

# SECTOR MINISTERS' MEETING 2019

San José — Costa Rica — 4-5 April



## The Mongolia COUNTRY BRIEF

*The Country Briefs were prepared by governments ahead of the SWA 2019 Sector Ministers' Meeting. They are a snap-shot of the country's current state in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene, and future targets.*

### 1. Country context

Mongolia is a land-locked country located in North-East Asia, bordering the Russian Federation in the north and the People's Republic of China in the south. The country occupies 1,564,900 square kilometers and the country has the lowest population density in the world. The population stands at 3.18 million (National Statistics Office (NSO), 2017)<sup>1</sup>, of whom more than half live in urban centers, particularly in the capital, Ulaanbaatar. The remaining half leads a semi-nomadic lifestyle, constantly on the move in search of better pastureland for their herds.

Therefore, Mongolia faces unique challenges related to its dispersed population and extreme weather conditions, exposed to winter temperatures as low as -40°C, while experiencing rapid urbanization. On other hand, Mongolia has consolidated a tradition of policy and legal reforms with increased investment in basic social services, including WASH. Challenges, however, persist in areas related to political accountability, rule of law and effective decentralization, as well as sustained budgetary allocation for the WASH services.

Climate change has had a disproportionate effect on Mongolia, with rising temperatures and reduced precipitation. Due to its geographic location and fragile ecosystem, Mongolia is highly vulnerable to climate change and its consequences, including droughts, floods and cyclical dzuds – slow-onset disasters associated with extreme temperatures that can lead to excessive livestock deaths. These phenomena threaten the well-being of poor herder communities and children in particular.

### 2. SDGS And the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector

A combination of rapid modernization and a traditional lifestyle under harsh climatic conditions presents many challenges for the delivery of equitable social services, including WASH. Low coverage of basic

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<sup>1</sup> NSO: [http://www.1212.mn/stat.aspx?LIST\\_ID=976\\_L03](http://www.1212.mn/stat.aspx?LIST_ID=976_L03)

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services for drinking water supply (59%) and sanitation facilities (41%) in rural areas of Mongolia constitute another priority, aggravated by geographic, income and gender disparities (WHO/UNICEF JMP, 2017)<sup>2</sup>.

The JMP data show that use of basic water sources is much higher in urban areas (95 per cent) than in rural areas (59 per cent) and use of basic sanitation facilities is also higher in urban areas (66 per cent) than in rural areas (41 per cent). Open defecation (or no service in sanitation) is high in rural areas at 31 per cent. JMP data also show improving trends on other indicators, such as households with a specific place (basic service) to wash hands and the availability of soap, which stands at 72 per cent as the national average (49 per cent for rural and 81 per cent for urban households).

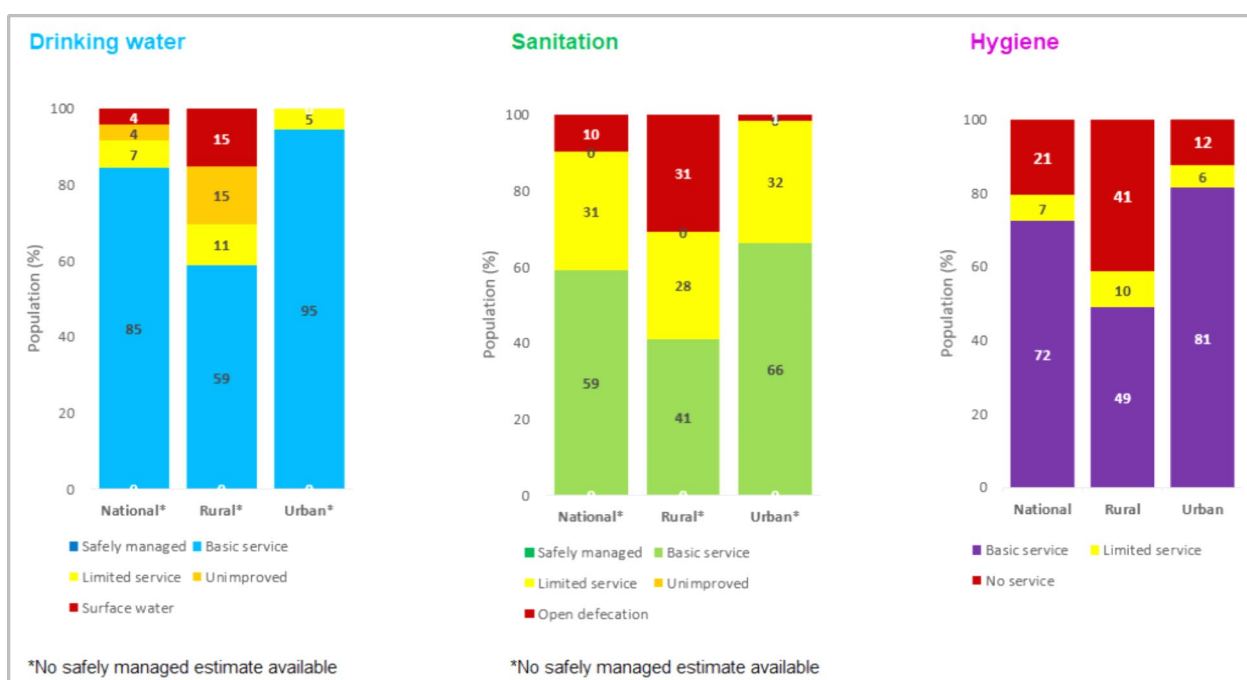


Figure 1. Water and sanitation coverage in Mongolia, JMP

The most important causes of low access to WASH services are related to persisting negative social and cultural practices and beliefs together with limited quality infrastructure. This is exacerbated by Mongolia's extreme climate, the remoteness of populations, lack of budget allocation and an overall low prioritization at the political level.

**The national vision for the WASH sector.** Guided by its new Sustainable Development Vision (SDV)-2030<sup>3</sup>, Mongolia continues to have favorable conditions to translate its economic potential into socio-economic gains, thanks to a young and dynamic society, and a vibrant parliamentary democracy. By 2030, Mongolia

<sup>2</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme: <https://washdata.org>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205\\_mongolia\\_sdv\\_2030.pdf](http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205_mongolia_sdv_2030.pdf)

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aspires to be amongst leading middle-income countries based on per capita income. It hopes to be a multi-sector stable economy, and a society dominated by middle and upper-middle income classes, which would preserve ecological balance, and have stable and democratic governance.

Mongolia aims to achieve the following national targets on water resource protection and safely managed WASH service coverage, through the implementation of the Mongolia SDV-2030:

- **Objective 1. Protect water resources and prevent water shortage.** It has three phases (2016-2020, 2021-2025 and 2026-2030) mainly focusing on protection of freshwater resources, river flows and implementation of complex water conservation and sustainable use projects, and construction of more water reservoirs/tanks to reserve surface waters.
- **Objective 2. Increase drinking water supply that meets health standards and improve the availability of sanitation and hygiene facilities.** It also covers three phases:
  - Phase I - (2016-2020): Ensure that 80 percent of the population is supplied with safe (safely managed) drinking water, and 40 percent of the population uses improved (safely managed) sanitation and hygiene facilities.
  - Phase II – (2021-2025): Ensure that 85 percent of the population is supplied with safe (safely managed) drinking water, and 50 percent of the population uses improved (safely managed) sanitation and hygiene facilities.
  - Phase III – (2026-2030): Ensure that 90 percent of the population is supplied with safe (safely managed) drinking water, and 60 percent of the population uses improved (safely managed) sanitation and hygiene facilities.

**Table 1. National targets for WASH services coverage in Mongolia (Mongolia-SDV-2030)**

WASH Indicators	Baseline (2018)	National targets (2020)	National targets (2025)	National targets (2030)
Safely managed drinking water service (at national level)	No data* (Basic service: 85%)**	80%	85%	90%
Safely managed sanitation facilities (at national level)	No data* (Basic service: 59%)**	40%	50%	60%
Safely managed hygiene (hand washing) facilities (at national level)	No data* (Basic service: 72%)**	40%	50%	60%

\* No safely managed estimate available.

\*\*Basic service data is taken from WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme: <https://washdata.org>

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## 3. Water, sanitation and hygiene Financing

Most of the capital revenues for major WASH infrastructure are raised at the central level through the government taxation system and form part of the state budget allocated by ministries (primarily through the MCUD). Central government ministries are the primary creators of new capital infrastructure in Mongolia.

Over the period from 2002 to 2010, the estimated total water and sanitation related expenditure represented 2.1 per cent of the total government expenditure. Between 2003 and 2011, the Mongolian government spent an average of US\$15 million per year (at the 2010 constant US\$ value) on water and sanitation infrastructure and programmes. In comparison, official development assistance (ODA) over the same period was slightly lower at US\$12.2 million on average per year. Nearly half (49.9 per cent) of governmental expenditure in the period was focused on large water and sanitation systems (defined as large reticulated water supply systems, sewerage networks and waste treatment facilities), whereas the primary focus of ODA was on 'basic' water and sanitation (such as small-scale or point-source/on-site water and sanitation infrastructure).

Comparing to above data of financing of water and sanitation provision, in 2018 the state financing to this sector was increased as 4.0 percent of national budget expenditure and spent US\$19,030.0 million of foreign investments to the project implementation towards water and sanitation infrastructure.

## 4. Implementation of SWA Guiding Principles, Collaborative Behaviours and Building Blocks in Mongolia

In Mongolia, all stakeholders in the national and local levels, who are responsible for the water, sanitation and hygiene, are carrying out their undertaken activities addressing pressing issues to achieve the SDG-6. The structure is vertically formed.

- a) **National government:** Ministry of Construction and Urban Development (MoCUD) is responsible for managing and coordinating the policy development and implementation and setting WASH targets and standards, evaluating and enforcing performance.
- b) **Water Service Regulatory Commission (WSRC)** is responsible for the design of the tariff methodology structure and verification of requests for revision, and policy implementation coordination including national programs on the sector.
- c) **Local (province –aimag) governments** are responsible for ensuring the provision of WASH capacity services (including the supply of networked water and sewerage in urban areas).
- d) **District (capital and soums) governments** are responsible for all aspects of WASH service delivery from spatial planning, infrastructure plans, capital creation, operations and maintenance, monitoring and regulation.

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- e) **Sub-districts (rural baghs/urban khoroos)** are responsible for protecting of natural water resources by putting control and supervision on water consumption.
- f) **Service providers:** Water and sewage utility companies (e.g. USUG -Water Supply and Sewerage Authority of Ulaanbaatar City), Community Based Organizations (CBO), households, housing estates and firms are responsible for the provision of WASH services in response to consumer demand.
- g) **Citizen/consumers** are responsible for demanding a minimum quality of WASH services for all.

National and some local organizations are collaborating with foreign relevant organizations for standard and project development and implementation in this sector to deliver healthy services and ensure the equal access of water and sanitation, for instance, with UNICEF, Asian Development Bank, French Government, and Chinese Government etc.

## 5. Mongolia Commitments for strengthening WASH services

Guided by its new Sustainable Development Vision-2030<sup>4</sup>, Mongolia aims to strengthen WASH services through the following commitments:

1. Ensure achieving the national WASH targets, set by the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision-2030, with more focus on achieving **80%** target for safely managed drinking water and **40%** target for safely managed sanitation and hygiene facilities in the first stage (2016-2020) and **90%** and **60%** (2021-2030). It will be enabled through systematic analyses of the WASH sector challenges and bottlenecks, using the SWA Framework (applying its guiding principles, strengthening collaborative behaviours and the building blocks).
2. Ensure sustainable and equitable access to WASH services through improving government and partners' cooperation for practicing the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Collaborative Behaviours (enhancing government leadership, strengthening the national system, using one information and accountability platform and building sustainable WASH sector financing strategies).
3. Ensure to eliminate inequalities in WASH services, using "No one left behind" strategy. Provide more attention for establishing sustainable financing mechanisms that address the progressive elimination of inequalities targeting most vulnerable and marginalized groups.

## 6. Mechanisms for Review and Follow-Up on The Priorities and Commitments

The above commitments will be reviewed and followed by the by national level review mechanisms for implementation of the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision-2030 and Mongolian Government Action Plan.

## 7. Processes and Materials Used in The Preparation of The Brief

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205\\_mongolia\\_sdv\\_2030.pdf](http://www.un-page.org/files/public/20160205_mongolia_sdv_2030.pdf)

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The following materials used for preparation of this document:

- Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision-2030,
- Data and reports from Ministry of Finance,
- National data sources: Household surveys and census by National Statistical office of Mongolia (NSO)
- WHO/UNICEF JMP reports

## 8. Contacts

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