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#### Abstract:

The ability of water and wastewater utilities to provide high quality water and sanitation services for their customers now and in the future will be determined, in part, by utilities' resilience to climate change. The extent to which utilities invest in the infrastructure, planning, and operational practices that increase resilience is affected by the extent to which water sector professionals perceive climate change and its related impacts as an important risk to utility operations. This study examines the perceptions of water sector professionals in Sub-Saharan Africa towards a variety of risks facing water and wastewater utilities. In particular, we surveyed participants at the 2016 African Water Association's Congress in Nairobi, Kenya to assess their perceptions of several climate-specific and general risk factors that may disrupt utility service. We find that water sector professionals' average risk perception toward impacts from eight different climate-specific factors on utilities is lower than their perceived risk associated with general risk factors. We also find that professionals in the sector that do not work directly for utilities are more concerned about climate-specific risks and climate change in general than utility professionals. These findings highlight the multiple, competing risks utilities face and the need for adaptation strategies that simultaneously address climate and non-climate concerns of utilities.

Key words: climate change, risk perception, water, sanitation, Africa

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