



World Water Week 2025

Special Session:

Sunday, Aug. 24, 2025

The [Water Institute at UNC](#) and the [African Ministers' Council on Water \(AMCOW\)](#) came together at [SIWI's World Water Week](#) on Aug. 24, 2025, to address the emergent public health challenge in sub-Saharan Africa of lead in drinking water. The event, titled "Eliminating Lead in Drinking Water: Focus on Africa," shared new evidence of exposure pathways, identifying lead-leaching pipes and parts in rural drinking water systems as the primary source of contamination.

The evidence presented showed that lead — a potent neurotoxin that has significant, lifelong impacts on health, particularly in children — is present in rural drinking water systems at levels above World Health Organization guideline values. Presenters provided next steps for mitigation and prevention, inspiring new inter-African agreement on goals and standards for safe drinking water.

Dr. Rashid Mbaziira, the Executive Secretary of AMCOW, called for the use of lead-free components to prevent future harm from lead contamination of drinking water, and the Honorable Kenneth Gilbert Adjei of the Ministry of Works, Housing, and Water Resources, Ghana, called for an AMCOW-led roadmap to enable effective prevention and elimination of lead from drinking water.

Other participants echoed the need for an African Roadmap to address lead in drinking water and a commitment from African governments to eliminate the use of lead-leaching parts and components in the construction of new water supply systems by 2030. Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa have already committed to this pledge.

This event was supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Key contributions to this event were made by the International Working Group on Toxic Metals members, IAPMO, RTI International, Aquaya, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization.