

# ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF POOR SANITATION IN AFRICA



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## The key messages

### 18 African countries are losing about US\$5.5 billion every year due to poor sanitation

- These countries account for 448million people, which is almost half of Africa's population.
- The annual economic losses due to poor sanitation are equivalent to between 1% and 2.5% of GDP.
- The true cost could be much higher: these analyses only deals with losses due to premature deaths, healthcare costs, losses in productivity, and time lost through the practice of open defecation.
- Other impacts of inadequate sanitation likely to be significant, but difficult and expensive to estimate and therefore not included, include the costs of epidemic outbreaks; losses in trade and tourism revenue; impact of unsafe excreta disposal on water resources; and the long-term effects of poor sanitation on early childhood development.

### Open defecation alone accounts for almost US\$2 billion in annual losses in 18 countries

- More than 114 million people still defecate in the open in the 18 countries analyzed; this is about half the number of people on the continent who have no latrine at all and defecate in the open and almost 24% of the total population in the countries surveyed.
- Eliminating the practice of open defecation in these countries would require about 23 million toilets to be built and used.

### Open defecation costs more per person than any other type of unimproved sanitation

- Each person without access to a toilet can spend up to 2.5 days a year finding a private location to defecate, resulting in losses totaling almost US\$500 million in access time annually due to open defecation for the 18 countries surveyed.
- Women shoulder a huge proportion of this cost as they spend additional time accompanying young children or sick or elderly relatives to relieve themselves, as well as time spent finding a safe place for urination.

### The burden of poor sanitation falls disproportionately on the poor

- In all countries, the poorest people are more likely to practice open defecation than the wealthiest people.
- The poorest people have to pay disproportionately more for the negative effects of poor sanitation.

### In most countries, current investments in sanitation are less than 0.1% of GDP

- According to the 2011 eThekweni commitments monitoring carried out by countries, currently only five of the 18 countries analyzed invest more than 0.1% of GDP in sanitation. Most countries invest less than 0.1% of GDP.
- Although African countries committed to increase their budgetary allocations for sanitation to at least 0.5% of GDP (eThekweni Declaration, 2008), none of the 18 countries surveyed has reached that target yet.

These findings make a strong case for increased investments in sanitation, increased attention to the bottlenecks constraining delivery of sanitation services, specific pro-poor policies, and the elimination of open defecation.

# Sanitation Data from 18 Countries in Africa

	Country	Population (millions)	Annual cost of poor sanitation to national economy (\$ millions)	National economic loss as % of GDP	Annual cost of open defecation (\$ millions)	No. of latrines needed to eliminate open defecation (approx.)
1.	Benin	8.8	104	1.5	75	1,000,000
2.	Burkina Faso	15.8	171	2	124	2,000,000
3.	Central African Republic	4.7	26	1.2	9.1	200,000
4.	Congo, Republic of	4.0	144	1.1	20	65,000
5.	Democratic Republic of Congo	68.7	208	1.6	32	1,500,000
6.	Ghana	23.9	290	1.6	79	1,000,000
7.	Kenya	39.0	324	0.9	88	1,200,000
8.	Liberia	3.6	17.5	2	11	350,000
9.	Madagascar	20.7	103	1	48	1,500,000
10.	Mauritania	3.1	41	1.2	30	350,000
11.	Mozambique	21.7	124	1.2	70	2,000,000
12.	Niger	15.3	148	2.4	128	2,000,000
13.	Nigeria	149	3,000	1.3	1,000	6,500,000
14.	Rwanda	10.7	54	0.9	3.9	70,000
15.	Tanzania	41.0	206	1	46	1,000,000
16.	Tchad	10.3	156	2.1	114	1,500,000
17.	Uganda	32.4	177	1.1	41	650,000
18.	Zambia	11.9	194	1.3	71	420,000

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