



# The WBCSD Pledge for Access to Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at the Workplace



An  
investment  
in people  
and business



wbcSD water



# Investing in safe WASH for employees leads to:



## **A healthier and more productive workforce:**

Adequate access to safe WASH is associated with decreased absenteeism due to water-related diseases, and thus improved productivity.



**Increased brand value:** Provision of access to safe WASH to all employees can also lead to tangible benefits, such as improved public perception, and thus increased brand value.



**Lower reputational risks and more secured social license to operate:** Perceived mismanagement of water resources or infringement on the Human Right to Water and Sanitation can negatively impact businesses and possibly result in revoking the company's social license to operate within certain communities. Good water management and provision of safe WASH allows them to lower this risk.



**Expanded and more vibrant markets:** Countries with higher percentages of the population with access to safe WASH enjoy higher growth. It is estimated that for every US\$ 1 invested in water and sanitation, US\$ 4.30 is generated in economic returns through increased productivity.



**Demonstration of leadership in supporting global objectives:** Ensuring safe WASH at the workplace contributes to the achievement of internationally recognized objectives such as the universal realization of the Human Right to Water and Sanitation.



# An Action2020 business solution based on ...

**Action2020** is a business sustainability agenda towards 2020 and beyond, led by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), with water as one of the identified priority areas for urgent action at scale.

As a direct contribution to accelerate solutions to the global challenge of access to safe **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**, the WBCSD is calling for the business community to sign and implement the **Pledge for Access to Safe WASH at the Workplace**.

## ... a strong business case ...

It is estimated that more than **1.8 billion** people are still without access to safe drinking water<sup>1</sup> and more than **4 billion** lack access to adequate sanitation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it has been shown that the simple act of washing hands with soap can significantly cut the risk of diarrhea by approximately **40 percent**.<sup>3</sup>

Many businesses have operations, employees, contractors and customers in countries lacking access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Their economic, social and environmental impacts can cause illness or fatalities, impair productivity, and restrict markets for some products and services. There is a compelling and clear economic case for businesses to demonstrate leadership by addressing this situation.

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- 1 - Onda, K., J. LoBuglio, J. Bartram, "Global Access to Safe Water: Accounting for Water Quality and the Resulting Impact on MDG Progress," International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 9, 880-894, 2012 (<http://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/9/3/880>)
  - 2 - Baum, R., J. Luh, J. Bartram, "Sanitation: a global estimate of sewerage connections without treatment and the resulting impact on MDG progress," Environmental Science and Technology, January 2013
  - 3 - Fewtrell et al., 2005, quoted at <http://globalhandwashing.org/why/health-impact#sthash.ffkYc3T8.dpuf>

## ... with straightforward implementation

By signing the Pledge, companies commit to implementing access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at the workplace at an appropriate level of standard for all employees in all premises under direct control within three years.

P

**P**lanetary movement: To achieve WBCSD's Vision 2050, where 9 billion people are able to live well within the limits of the planet, the aim is to increase exponentially the number of Pledge signatories and create a strong business momentum around it.

E

**E**xtending impact: Forward-looking businesses are encouraged to move from implementation at a company's own premises to promotion across value chains (including supply chains, employees' homes and communities).

G

**G**uidance and tools: A Self-Assessment Tool and Guiding Principles for implementation, including points of reference for good practices, have been developed by the WBCSD to support companies in operationalizing the Pledge. They can be downloaded from: [www.wbcd.org/washatworkplace.aspx](http://www.wbcd.org/washatworkplace.aspx).

P

L

E



If all WBCSD members were to sign the Pledge, **15 million employees** would have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene at the workplace.



L

**Non-Legally binding commitment:** The implementation of the Pledge aims to be integrated in existing company processes rather than responding to an externally imposed requirement.

D

**D**irect and straightforward signature process: Any person in a position to commit the company can sign by sending a written statement in an email. For more information, visit [www.wbcسد.org/washatworkplace.aspx](http://www.wbcسد.org/washatworkplace.aspx).

E

**E**xperience-sharing: There are no formal reporting requirements but companies are encouraged to communicate externally about the Pledge, while sharing their implementation experiences and feedback with the WBCSD.

D

G

E

*"We already commit to providing access to clean water to our employees at all of our direct operations, as part of our existing commitment on water stewardship. By signing the WASH pledge, we are reaffirming this commitment and our recognition of our responsibilities as manufacturer and employer. We hope that together with the other companies that have already signed up, we can encourage more businesses to do the same."*

**Carlo Galli**, Technical Manager  
for Water Resources,  
Nestlé

[www.wbcsd.org](http://www.wbcsd.org)

To join the Pledge signatories, download its supporting documents, and read about implementation experiences, visit [www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx](http://www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx)



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