report by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response as presented to the UN General Assembly on 28 July 2021 which demonstrates that pandemics will only be mitigated with international cooperation and infrastructure,

*Acknowledging* the looming global risk to life and wellbeing from a failure to act swiftly and collectively in prioritising WASH-PAP and, given the enormous suffering ensuing from the spread of COVID-19, recognising the unacceptability of inaction in this regard,

*Further realizing*, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, that our world is interconnected and that none of us are safe until all of us are safe,

*Calls upon Member States* to apply the following novel approaches for UN Member States to provide universal access to Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Pandemic Protection, or WASH-PAP, by encouraging States to employ the criteria contained in this resolution, and, following a one year planning process, to introduce such criteria and principles into a comprehensive national plan, in consultation with the vulnerable communities and populations involved, for achieving WASH-PAP for everyone on earth by 2030:

1. *Acknowledge water (WASH-PAP) as the basis for health and a human right* and the lack of it as exacerbating disease, and commit to protecting the natural sources of water and recognizing the importance of eliminating detrimental man-made environmental impacts.

This could be achieved by:

- a. Dispersing education on alternatives to bottled water to ensure the conservation of natural springs and fresh water reserves while decreasing the prevalence of single-use plastic bottles;

- b. Working with the Global Water Partnership to facilitate integrated management in transboundary basins as well as from source to sea, and, in particular, working with deltas, a key connecting point for freshwater and ocean issues;
  - c. Creating rainwater harvesting and desalination programs.
2. Establish standard water requirements and usage norms intra-nationally and determine quotas for maximum usage by individuals and corporations. Potential approaches include:
- a. Dissemination of information to corporations and individuals about exceeding nationally-determined water usage quotas;
  - b. Creating proper measurement techniques for water usage on international, national, regional, and local levels while contextually determining minimal water requirements for each Member State.
3. Establish sufficient access to safe water resources for all people. Examples of this include:
- a. Installing community wells and water supply stations that can improve sanitation in regions where water pipes are not accessible;
  - b. Creating cross-national agreements for allocating natural water resources to Member States;
  - c. Commissioning national bodies and delegating personnel and funding for the creation and maintenance of safely-managed water infrastructure in each Member State;
  - d. Sharing open information with Member States on best practices for efficiently delivering water to rural communities.
4. Recognize that delivering sanitation resources and services (WASH/PAP) is equally as important as the delivery of water itself, and create dedicated institutions to:

- a. Develop and maintain efficient water-recovery services in every nation. Some potential innovations for this include:
  - i. Incentivizing facilities to recycle wastewater;
  - ii. Developing and sharing efficient methods for extracting reusable water after contamination via human or environmental influences.
- b. Create adequate sanitation services in every country. These steps include:
  - i. Establishing international minimal regulations for water sanitation, prioritising universal provision of at least basic sanitation services, with the goal of ensuring safely-managed sanitation services for all;
  - ii. Sharing the most efficient sanitation practices and utilizing knowledge from across the globe to deliver free information to low income nations on how to create and maintain safely-managed sanitation services or, at minimum, a basic level of sanitation services.
- c. Develop a comprehensive plan for delivering safely-managed sanitation services to its most underserved populations. Such initiatives could include:
  - i. Utilizing novel delivery modes such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to supply hygiene products, feminine hygiene products, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment to remote areas;
  - ii. Delegating national task forces to identify locations that currently lack sanitation services, establish the level of service-provision across all regions and localities, and devise targeted action plans for progressively upgrading sanitation services;
  - iii. Encouraging local governments to ensure the regular updating and cleaning of public sanitation resources to avoid the proliferation of harmful bacteria that can lead to deadly outbreaks of disease and public health concerns. Potential approaches could include:
    - 1. Initiating public works programs towards the above;
    - 2. Incentivizing entities to develop low-cost sanitation products;

3. Focusing on recycling water and minimizing human contact with sewage.
5. *Emphasize* that hygiene practices (WASH/PAP) ultimately reflect the health of the individual and the communities, and bolster hygiene in the world by:
- a. Commissioning relevant national bodies to plan and deliver proper hygiene education for all communities across the nation. Such steps may include:
    - i. Acknowledging how lack of access to WASH/PAP disproportionately affects women and girls;
    - ii. Acknowledging also the link between gender violence and lack of access to and safety of public toilets, and calls for the creation of advocacy and support programs to mitigate the problem;
    - iii. Pursuing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), Member States should provide educational outreach to communities on appropriate hygiene and sanitation habits in public sanitation facilities and information on safe alternative hygiene and sanitation models;
    - iv. Urging Member States to adopt an Information, Education, Communication, and Demonstration approach for all public awareness campaigns and outreach in an effort to directly model appropriate sanitation habits;
  - b. Establishing access to sanitation resources for every individual. Examples of this include:
    - i. Making sanitary kits more accessible and affordable;
    - ii. Promoting sustainable infrastructure for menstrual management by providing menstrual products in public sanitation facilities and decreasing or eliminating taxes on these products;
  - c. Committing to achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status by the year 2030 by:
    - i. Creating additional jobs in the public sector dedicated to management and maintenance of public sanitation facilities;

- ii. Implementing public and private partnerships in rural areas to facilitate the use and maintenance of public toilets and encourages NGOs to assist in the creation of better institutional infrastructure;
  - iii. Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in order to reach ODF status by ensuring that those with disabilities can safely access public toilets
  - iv. Issuing subsidies for individual household toilets;
6. Recognize that the world was not prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic and realize that comprehensive and robust pandemic protection response measures (**WASH*PAP***) must be in place for the next outbreak of infectious disease, and oversee the creation of protection measures such as:
- a. Pandemic response education for all citizens, pursuant to SDG 4, which can be achieved by:
    - i. Creating handbooks for low-income and rural communities that will:
      1. Convey the essential importance of safe sanitation and personal hygiene within the family and community for good health and pandemic containment;
      2. Communicate a clear message on how best to protect oneself and one's community during disease outbreaks;
      3. Provide instructions on creating adequate and effective homemade face masks and sanitizers out of sustainable and affordable materials that are readily available in most regions;
      4. Feature infographics on hand washing techniques, social distancing measures, sanitation methods, and household medical care;
      5. Feature content and imagery appropriate to the local culture and are available in indigenous and local dialects, and in contextually-appropriate physical or electronic mediums.
    - ii. The establishment of sub-national pandemic task forces convened by local governments and/or councils which can include:



1. Appointing medical experts to the regional task forces and meeting regularly to discuss local outbreaks, guidelines to prevent such outbreaks, and measures to control them;
    2. Creating communication pathways with the local hospital network and authorities, allowing small communities to develop pandemic response methods that best address their unique needs and challenges.
  - b. Utilizing Advanced Market Commitments to ensure equitable and fair vaccine distribution.
7. Implement innovative financial measures to ensure **WASHPAP** for all by 2030, such as:
- a. Making funding for water, health and sanitation services a common national priority by committing to the implementation of WASHPAP initiatives, with high income nations and developed member states encouraged to create dedicated WASHPAP funds that will provide aid to countries lacking clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene, and pandemic preparedness;
  - b. Sourcing financial aid for developing countries from corporations and multilateral development banks such as the World Bank.
8. Acknowledge our shared humanity in light of the current pandemic, and the heartbreaking loss of life, exacerbated political divisions, and spread of misinformation, by strengthening multilateral and individual capabilities, and commit to:
- a. Responding to current and future pandemics or any public health crises with increased integrity and transparency, which includes:
    - i. Discouraging and disengaging from all forms of exploitation of water/sanitation and public health crises for political or economic reasons;
    - ii. Creating and upholding transparency standards by encouraging domestic activists and members of international NGOs to form, in collaboration with their counterparts across Member States, a transnational task force of

citizens to monitor and evaluate the World Health Organization's management of global health crises through mechanisms such as regular audits, debriefs about the task force's work, publishing of data and reports on the task force's findings, and supervision from an independent board of specialists.

- b. Cooperating with the World Health Organization on all matters pertaining to WASHPAP, allowing for free movement and necessary data access for WHO officials to monitor and research future outbreaks of disease;
- c. Empowering the UN to improve WASHPAP accountability structures, performance guidelines, and incentives by:
  - i. Improving data and information availability through easily understandable and accessible tools for data collection and dissemination such as an interactive map to track global progress on WASHPAP, using the map to indicate the locations, prevalence, and severity of water shortages, disease outbreaks, and deficiencies in WASH facilities;
  - ii. Consolidating data on intra-national expertise, capacities, and ongoing programmes for water supply, wastewater management, sanitation and hygiene, and public health;
  - iii. Contributing to an international database organized by UN Water to monitor the status and availability of global water resources, in which depleted and overexploited freshwater reserves are labeled as endangered, with further extraction of water from such sources being prohibited;
  - iv. Utilizing this data to indicate where, when, how and to whom to target interventions, with UN Member States invited to act as consultants to create improved documentation for developing nations;
  - v. Cooperating with UN Water on the creation and updation of a WASHPAP Manual of Information, Standards and Operating Procedures, a reference resource developed by UN Water and periodically updated with inputs from specialists, practitioners, communities, institutions, corporations,

NGOs and other stakeholders across Member States, designed to set out the standards and procedures pertaining to WASHPAP provision.

- d. Cooperating with Member States and engaging in knowledge sharing regarding the development of new technologies and research through:
    - i. The creation of a web portal overseen by the United Nations to allow Member States to obtain and share data, research, best practices, and expertise on ensuring access to safely-managed services for water, sanitation and hygiene, and pandemic protection for all;
    - ii. The establishment of innovation incubators, training programs, and funds for individuals, communities, and governments in developing countries to:
      1. Develop their own water and sanitation innovations and infrastructure;
      2. Exchange blueprints to already established modern and efficient water management and sanitation services;
      3. Engage in technology and capacity building research and implementation.
9. Employ the next one year to create, in collaboration with diverse sub-national stakeholders to ensure representation of the most vulnerable voices, a comprehensive national plan meeting the criteria put forth in this resolution and guided by the recommendations herein, along with contingency plans for any intervening public health crises, and to report on this plan to the UN General Assembly in 2022, with UN entities also called upon, under the guidance of UN Water, to utilize one full year to prepare a letter from the Secretary General with recommended concrete and feasible steps for achieving universal access to WASHPAP for all by 2030, to be presented to Member States also at the 2022 UN General Assembly, and progress in development, access and implementation to be measured at each General Assembly herein.