

# New water supply, waste management project launched in Welenchiti, Ethiopia

A new model water supply, sanitation and waste management system was recently added to Ethiopia's water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in the town of Welenchiti, Oromia Region. Part of the ONEWASH Plus programme, the system integrates innovative and resilient solutions to provide WASH services to more than 48,000 people, including more than 22,000 children under the age of 15, residing in the town and its satellite villages.



Ethiopia inaugurates model water supply and waste management project in Oromia Region. (Source: UNICEF Ethiopia)

Attending the inauguration were Dr Girma Amente, vice president, coordinator of infrastructures, Oromia Regional Government; Harriett Baldwin, minister for Africa at the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; Dr Negash Wagesho, state minister of water, irrigation and energy; Gillian Mellsop, UNICEF representative in Ethiopia; officials from the Oromia Regional Government, and Welenchiti and Boset Woreda administration officials and the media.

Dr Girma Amente said, “We are inaugurating a special project today, a project which focuses on water but also connects water to health, environment and agriculture. The Oromia Regional Government is committed to adopt and scale up this model water supply and waste management project to other towns of the region.”

## Clean water supply coverage

Wagesho said that the ministry has planned to achieve clean water supply coverage at rural, urban and national levels (85%, 75% and 83% respectively) at the end of the second Growth and Transformation plan. To achieve the target, the ministry is working hand in hand with donors, non-governmental organisations and communities.

“This project can provide sufficient clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to the population of the Welenchiti town and surrounding rural areas for the coming 20 years. The project enhances the coverage of the clean water supply of town to its fullest potential. The ministry appreciates the support and contribution of the DFID and UNICEF to the water sector.”

Baldwin said the Welenchiti project represented an excellent example of partnership between the UK, UNICEF and regional and federal government delivering improvements to local people’s livelihoods.

## Empowering women and girls

“The UK takes very seriously our commitment to the Global Goals, and our work to support Ethiopia to improve its water and sanitation facilities is an excellent demonstration of this. Projects like this support our efforts to empower women and girls - they can make the difference between girls staying in school or dropping out. WASH underpins the effective functioning of health facilities. And towns like Welenchiti will only effectively support industry and economic growth with good water supply in place. I am delighted to be here today to see first-hand how the local population is benefiting.”

Mellsop said the project was one of the greatest achievements of the ONEWASH Plus programme and stands as a testament to the tremendous good that can be achieved when everyone pools their resources together towards one common purpose.

“Investments of this nature, both in Welenchiti and elsewhere in Ethiopia, are not just improving access to essential services but are changing entire lives,” said Mellsop. “Women and girls no longer have to walk long distances and spend many hours fetching water. Girls can go to school and attend to their schoolwork while mothers have enough time to spend with their children and engage in other productive activities. For communities, a safe and clean environment means fewer disease outbreaks.”



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## Existing system expanded

The Welenchiti project involved expanding the capacity of the town’s existing system to supply water to the town and three satellite villages, integrating it with a “full chain” system for managing liquid sludge and waste (from containment to recycling), improving water and sanitation in institutions such as schools and health facilities, and establishing a business model for managing the facility comprising the local administration and private operators.

The ONEWASH Plus programme, funded by the UK through DFID and by regional governments (by contributing up to 30% of the total cost), is implemented by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, regional sector bureaus, and the Water Resource Development Fund. The programme also works with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction, and respective sector regional bureaus, as well as town administrations and town water supply and sewerage utilities.

The programme, which began in 2013, will benefit 250,000 people in eight small towns and surrounding rural villages in Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Tigray regions with a total investment of some \$36m by targeting communities living in towns

and in peri-urban areas. Models such as the one in Welenchiti, some large and others medium sized, are now a key component of the ONEWASH programme across more than 1,000 towns in the four regions in Ethiopia.

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