PROGRESS ON HOUSEHOLD DRINKING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

2000-2020 | FIVE YEARS INTO THE SDGs

WHO/UNICEF JOINT MONITORING PROGRAMME FOR WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

World Health Organization

WHO UNICEF JMP

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Highlights

Five years into the SDGs

The World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) produces internationally comparable estimates of progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and is responsible for global monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets related to WASH. In 2020, the JMP released updated estimates for WASH in schools and WASH in health care facilities (2000-2019). This report presents updated national, regional and global estimates for WASH in households for the period 2000 to 2020 and takes stock of progress five years into the SDG period (2015-2020).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development called for 'ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all' under SDG 6, and established ambitious indicators for WASH services under targets 6.1 and 6.2. While the number of countries with estimates available for the new SDG global indicators has increased with each JMP progress update, many still only have a small number of data points, making it difficult to assess trends. However, we now have enough data to begin to assess the prospects for achieving the SDG targets. This report extrapolates estimates based on existing trends to illustrate current trajectories and the acceleration required to achieve universal coverage by 2030.

Achieving SDG WASH targets by 2030 will require a quadrupling of current rates of progress

FIGURE 1 Global coverage of WASH services, 2015-2020 (%), and acceleration required to meet targets by 2030

Five years into the SDGs, the world is not on track to achieve SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2. Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a quadrupling of current rates of progress in safely managed drinking water services, safely managed sanitation services, and basic hygiene services (Figure 1). Least developed countries (LDCs) have the furthest to go and it will be especially challenging to accelerate progress in fragile contexts[1]. Many more countries are facing challenges in extending services to rural areas and to poor and vulnerable populations who are most at risk of being left behind.

[1] As of May 2021, the OECD States of Fragility series identifies 57 fragile contexts, including 13 that are classified as extremely fragile. Source: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/states-of-fragility-fa5a6770-en.htm>

DRINKING WATER

From 2015 to 2020

- The proportion of the global population using safely managed services increased from 70% to 74%, rural coverage increased from 53% to 60%, and urban coverage increased from 85% to 86%.
- The number of people without safely managed services decreased by 193 million, decreasing by 225 million in rural areas but increasing by 32 million in urban areas.
- The number of countries with estimates available for SDG 6.1.1 increased from 96 to 138, and the proportion of the global population with data available increased from 34% to 45%. Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the biggest increase in data coverage.
- On average, use of safely managed services increased by 0.63 percentage points per year (% pts/yr) at the national level, 0.89 % pts/yr in rural areas and 0.06 % pts/yr in urban areas.
- Achieving universal access to safely managed services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (10x in LDCs and 23x in fragile contexts).
- At current rates of progress, the world will only reach 81% coverage by 2030, leaving 1.6 billion people without safely managed services.

In 2020

- 2 billion people lacked safely managed services, including 1.2 billion people with basic services, 282 million with limited services, 367 million using unimproved sources, and 122 million drinking surface water.
- 138 countries and five out of eight SDG regions had estimates for safely managed services, representing 45% of the global population.
- 84 countries had achieved universal (>99%) access to at least basic services, including 30 countries that had achieved universal access to safely managed services.
- 16 countries are on track to reach universal access to safely managed services, and 34 countries are on track to reach universal access to at least basic drinking water between 2020 and 2030.
- People living in fragile contexts were twice as likely to lack safely managed services as those living in non-fragile contexts.
- Eight out of ten people who still lacked even basic services lived in rural areas. Around half of them lived in LDCs.

One in four people lacked safely managed drinking water services in 2020

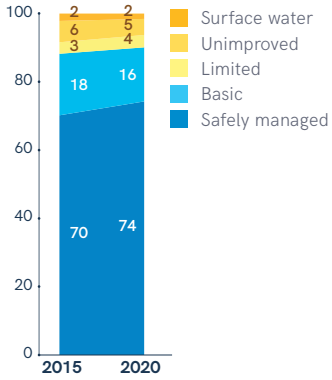


FIGURE 2

Global drinking water coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

Five SDG regions had estimates for safely managed drinking water services in 2020

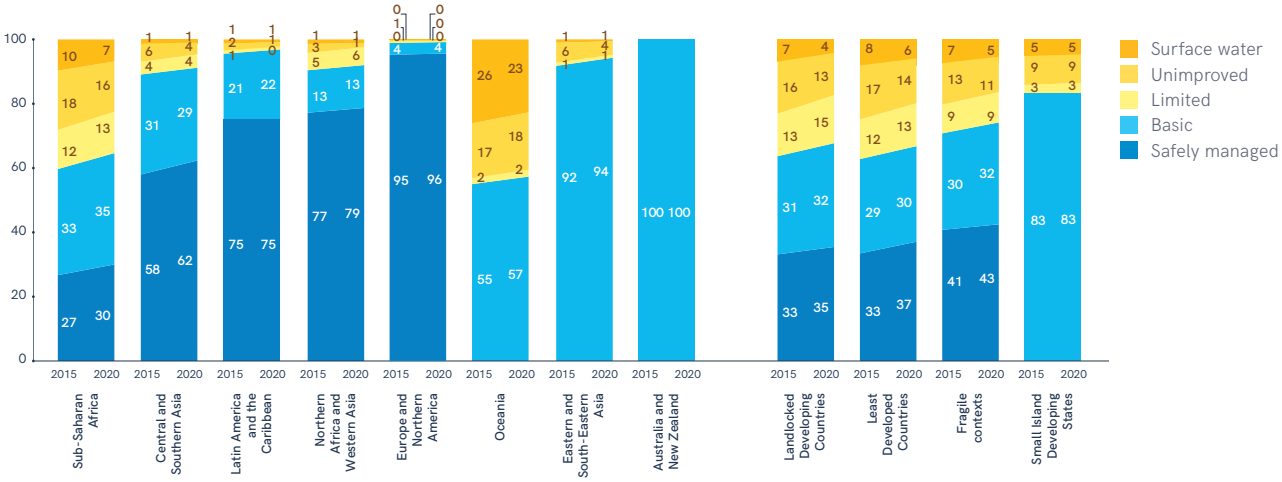
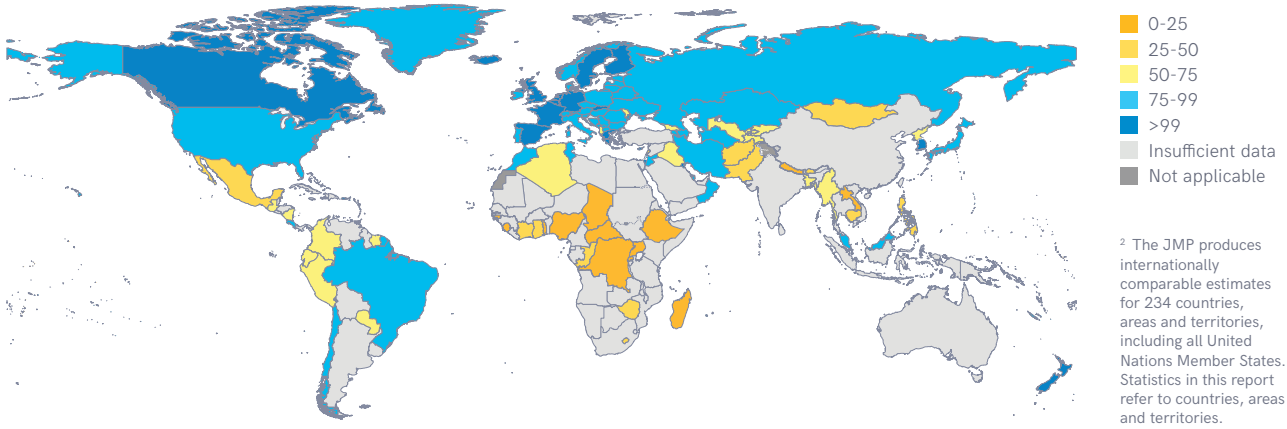


FIGURE 3 Regional drinking water coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

In 2020, 138 countries[2] had estimates for safely managed drinking water services



[2] The JMP produces internationally comparable estimates for 234 countries, areas and territories, including all United Nations Member States. Statistics in this report refer to countries, areas and territories.

FIGURE 4 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, 2020 (%)

SANITATION

From 2015 to 2020

- The proportion of the global population using safely managed services increased from 47% to 54%, rural coverage increased from 36% to 44%, and urban coverage increased from 57% to 62%.
- The population practising open defecation decreased by a third, from 739 million people to 494 million. 85% of this drop occurred in rural areas.
- The number of countries with estimates available for safely managed services increased from 84 to 120, and the global population with data available increased from 48% to 81%.
- On average, use of safely managed services increased by 1.27 percentage points per year (% pts/yr) at the national level, 1.48 % pts/yr in rural areas, and 0.84 % pts/yr in urban areas.
- Achieving universal access to safely managed services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (15x in LDCs and 9x in fragile contexts).
- At current rates of progress, the world will only reach 67% coverage by 2030, leaving 2.8 billion people without safely managed services.

In 2020

- 3.6 billion people lacked safely managed services, including 1.9 billion people with basic services, 580 million with limited services, 616 million using unimproved facilities, and 494 million practising open defecation.
- 120 countries and seven out of eight SDG regions had estimates for safely managed services, representing 81% of the global population.
- 62 countries had achieved universal (>99%) access to at least basic services, including eight countries that had achieved universal access to safely managed services.
- Eight countries are on track to reach universal access to safely managed services, and 26 countries are on track to reach universal access to at least basic services between 2020 and 2030.
- Two thirds of people who still lacked even basic services lived in rural areas. Nearly half of them lived in sub-Saharan Africa.
- 92% of the population practising open defecation lived in rural areas.

Nearly half the world's population lacked safely managed sanitation services in 2020

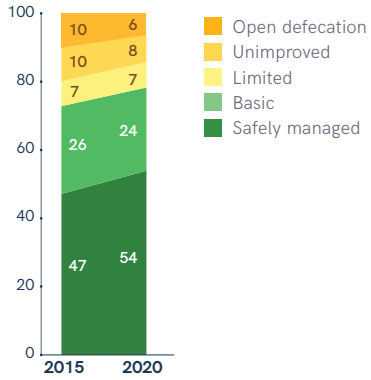


FIGURE 5

Global sanitation coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

Seven SDG regions had estimates for safely managed sanitation services in 2020

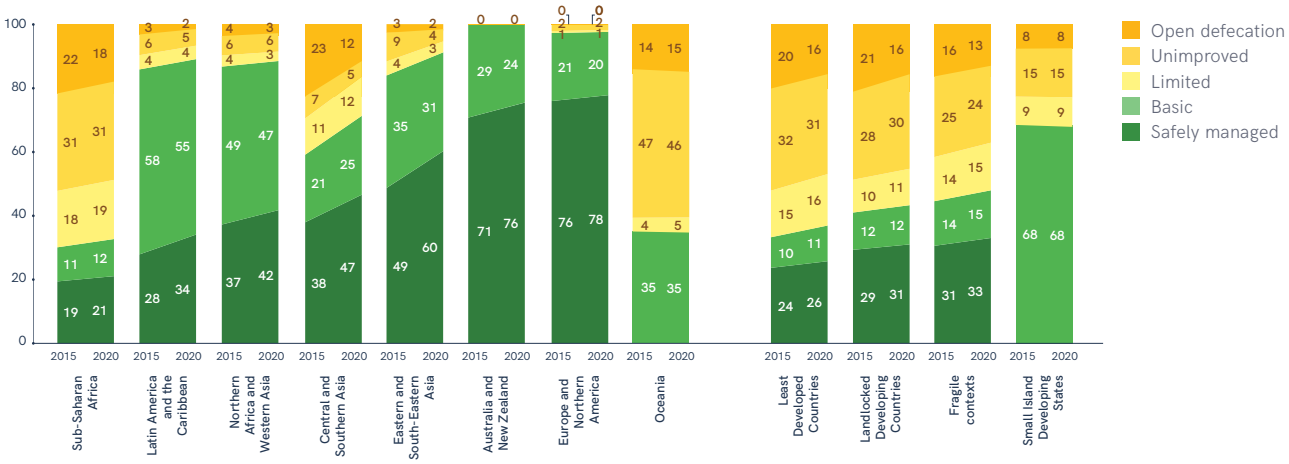


FIGURE 6 Regional sanitation coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

In 2020, 120 countries had estimates for safely managed sanitation services

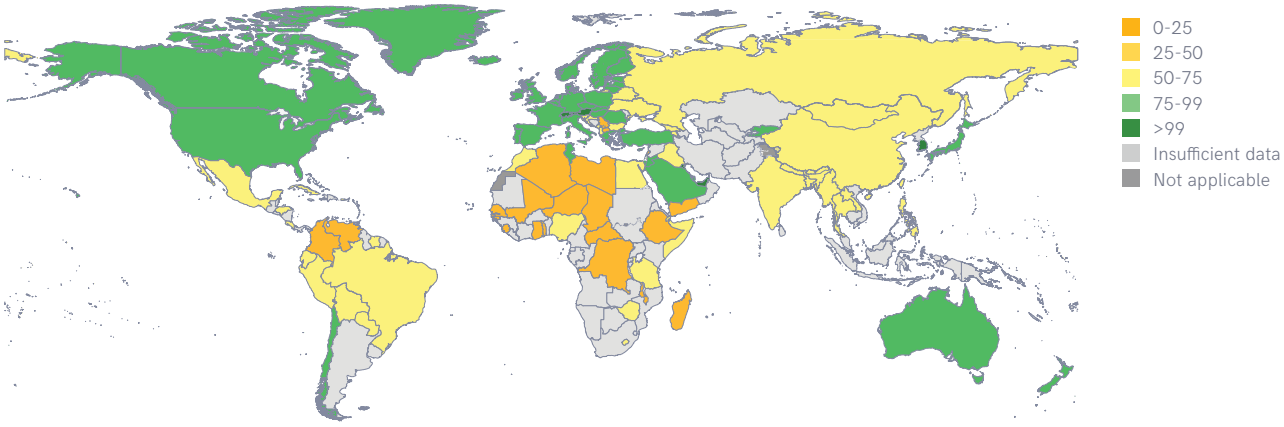


FIGURE 7 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, 2020 (%)

HYGIENE

From 2015 to 2020

- The proportion of the global population with basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home increased from 67% to 71%.
- The number of people lacking basic services decreased from 2.4 billion to 2.3 billion.
- The population with basic services increased by an average of 0.69 percentage points per year (% pts/yr). The rate of increase was greater in rural areas, at 1.08 % pts/yr. There were not enough data to make global estimates for urban areas.
- The number of countries with estimates available for basic services increased from 70 to 79, and the proportion of the global population with data available increased from 30% to 50%. Central and Southern Asia recorded the biggest increase in data coverage, followed by Oceania.
- Achieving universal access to basic services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (7x in LDCs and 5x in fragile contexts).
- At current rates of progress, the world will only reach 78% coverage in 2030, leaving 1.9 billion people without basic services.

In 2020

- 71% of the global population had basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home.
- 2.3 billion people lacked basic services, including 670 million people with no handwashing facilities at all. Over half of these people (374 million) lived in fragile contexts.
- 79 countries and four out of eight SDG regions had estimates for basic services, representing 50% of the global population.
- Four countries had already achieved universal (>99%) access to basic services, and six countries were on track to reach universal access between 2020 and 2030.
- Most high-income countries lacked data on the availability of handwashing facilities with soap and water at home.
- In 16 countries, the gap in basic hygiene coverage between urban and rural areas was more than 20 % pts, and in 12 countries, the gap between highest and lowest sub-national region was more than 50 % pts.

Seven out of ten people had basic hygiene services in 2020

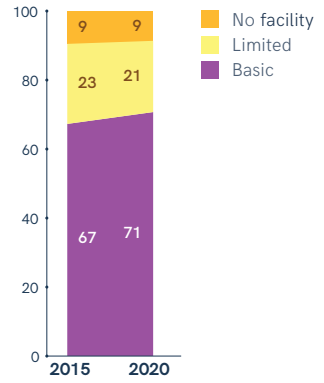


FIGURE 8

Global handwashing coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

Four SDG regions had estimates for basic hygiene services in 2020

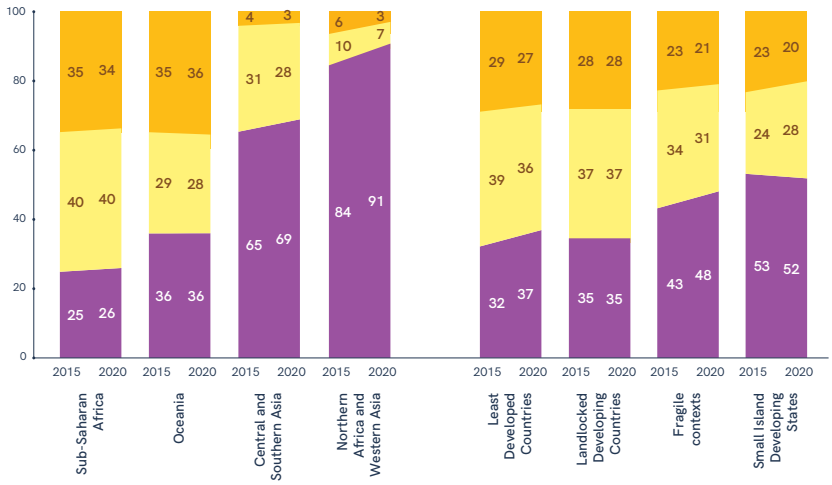


FIGURE 9 Regional handwashing coverage, 2015-2020 (%)

Note: For Northern Africa and Western Asia, limited and no service levels for 2020 were projected based on 2018 estimates.

In 2020, 79 countries had estimates for basic hygiene services

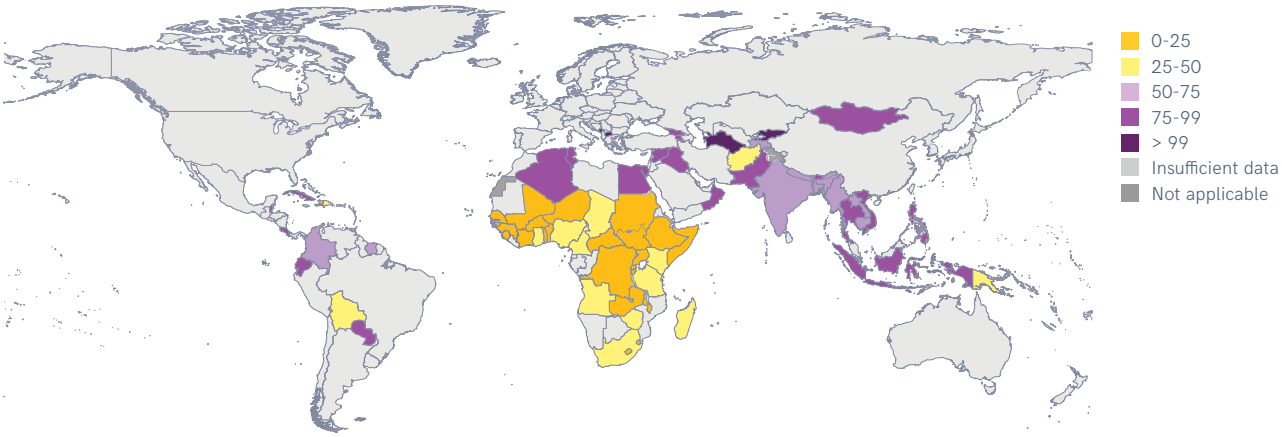


FIGURE 10 Proportion of population with basic hygiene services, 2020 (%)

MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Emerging data and indicators on menstrual health

- SDG target 6.2 calls for 'special attention to the needs of women and girls' and WASH programmes are increasingly monitoring menstrual health-related needs. The JMP has expanded its global database to include emerging national data on menstrual health.
- New indicators related to menstrual health and associated WASH service needs have been progressively included in household survey questionnaires for women and girls age 15 to 49, and can be grouped as follows:
  - **Awareness** of menstruation before menarche (first menstruation).
  - **Use of menstrual materials** to capture and contain menstrual blood, such as pads, cloths, tampons or cups. These can also be grouped into single-use and reusable materials.
  - Access to a **private place to wash and change** while at home.
  - **Participation** in activities during menstruation, such as school, work and social activities.
- National data on these menstrual health indicators have been collected from 42 countries, 29 of which had some information on at least three of the indicators.
- Nearly half (19) of the 42 countries with national data on the menstrual health indicators are in the sub-Saharan Africa region, and the majority are either low-income (13) or lower-middle-income countries (18). No high-income countries had national data on any of the four menstrual health indicators.
- Only two countries had national data on awareness of menstruation before menarche; 32% and 66% of girls were aware of menstruation before their first period in Bangladesh and Egypt, respectively.
- Emerging data show in many countries a significant proportion of women and girls do not have the services they need for menstrual health and there are often substantial disparities between population sub-groups, particularly between sub-national regions and for women and girls with and without disabilities.

In 2020, 42 countries had nationally representative data on at least one menstrual health indicator

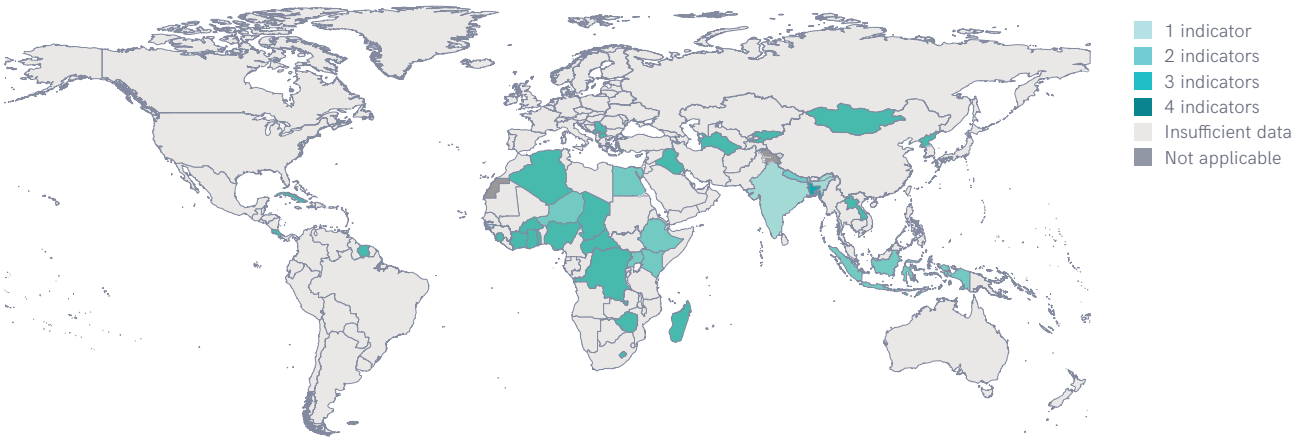


FIGURE 11 Numbers of menstrual health indicators with national data available, by country, 2020

Use of menstrual materials is high, but some women lack a private place to wash and change

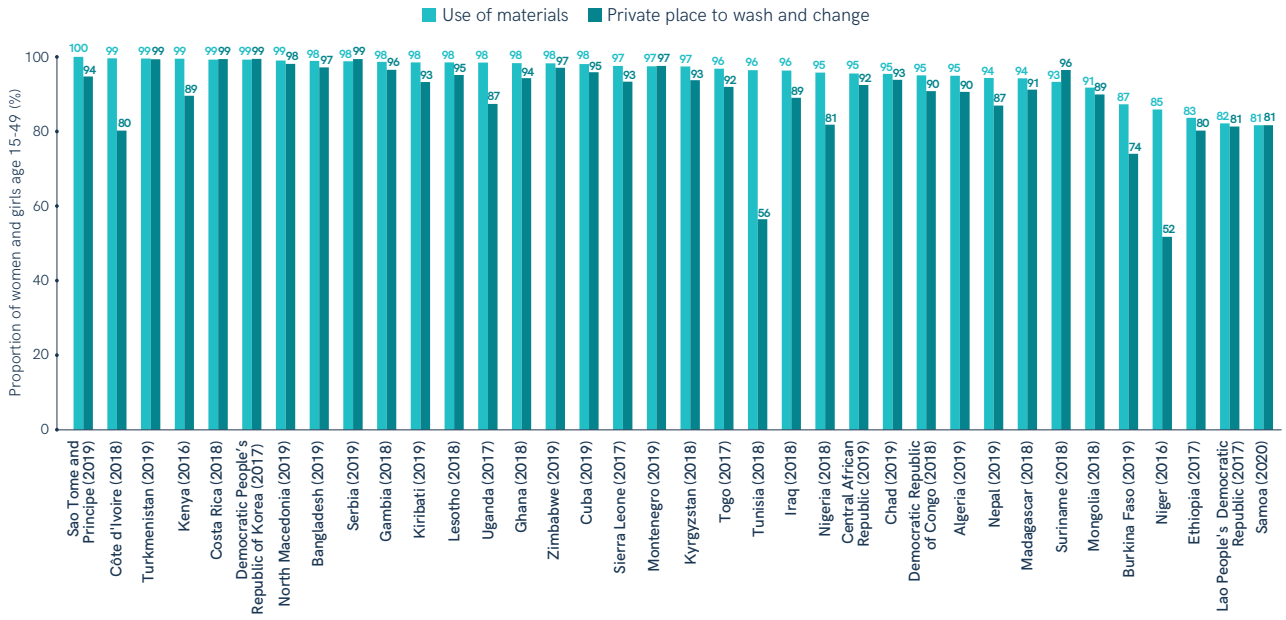
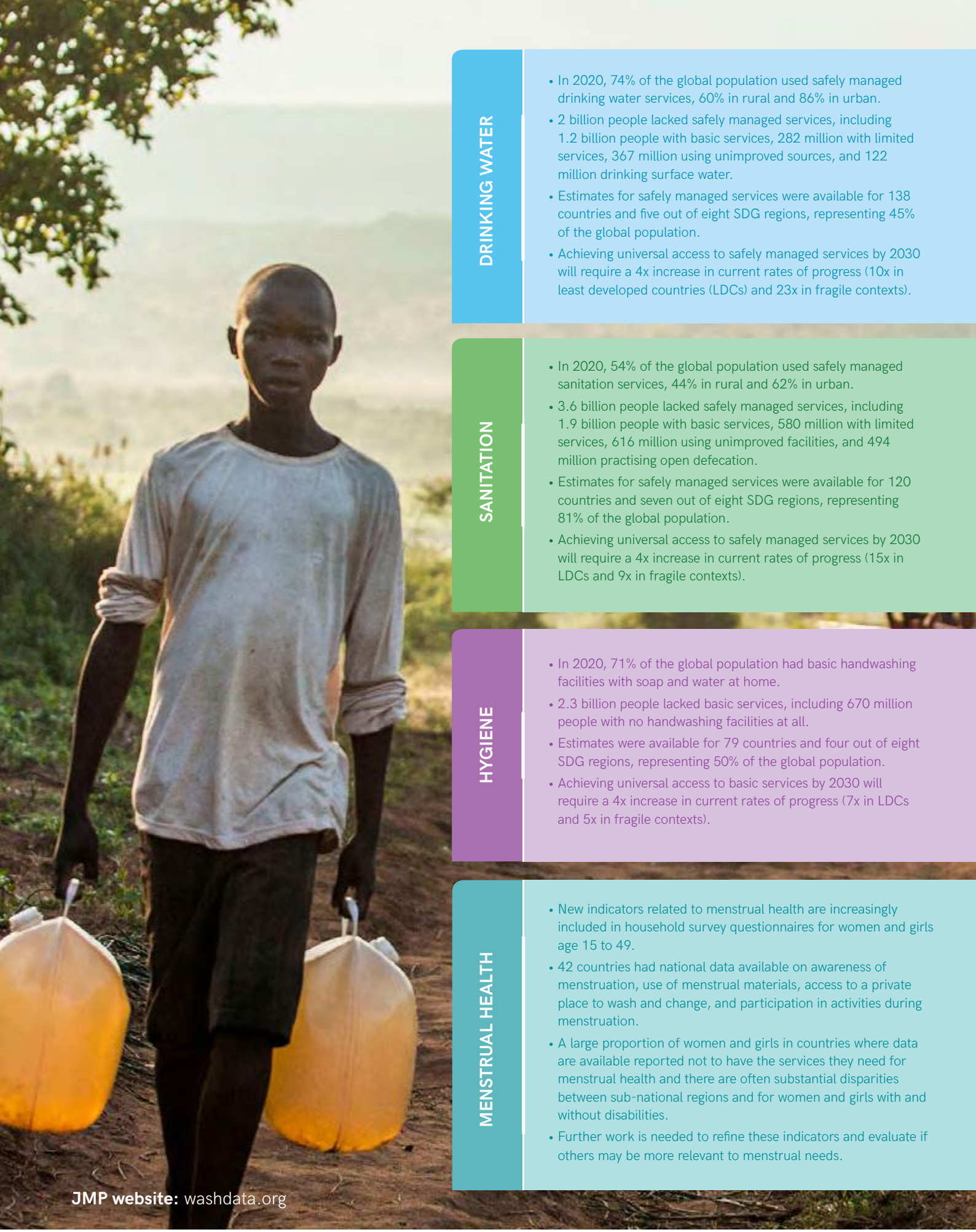


FIGURE 12 Proportion of women and girls age 15-49 who use menstrual materials, and have a private place to wash and change during menstruation, selected countries, 2016-2020



DRINKING WATER

- In 2020, 74% of the global population used safely managed drinking water services, 60% in rural and 86% in urban.
- 2 billion people lacked safely managed services, including 1.2 billion people with basic services, 282 million with limited services, 367 million using unimproved sources, and 122 million drinking surface water.
- Estimates for safely managed services were available for 138 countries and five out of eight SDG regions, representing 45% of the global population.
- Achieving universal access to safely managed services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (10x in least developed countries (LDCs) and 23x in fragile contexts).

SANITATION

- In 2020, 54% of the global population used safely managed sanitation services, 44% in rural and 62% in urban.
- 3.6 billion people lacked safely managed services, including 1.9 billion people with basic services, 580 million with limited services, 616 million using unimproved facilities, and 494 million practising open defecation.
- Estimates for safely managed services were available for 120 countries and seven out of eight SDG regions, representing 81% of the global population.
- Achieving universal access to safely managed services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (15x in LDCs and 9x in fragile contexts).

HYGIENE

- In 2020, 71% of the global population had basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home.
- 2.3 billion people lacked basic services, including 670 million people with no handwashing facilities at all.
- Estimates were available for 79 countries and four out of eight SDG regions, representing 50% of the global population.
- Achieving universal access to basic services by 2030 will require a 4x increase in current rates of progress (7x in LDCs and 5x in fragile contexts).

MENSTRUAL HEALTH

- New indicators related to menstrual health are increasingly included in household survey questionnaires for women and girls age 15 to 49.
- 42 countries had national data available on awareness of menstruation, use of menstrual materials, access to a private place to wash and change, and participation in activities during menstruation.
- A large proportion of women and girls in countries where data are available reported not to have the services they need for menstrual health and there are often substantial disparities between sub-national regions and for women and girls with and without disabilities.
- Further work is needed to refine these indicators and evaluate if others may be more relevant to menstrual needs.

JMP website: washdata.org

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