



IFEH

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HEALTH

Message from IFEH President, Dr. Henroy Scarlett to commemorate WEHD 2022

The inauguration of World Environmental Health Day (WEHD) by the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) took place on September 26, 2011, in Indonesia, and ever since, this day is celebrated annually by all environmental health practitioners/officers/public health inspectors, academics in the field of environmental health, national governments, municipalities, and NGOs.



The theme for WEHD this year is **“Strengthening environmental health systems for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”**. “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership”. The focus on the SDGs in this year’s theme is of particular significance given the fact that several of the goals, targets, and indicators of the SDGs are directly related to the environment and environmental health. Consequently, the SDGs cannot be attained without significant improvement in the myriad of global environmental problems that abound. Traditional approaches to addressing environmental problems have focused on education, regulation, and the provision of services. However, these approaches operate within the context of differences between health systems which may range from weak to strong. The strengthening of environmental health systems at every level globally is a pre-requisite for the sustainable development and delivery of effective environmental health services.

Strengthening environmental health systems should focus on training and utilizing more environmental health practitioners (EHPs) as managers of environmental health services; workforce development and deployment; improving the skillsets of EHPs to conduct local research to enhance the formulation of policy, informed decision making, and programme planning and evaluation; appropriate budgetary allocations; equipping EHPs with appropriate technology to conduct and report on their work; and simply to recognize EHPs for their contributions to world health, peace, and prosperity.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 provides information on the attainment of the 17 Goals and paints a grim analysis of the current situation. The report “reveals that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is in grave jeopardy due to multiple, cascading and intersecting crises”. Key conclusions from the report are:

- “The world is facing a confluence of crises that threaten the very survival of humanity. All these crises – and ways to prevent and navigate them – are addressed holistically in the SDGs. We ignore them at our own peril”.
- “Policies, programmes and resources aimed at protecting people during this most challenging time will inevitably fall short without the evidence needed to focus interventions”.
- “The severity and magnitude of the challenges before us demand sweeping changes on a scale not yet seen in human history”.
- “Despite some progress, serious data gaps persist in SDG monitoring”

Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of countries or areas with available data since 2015, by Goal (percentage).

Proportion of countries or areas with available data since 2015, by Goal (percentage)

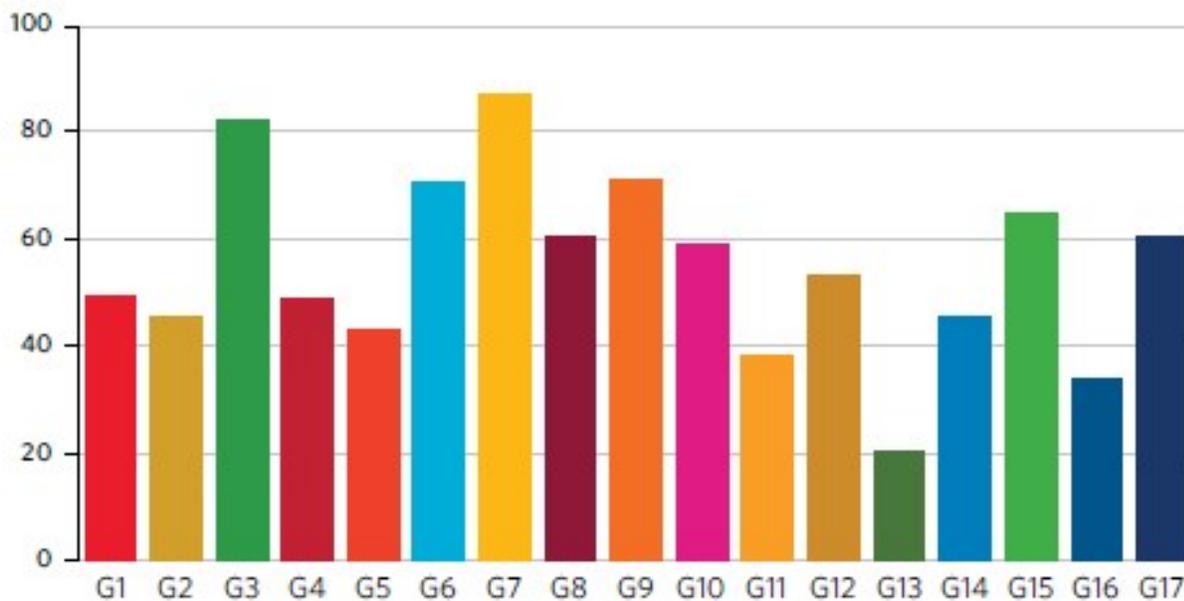


Figure 1: Proportion of countries or areas with available data since 2015, by Goal (percentage)

Source: The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 ([THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#))

If we focus on one of the goals that is directly related to environmental health, Goal 6 seeks to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The 2022 Report reveals that “Meeting drinking water, sanitation and hygiene targets by 2030 will require a fourfold increase in the pace of progress” and that “Achieving these targets would save 829,000 lives annually”. In relation to drinking water targets, at the current rate of progress, the world will reach 81% coverage by 2030, missing the target and leaving 1.6 billion people without safely managed drinking water supplies. The 2022 Report points out that from 2015 to 2020, the world population using safely managed sanitation services increased from 47 % to 54 % and if the rates of progress continue, the world will reach 67 % coverage by 2030, leaving 2.8 billion people without access.

Other goals directly related to environmental health are in danger of not being met by 2030 and consequently strengthening environmental health systems assumes greater urgency to address these goals. I am however excited at the plans being made globally by environmental health associations and academic institutions affiliated to the IFEH and local, provincial, and national governments and NGOs to recognize and commemorate WEHD on September 26, 2022. As the support for WEHD continues to gain momentum, we invite all other institutions and organizations to join us in focusing on environmental health as the environment is one of the most powerful determinants of health. The global environmental workforce needs special commendation and recognition for their continued efforts, even under harsh working conditions to make environmental health their priority daily. The IFEH salutes this great workforce and pledges to provide the leadership, inspiration, advocacy, and direction to ensure success despite the many and varied challenges.

IFEH invitation for engagement

To make your initiative in regard to World Environmental Health Day 2022 known for the rest of the World, organizations and institutions etc. are welcomed to have your initiative highlighted on the IFEH website on this special webpage: www.ifeh.org/wehd/ . Just inform our IFEH webmaster: webmaster@ifeh.org or/and you can use our IFEH Face book profile <https://www.facebook.com/ifeh.org>

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