



Water and COVID-19:

Responding to crisis
emergency response, crisis recovery and future
development planning

Dr Håkan Tropp

Programme Director, SIWI

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Water security and COVID-19

Water Perspectives:

- Impacts on water and sanitation services - Utility revenues are going down!
- In countries with non-universal access lack of water and sanitation services help drive spread of COVID-19 virus
- Tracing COVID-19 virus in sewage water as an early warning system of pandemic
- Water security has to be part of social and economic recovery policies and plans



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WATER AND COVID-19
#STAYATHOME



Water is always essential, but at this exceptional time it is vital to ensure hygiene



Handwashing is an essential measure to prevent infectious diseases, including COVID-19



Only toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet. Any other substitute (kitchen roll or wet wipes) can block sewers

MYTH BUSTERS



It cannot be transmitted through tap water



Drinking hot water does not prevent infection



Breathing water vapour does not prevent the disease



It cannot be cured by drinking garlic water

Changing Development Cooperation Landscape

- ❑ GDP is expected to drop dramatically in 2020
 - The US economy shrunk by 4.8 per cent in the first quarter of the year
 - The European Union's GDP decreased by 3.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 (France 5,8%, Spain 5,2%, Italy 4.7%)
 - Economies hit by Covid-19 are expected to contract by some 6-12% by the end of 2020 and unemployment rates soaring to 12-15 % or more.
- ❑ Many countries' development cooperation budgets are directly dependent on the size of GDP/GNI
 - There will be less development cooperation budget overall
 - Due to social and economic recovery needs there may also be risks that donor countries may allocate even less for development cooperation
 - Donors will re-prioritise their support to Covid-19 social and economic recovery.

How will this affect water and environment priorities?

- **Dwindling revenues for water utilities risk set-backs to achieve SDG6:** Severe implications for water utility cash flow and longer-term financial stability to maintain quality of water services. Some governments give consumers payment holidays while utilities accumulate costs and continue to pay full for all support services.
- **Water security is key to manage crisis and social and economic recovery:** How we value, manage and invest in water should be part of post-pandemic strategies of social and economic recovery to build a more resilient society towards future shocks of natural or man-made disasters.

Ways Forward: What next?

- Short term governments need to **reassure cash-flow** (solvency) of water utilities
- Governments to consider **supporting municipal water supply and sanitation investments** for building a more resilient water sector and to provide **local job opportunities**
- Governments to consider investing in **improved water resources management** as strategy of **water security and social and economic recovery** (investment stimulus packages for job creation)

SDG 6 - Water and Sanitation for All - aims at ensuring access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services - **fundamental to fighting the pandemic** and preserving the health and well being of people.



Some Conclusions