



[WASHwatch: helping to hold governments to account on their commitments to the fundamental foundations of health.](#)

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“Watches” —civil society’s accountability tool—are in vogue: First, there was [PEPFAR Watch](#), an initiative set up to hold U.S. global AIDS funding and policy (through [President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#)) accountable to scientific evidence, the real-life needs of women and girls, and human rights. Then there was [Global Health Watch](#) established six years ago to help improve civil society’s capacity to hold national and international governments, global international financial institutions and corporations to account. Now there is [WASHwatch](#)—an online platform for monitoring government policy commitments and budgets for water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) which was launched by [WaterAid](#) yesterday at [World Water Week](#) in Stockholm.

Why? Because in 2011, 2.6 billion people world-wide [STILL](#) do not have access to sanitation; 884 million people have no safe drinking water source; and shockingly, the resulting diarrhoeal diseases kill 4,000 children every day.

Last year, a [PLoS Medicine series](#) advocated for prioritising action towards the neglected fundamental foundations of health—water, sanitation, and hygiene, which unknown to many, also have their share of international commitments and pledges, such as the [eThekweni declaration on sanitation](#), and the [Sharm El-Sheikh declaration](#) on water and sanitation, which include promises to increase the funds available for WASH. Some governments are doing as promised, but many are not. [WASHwatch.org](#) aims to get the key information from national budgets in an accessible, understandable, and downloadable format, which can then be used for communication and advocacy purposes. And there is a lot to advocate for:

According to [WaterAid](#), Donor governments and organisations need to:

- Double aid to water, sanitation and hygiene to spend \$10bn more a year.
- Target aid on the basis of need, directing money and support to sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, particularly to the least developed, fragile and low-income countries, and to lower middle-income countries where the need is highest.

National governments should also take action to significantly improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene within their countries. [Specifically:](#)

- Sub-Saharan African countries should invest 1% of their GDP in tackling sanitation and at least a further 2.5% to developing water supply.
- The countries in South Asia currently off-track to meet their Millennium Development Goal target for sanitation should allocate at least 1% of their GDP to the issue.

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