

SDG 6: Target 6.3 Speaker Notes

To accompany the Target 6.3 Slide Deck

- Slide 1: Today we'll be examining the third target of SDG 6.
- Slide 2: As a quick refresher (or brief introduction) - sustainable development goal 6 is to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all." Here's a short video highlighting some of the key issues this sustainable development goal addresses. *Play video.*
- Slide 3: As stated by the United Nations, Target 6.B is "By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally." In the following slides, we'll break down this goal into its key components and how we can track progress on this goal.
- Slide 4: To provide background on target 6.3, according to UNICEF and WHO, approximately 1.8 billion people use a source of drinking water contaminated with feces, which puts them at increased risk of contracting cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio.
- Slide 5: Target 6.3 has two indicators, 6.3.1 and 6.3.2. These indicators are how we measure progress under SDG 6.3. We'll break each of these indicators down in the following slides.
- Slide 6: Indicator 6.3.1 is the proportion of wastewater safely treated. A possible metric we can use to measure progress under this indicator is the amount of domestic and industrial wastewater that gets treated.
- Slide 7: This graphic provides a further look into the proportion of domestic and industrial wastewater safely treated. As you can see, there are many countries that have not voluntarily reported data under this indicator. As for those who have, the United States and European countries have the highest proportion of wastewater treated with 75-100%. The countries that see the lowest amount of wastewater treatment are located in South America, Africa, and Asia.
- Slide 8: Data published by the UN WWDR shows that over 80% of wastewater is released into the environment without adequate treatment. This contributes to environmental degradation and has negative implications for agriculture and human consumption.
- Slide 9: The first case study that we will examine under SDG 6.3 is hazardous e-waste in China. The highest overall contributor to E-Waste is Asia, but the highest contributors

per capita are the United States, Europe, and Oceania. Regardless of the origin, a large portion of it will end up in China.

Some of this e-waste that is illegally shipped to China, will end up being recycled by informal recycling centers. These informal recycling centers pose great threat to the surrounding environment as they do not follow regulations and policy that would protect themselves or the ecosystem from danger. The chemicals found in e-waste like barium, lead, and mercury then seep into the environment where they find their way into rivers, ponds, and groundwater.

- Slide 10: [READ QUOTE] from Ruediger Kuehr, the lead author on the report about E-Waste in China and head of the Sustainable Cycles program at the United Nations University.
- Slide 11: These two videos from CNN and the UN provide further information on the topic. *play videos*
- Slide 12: Indicator 6.3.2 is the proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality. A possible metric we can use to measure is self-reported data from countries.
- Slide 13: Unfortunately, not enough countries have reported recent data to be able to estimate the proportion of safely treated wastewater on a global level. Additionally, not enough countries reported data on the proportion of water bodies with a good ambient water quality to create a statistic on the global level.
- Slide 14: Of the 89 countries that provided data on water quality, 60% of water bodies have good ambient water quality according to UN Water.
- Slide 15: The second case study that we will examine under SDG 6.3 is toxic water in the Ganges. To provide context on the situation, here are some facts of the area to know. The Ganges River begins in the Himalayas. It flows through Northern India, then Bangladesh, and finally enters the ocean at the Bay of Bengal. The river is extremely polluted and known to have extraordinary levels of the bacteria fecal coliform, making the water unacceptable for human consumption. Despite this, it is the main water source for nearly half a billion people.

In terms of barriers to water treatment, one of the largest challenges is restoring the water flow which would contribute to cleansing the river. However, much of the river's natural flow has been disrupted by dams, diversion for agricultural use, and industrial use. Additionally, climate change is exacerbating the problem as the glaciers that feed the river are diminishing. Perhaps the largest barrier is finance, as the amount of money it would take to develop and enact restoration projects for the Ganges River is astronomical.

There are many consequences of the Ganges water being polluted. Perhaps one of the most obvious is that it is dangerous for humans to bathe in this river, let alone drink it and utilize the water for agriculture. Additionally, many of those who live in the areas surrounding the river are religious, with the primary religion being Hinduism. Many of those practicing Hinduism view the river as a goddess, some believing that the pollution cannot harm her. While religious ceremonies and practices can contribute to the pollution, like disposing of dead bodies in the river as a funeral proceeding and putting non-biodegradable objects in the water as offerings; a primary contributor to the pollution is industry waste from the urban areas that border the Ganges.

- Slide 16: [READ QUOTE] this quote from Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, swami from the riverside city of Rishikesh, shows the consequences the complete degradation of the Ganges River would have on Hinduism.
- Slide 17: These two videos provide additional information on the topic. *play video*
- Slide 18: The targets within SDG 6 are interconnected, and are also related to the targets in many of the other sustainable development goals. This graphic depicts the interrelated nature of the targets. The number of connections between the SDGs emphasizes the importance of collaborations between different experts and stakeholders from many different disciplines and sectors.
- Slide 19: N/A
- Slide 20: N/A