



Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES)

Eritrea

Country Setting

- Eritrea is one of the world's poorest countries (in 2003, it ranked 155th out of 175 on the UN Human Development Index).
- Food insecurity and poverty is increasing due to a four-year drought, one of the worst in Eritrea's history, and the continuing repercussions of the 1998-2000 border war with Ethiopia.
- The war has resulted in 1.2 million internally displaced people, straining the already fragile infrastructure, including water and sanitation.

WES Sector Setting

- The drought is affecting two-thirds of the country, with water levels in wells and boreholes at an all time low – due to drying water sources, actual safe water coverage is down to about 30 per cent.
- At only three per cent, Eritrea's rural sanitation coverage is the second lowest in the world.
- Sanitation and hygiene promotion are not emphasized in national programmes, in part due to the water supply crisis triggered by the drought.
- Limited management and implementation capacity in both the public and private sectors is a major constraint for increasing coverage.

Basic Indicators

Total population (1000s)	4,141
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)	85
Total adult literacy rate (%)	56

Water and Sanitation Coverage

	Water (%)	Sanitation (%)
Urban	72	34
Rural	54	3
Total	57	9

UNICEF WES Programme

Main Components

- UNICEF is the main external support agency active in the water and sanitation sector, and co-chairs the UN Thematic Group on WES.
- The UNICEF programme supports various government ministries and institutions, and civil society organisations.
- The programme has three main components:
 - Community Water Supply;
 - Community Hygiene and Sanitation Promotion;
 - School Water Supply and Sanitation.

Programme Highlights and Achievements

- New National Water Policy drafted.
- Support to the construction of 21 water supply projects catering to 130,000 people.
- Emergency water trucking reaching 65,000 people annually.
- Community-based management systems have been established in 35 completed water supply schemes.
- Training of sanitation facilitators and community leaders, and the construction of demonstration latrines.
- Water supply to 98 schools facing acute water shortages.