27 February 2017

**Overview**

The SWA global partnership supports government-led national processes to ensure sanitation, water, and hygiene for all, always, and everywhere. To support this country-level activity, the partnership regularly convenes global High-level Meetings, bringing together government ministers and a wide variety of other stakeholders to elevate sector priorities to the highest levels, and help drive and align action.

In 2017, the SWA High-level Meetings will consist of a Finance Ministers’ Meeting and a Sector Ministers’ Meeting. These meetings are part of the wider SWA High-level Political Dialogue that also includes vital preparatory and follow-up activity by country partners, work that both equips ministers for the meetings, and then ensures that agreed priorities are turned into action.

The meetings attract global leaders in the sector, and emphasis is placed on facilitating free-flowing discussions to exchange experiences, generate ideas, and find workable solutions. They also provide a stimulus for greater interaction between ministers of finance and ministers of sanitation and water in their home countries, in the lead up to the meetings, and afterwards.

**2017 Finance Ministers’ Meeting (20 April, 5-7pm)**

This Finance Ministers’ Meeting is, for the first time, part of the World Bank’s formal Spring Meetings agenda. The finance ministers will seek to identify solutions to close the financing gap for sanitation and water. Progress for this sector is not only directly called for by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but has a significant spillover effect across many other areas of the SDGs.

This year’s Finance Ministers’ Meeting follows their 2014 meeting when over 20 finance ministers were in attendance, showing the high political support to the sanitation and water sector. The meeting will cover the magnitude of the financial challenge, how to use existing resources more efficiently, and how to access additional resources, focusing in particular on domestic sources. The ministers will also consider how international cooperation can best be used in order to reach countries’ SDG targets. The meeting will seek to get ministers’ endorsement of key policy principles on sector financing, with a focus on eliminating inequalities, achieving universal access, and ensuring sustainability.

The meeting will be chaired by the Hon Kevin Rudd, Chair of the SWA global partnership and former Prime Minister of Australia. Keynote speakers will be confirmed at a later date.

**2017 Sector Ministers’ Meeting (19 and 20 April)**

The Sector Ministers’ Meeting will build on their most recent meeting, in Addis Ababa in March 2016, which was the first time ministers convened following the adoption of the SDGs. At this year’s meeting, convened by UNICEF on behalf of the partnership, ministers will follow up on these discussions, and continue to discuss ideas on the practical challenges of meeting the sanitation, water, and hygiene-related SDG targets, exchanging ideas and experiences in institution and capacity building, planning, and monitoring, in part to inform the discussions at the Finance Ministers’ Meeting. They will also discuss bottlenecks to progress and potential solutions, and where particular roles and responsibilities lie. One particularly fruitful opportunity the meeting provides, is the significant time devoted to inter-ministerial multi-regional discussions, from where some of the most operational ideas emerge.

Ministers from around 60 countries have been invited. Other partners including heads of bilateral donor agencies, UN agencies, private sector partners, civil society organizations, and research and learning institutions will also attend.

This meeting will also be chaired by the Hon Kevin Rudd. Keynote speakers will be confirmed at a later date.

**Meeting Preparatory Work and Follow-up**

The preparation process for the High-level Meetings, being facilitated by the SWA global partnership Secretariat, provides a structured plan for partners to best equip their ministers for success. In the months leading up to the meetings, it involves in-country multi-sectoral dialogue, developing political engagement, and providing ministers with a completed Country Overview for a comprehensive understanding of the sector’s state-of-play. These preparation efforts then provide a firm foundation for the follow-up efforts, including using the benchmarking evidence from the Country Overviews for planning and monitoring future activities.

**SDGs and Sanitation, Water, and Hygiene**

The 17 SDGs were adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. They include a dedicated goal for sanitation and water (Goal 6), elevating the importance of success in sanitation, water, and hygiene in recognition of the critical role they plan in overall human development. Not only is success in the sector a goal in itself, with its ambitious new target of universal access, but it is also recognized as critical to success for a number of other SDG areas, not least health, education, and gender equality.

**Sanitation and Water for All Global Partnership and its Framework**

The SWA global partnership is the multi-stakeholder platform for sanitation, water, and hygiene. It was established eight years ago and has grown to over 150 partners, including 55 countries, civil society organizations, UN organizations, private sector players, research and learning institutions, and bilateral donors. Its mission is to address obstacles to improving access to sanitation and drinking water, including low political prioritization, insufficient and inadequate financing, lack of adequate governance structures at the national level, and a need to improve the understanding of the problem and its scale through more reliable data. The partnership’s goals from the outset have had universal access at the core, a mission now explicitly addressed and given added impetus by the SDGs. The SWA global partnership plays a catalytic role, to support more effective national processes, and align support behind government-led planning and investment strategies for achieving the sanitation, water, and hygiene-related targets of the SDGs.

The partnership has focused on developing what partners agree to be the most constructive approach possible for accelerating progress in access to sanitation, water, and hygiene. Its efforts now focus on increasing implementation of this framework at the country-level, by all national stakeholders, importantly with governments at the helm to ensure implementation best fits country priorities. Effective implementation in-country is now turning commitments into results, and demonstrating how transformational change for the sector can be a realistic target for all countries.

The SWA global partnership has developed a framework for country plans and work practices to be built around: the *what* to build (five Building Blocks of policy and planning, institutional arrangements, financing, monitoring and review, and capacity development) and the *how* they should be built (the four Collaborative Behaviours of government leadership, effective country systems, a reliable single information and monitoring platform, and sustaining financing strategies). With one of the framework’s goals being aligned action, the ‘how’ is just as important as the ‘what’. Both the Building Blocks and Collaborative Behaviours are prioritized and driven by the High-level Political Dialogue, and are the basis for discussions at the High-level Meetings.

**Support and Tools**

In addition to direct help from other SWA partners, countries also have a range of tools on hand to inform and support the achievement of their annual sanitation, water, and hygiene plans. These include the UN-Water Global Assessment and Analysis of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS) and the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report, plus diagnostic tools such as the UNICEF WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool.

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