



SANITATION
AND WATER
FOR ALL

SECTOR MINISTERS' MEETING REPORT

BEHIND
LEAVE NO ONE



Overview:

Aligning with the 2019 focus set by the UN for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) global partnership dedicated its 2019 Sector Ministers' Meeting (SMM) to 'Leave No One Behind'. Identifying and eliminating inequalities has always been central to the SWA partnership, and at this Meeting, leave no one behind became the lens through which all efforts towards achieving the SDGs were discussed.

The meeting was hosted by the Government of Costa Rica and was co-convened by UNICEF and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The President of Costa Rica, His Excellency Carlos Alvarado Quesada opened the Meeting. More than 50 ministers, and leaders from external support agencies the private sector, civil society and research and learning institutions made up the over 300 participants from 74 countries who attended the Sector Ministers' Meeting.

All plenary speakers and panels embodied SWA's multi-stakeholder approach, with every region of the world, and women, better represented than ever before at an SWA High-level Meeting. This is also a reflection of the expanding partnership and increasing numbers of women in positions of authority – as ministers, as well as within organizations and institutional partners.

Plenary sessions were interspersed with Ministerial Dialogues, which allowed for smaller groups discussing specific topics following presentation by one or two ministers. These dialogues have always been a highlight of Sector Ministers' Meetings, providing an opportunity to delve a little deeper into the issues that matter to ministers and other stakeholders, to share experiences between countries and development actors, and to build stronger links across the partnership.

The highlights of the discussions at the SMM were:

Leave no one behind

The meeting fostered a common understanding among all partners of the scale of inequalities in access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), its root causes, its impact on broader development and what needs to be done to recognize and address inequalities. The issue that was most commonly mentioned here was data – how to ensure that the data that we have is sufficient, that it is disaggregated to show the detail of who does not have access to water, sanitation and hygiene, where they live and why they do not have access. In order to be acted upon, the data must be translated into information that can be used for planning better services that reach the most marginalised and disadvantaged people. Communicating this information is critical to ensuring accountability. The ministerial dialogues provided an opportunity to discuss how critical data is to inform decision-making. However, one donor admitted that their government wants to fund infrastructure and is not as interested in investing in data collection despite the fact that this provides essential knowledge on where investments should be made.

Finance

Political commitment must be matched with national and sub-national financing strategies that utilize a range of different sources of funding to ensure that everyone is able to gain access to water and sanitation. Leaders discussed in detail how this can be achieved, while ensuring that people living in poverty, or in harder-to-reach areas are able to access affordable services. Financing for services that address inequalities must be specifically budgeted and monitored for successful allocation and expenditure of those budgets. Some countries were able to report that their budgets for water and sanitation have increased due to statistics that have demonstrated how critical these services are for development. For example, in Burundi, 8% of the budget for the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 has been dedicated to water and sanitation. The minister for Paraguay said, **„We are going to leave a legacy to humanity. Because there are human resources, there is an increasingly stronger institutional structure, there is technology and we have also seen that there are financial resources to achieve it. “**



Leadership

Eliminating inequalities in water and sanitation services demands political commitment at the highest level. This meeting focussed attention on the critical role of determined leadership to ensure that the right planning, capacity and resources are available to ensure that everyone, and particularly the poorest and most marginalized people gain access to services. Leaders discussed with their peers how they can use their position to commit to eliminating inequalities and shared the progress that they are making. As the Hon. Mr. Shahram Khan Taraki, Minister of Local Government, Pakistan, stressed, **“The leaders should lead from the front. You have to own everything, you have to guide the nation, and you have to take difficult steps to put the countries in the right step.”**

Climate change and resilience

Many participants from different parts of the world told the meeting about efforts that they are making to ensure that their programmes for water and sanitation also reflect the challenges brought on by climate change. Ethiopia explained that extreme weather phenomena (droughts and floods) is requiring them to adopt sustainable and climate resilient technologies and management systems. The World Bank also reinforced this message, stating that, **“all climate models point to more severe and intense droughts in the future,”** and the expected impact is that a quarter of the world’s cities could suffer from water shortages by 2050. As was stated by a participant in one of the ministerial dialogues, there is also an opportunity to tap into financing that is earmarked for addressing climate change, as access to both water and the disposal of waste are critical for achieving resilience.

While climate change was a topic of conversation, Sanitation and Water for All needs to engage more with the risks associated with climate change to ensure sustainability and resilience, and to make sure that we continue to make progress in improving access to water and sanitation, rather than seeing regression due to changing weather and a degrading environment.

The preparation process

The Sector Ministers’ Meeting represents the culmination of considerable work that happens in all partner countries, even those that cannot attend the actual meeting. This preparation process starts long before the first invitation letters for the meeting are sent, with webinars to inform partners about the main themes of the meeting, and how each country will be able to engage with the meeting. This year for the first time, identifying commitments under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was a significant part of the preparation process, and many countries used this to strengthen multi-stakeholder discussions on priorities and targets for achieving the SDGs. Countries are also encouraged to submit a Country Brief that summarises the context and identifies critical issues that the country and other stakeholders hope to address in the next couple of years. There was a significant increase not only in the number of countries engaging in the preparation process, but also in the quality of country briefs submitted. All commitments and country briefs are available on the Sanitation and Water for All website.

The follow-up process in the months after the Sector Ministers’ Meeting will be as significant for participating countries as the preparation process was, supporting partners in putting the lessons learnt at the Sector Ministers’ Meeting into practice.

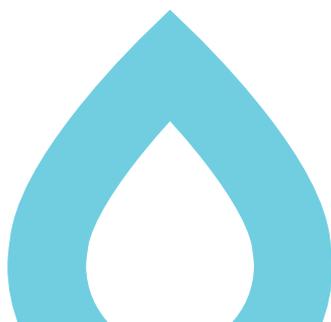
Planning, monitoring and review

At the centre of the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership is support for multi-stakeholder planning, monitoring and review processes, providing a framework for all partners to explore good practices in ensuring that no-one will be left behind. Participants discussed how multi-stakeholder processes can support targeted planning, gathering of disaggregated data and strengthen regulatory frameworks to ensure that those who have historically been left behind can gain access to water and sanitation services. In one of the ministerial dialogues, a country commented that investors’ interests can lead to neglect of more risky sectors, which can compromise a country’s planning cycle and neglect the most vulnerable people, and that care should be taken that collaboration happens at all levels regardless of potential power imbalances.



Partnership

Nurturing partnership is critical to the success of SWA’s vision to achieve the SDGs. This Sector Ministers’ Meeting provided a platform that enabled the sharing of experience between SWA’s partners in implementing innovative approaches to service delivery. Numerous connections were made between different partners from all over the globe. The Namibian minister expressed interest in learning more from the Kenyan private sector, Kenyan ministers sought advice from the Portuguese regulator. Lessons on strengthening the response to improving girls’ experience of menstruation in schools were embraced by many partners. At one of the Ministerial Dialogues on partnership, AMCOW also stressed that, **“Partnerships are living organisms, that require evolutionary efforts, and come with challenges. Partnerships do take time.”**



Plenary 1: Opening session



The sixth Sector Ministers' Meeting was called to order by **Sanitation and Water for All's High-level Chair, the Honourable Kevin Rudd**, who set the scene, emphasizing in the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene for broader development and reminded the participants of the scale of the challenge. He outlined the purpose of the meeting, which was to focus on political will; broadening leadership across government institutions; financing, critically, new financing methods; the proper deployment of human capital; and above all, ***“to increase awareness and understanding of the concept of leaving no one behind, its fundamental relationship with WASH, and its implications for leadership, partnership, planning and finance.”***



Hon. Mr. Rudd also cited the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' message to the meeting, who challenged participants, *“I count on you to develop concrete plans and solutions to overcome this significant challenge to leave not one behind.”*

The Hon. Mr. Rudd stated that The Secretary-General's words oblige us to *“use these coming days to their fullest in this pursuit.”*



Ms. Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF and Mr. Sergio Campos, Chief of the Water and Sanitation Division of the Inter-American Development Bank

provided inspiration, reminding participants of the importance of ensuring collaboration and participation for achieving the SDGs. Ms. Fore also stressed that particularly for children, the *“lack of water is deadlier than bullets and bombs. Children under 15 are almost three times more likely to die from diseases linked to unsafe water and sanitation like diarrhoea or cholera than from direct violence”*.

Given this reality, she clarified, *“There is no excuse for failing to act, so let us combine our ideas and our efforts, let us learn from one another, let us hold each other accountable for our commitments and let us make the coming decade one of action, results and progress for this critical sector.”*



Mr. Campos, said *“We need to move from conventional solutions to, not non-conventional solutions, but to more optimal solutions that put people first rather than infrastructure.”*



His Excellency Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of Costa Rica, in his keynote speech as host of the Sector Ministers' Meeting, pulled no punches with his expressive, *“Shit matters”*. He clarified, stating, *“There is no need to have a universal social security system if at the origin, in the prevention, we fail. Even the return on investment is much greater in completing sanitation, access to water and access to hygiene than having a universal social security service.”* Mr. Rudd welcomed Quesada's keynote, remarking *“Partnerships across all sectors creates results”*.



Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, CEO of Sanitation and Water for All

rounded off the opening session with a call to arms, *“This is a global level meeting with the potential to significantly impact mankind and we must call attention to issues that are critical to human development.”* She went on to ask participants to discuss ways to undertake the following actions:

- Secure political will and political commitment
- Deliver reliable and desegregated data on who does not have access to sanitation and water, as people who are invisible cannot be assisted
- Combat stigma in the sector to avoid exclusion from services
- Partner with communities and people who have been left behind
- Match political support with adequate resources
- Be prepared to be held accountable for our actions – or lack of action
- Be prepared to change the way we think, speak and act in order to challenge 'business-as-usual'

Plenary 2: Status of the Wash sector



Panellists and speakers at this session presented progress towards achieving SDG 6 on water and sanitation and the SDGs more generally. Speakers discussed particularly the need to work more collaboratively with other sectors, and the lack of adequate, disaggregated data, which is limiting partners' ability to act constructively to address inequalities in access to water and sanitation services.



Dr. Maria Neira,
Director, Public Health
and the Environment,
World Health
Organization and **Ms.**
Kelly Ann Naylor, Chief



**of Water, Sanitation
and Hygiene, UNICEF**
presented on the
current status and
trends regarding
WASH inequalities and

the impact they have not only on access to water and sanitation but also in other areas of development. Ms. Naylor stated that we need to commit and take action with health, education and other sectors to improve WASH in all institutions. She reiterated that "we particularly need to focus on reaching those who

have been left behind in order to achieve the SDGs."

Dr. Neira asked the rhetorical question, "why do we call them 'health care facilities' if one quarter of them around the world still do not have access to safe water and sanitation? This is not a dream anymore, this is a really a critical need."



Ms. Aparna Mehrotra, Director, UN System Coordination, UN Women discussed the impact of ensuring access to water, sanitation and hygiene on achieving gender equality, expressing that one of the particular problems of insufficient disaggregated data is that

we don't know how many of the 833 million people without access to water are women, or how many have disabilities. Given that the burden of the lack of water falls disproportionately on women, *'a gendered perspective in WASH programming is a moral imperative... This not an area where we can hide behind culture, or country. This is an area of human rights and we have nothing to hide behind. We have to deliver.'*

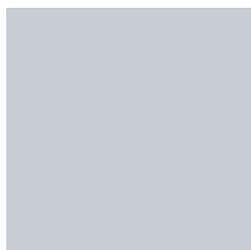


Mr. Rodolfo Lacy, Director of the Environment Directorate, OECD reminded participants of the economic cost of inequalities, again specifically for women, in the opportunity and health costs of fetching water and walking to and from toilets (or

open defecation sites) that are not close to home or work.

"When it comes to finance water, money is not an issue, money is available globally in every country with a few exceptions, but money is far away from your hands Ministers, money is far away from the hands of our people. We have to overcome this risk aversion... that the financial systems have ... we will not solve the problems of

water if we will still deal with the same financial system that we had before these SDGs."



Hon. Dr. Eng. Seleshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Ethiopia discussed the progress they have made since the 2016 SMM held in Addis Ababa, and the challenges and opportunities in 'Leaving no one behind'. The Ethiopian One Wash Programme is a cooperation between four ministries, namely water, health, education and finance. This

partnership has led to an increase in the amount of resources available for WASH service provision, created the national WASH inventory and launched the national WASH Management Information System (MIS). The Hon. Bekele also mentioned two further challenges, climate change and refugees, that will be integrated into the One WASH Programme. He reported that Ethiopia has developed a comprehensive legal framework which provides the same rights to refugees as to citizens.



Plenary 3:

What does it take to leave no one behind?
Building blocks for sector progress.



Mr. Patrick Moriarty, CEO of IRC-WASH and interim Chair of SWA's Steering Committee moderated this plenary session's discussion on how to make progress in the sector while ensuring that no one be left behind. Representatives of each SWA stakeholder group spoke of progress made, and some of the reasons for this progress.



Hon. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana

congratulated her government for putting her ministry on the priority list due to the needs and importance of WASH, thus securing loans slightly over

one billion USD. This consequently has also increased support from multi-lateral and aid agencies. The Minister stated, "*We are now moving from production to quality,*" but that there is still a lot to be done to improve sanitation behaviour as a key to solving the sanitation problem.



For the private sector, **Mr. David Auerbach, Co-Founder, Sanergy, Kenya** spoke about the importance of working with government to improve services: *“It doesn’t matter how long it takes to engage with the government, you have to do it.”* He gave an example of using the Shit Flow Diagram, which brought together with the national and municipal governments, the utility, the national regulator, civil society and academic institutions to create a picture of what happens to faecal waste in Nairobi. This provided an opportunity for a conversation with the treasury, as well as the ministries responsible for health, water and sanitation in order to reconsider how sanitation could be better managed. Mr. Auerbach also stated that, *“We are being constrained by how we traditionally think about sanitation - and this is our biggest challenge.”*



Ms. Kate Harawa, Country Director, Water For People, Malawi talked about the importance of linking local to national processes, *“We start working with the local government, but local governments have structures that relate them to the national government so whatever we are doing at district level is also channeled to the national. We don’t end there, we have the joint sector reviews, which don’t just happen at national level, we start at district and then we go to the region and all people are engaged.”* She also stressed the importance of educating girls to make progress in water and sanitation, *“In Malawi, when we say we want 50-50 women/men in leadership positions, including in politic. How do we achieve this if these girls are not educated?”*



Mr. Tim Wainwright, Chief Executive, WaterAid, stated that WaterAid recognizes three ways in which progress can be made: leadership from governments; empowerment of citizens; and strong systems. In WaterAid’s work in Kampala, Uganda, they worked with local counsellors in low income areas to develop their capacity in budget planning. In Cambodia, WaterAid worked specifically to empower female employees working within provincial government.



Mr. Sergio Campos of IADB supported Mr. Auerbach’s intervention on sanitation, stating that the IADB is *“moving towards non-conventional solutions, which doesn’t mean we are proposing second class solutions. Sometimes the solutions that we have provided to the rural areas are ... too fancy to operate, to maintain and are sometimes too costly. So, solutions need to be better tailor-made, we need to combine technological with social innovation.”*

Contributors from the floor also made useful additional points, drawing attention to the risk to peace of not securing water. Minister **Issoufou Katambé, Minister for Water and Sanitation, Niger** commented, *“Since we started these debates, I have the impression that the debates focus more on surface water than on groundwater. While the most important for the future of the world in general, to avoid the third world war, that would certainly be a water war, it is necessary to pass to the groundwater.”* »

Derek Klazen, the Deputy Minister for Urban and Rural development in Namibia spoke from the floor to remind us that, *“Menstrual hygiene is an overall problem in our women’s health, girls drop out of schools because of that. In our country we are busy trying to give sanitation pads for free at schools and distribute it.”*

The Ministerial Dialogues – an overview

The three Ministerial Dialogues were an important opportunity for ministers and other partners to exchange and discuss strategies, raise innovative ideas regarding financing and collaboration, and listen to the voices of all the different stakeholders in a closed, more intimate setting. All participants were encouraged to speak openly and honestly about the challenges that they have struggled with, as well as reflect on solutions that they have found. Ministers and leaders used these dialogues to identify the lessons they want to take forward in their countries or organisations, and to share ideas on strengthening the processes that they already have in place.

Each topic for the Ministerial Dialogues ran simultaneously in eight rooms. To break down barriers and allow for exchange between regions and countries, for the first time at a Sector Ministers' Meeting, simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish was available in all dialogues. Participants welcomed this innovation.

There were several themes that were common to all three dialogues. One of these is that Leave No One Behind concerns all countries. While some countries and partners might be further ahead in some areas, all have more in common than might be expected. However, sharing experiences on how to improve equality in access to services is inspiring, but each country needs to understand their own national and local priorities in order to decide how to ensure services for all, particularly those who have been historically invisible and ignored. Further, where inequalities exist in access to water and sanitation, they tend to exist in other areas of people's lives as well. There is therefore a need to link water and sanitation to programmes related to health, education, employment, transport,



environment and climate change. Reaching universal access can only be achieved through collaboration between all stakeholders and sectors.

Many agreed that it is more important to serve people who have no or limited access to services before moving on to improve access for those who already have basic services, and this is especially true for sanitation, given the significant health and economic benefits of access to sanitation.

Sanitation came out as a priority in all three dialogues, which clearly reinforces the emphasis that the Sanitation and Water for All partnership places on sanitation as a critical area that demands more political and financial commitment.

Financing and collaboration were significant themes in all dialogues, as well as being the focus of two dialogues, so more details on those discussions are provided below.

MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE 1: Taking stock of progress since 2016 Sector Ministers' Meeting - To what extent have inequalities been addressed

During the first dialogue, participants discussed how government leadership and coordination is of paramount importance to catalysing progress. They shared experiences from different approaches and initiatives aimed at improving progress such as inter-ministerial WASH committees, Open Defecation Free roadmaps, review of comprehensive budgets, and real time monitoring systems. It was generally acknowledged that aligning the delivery of the SDGs into one coordinated system, such as the One Wash Programme in Ethiopia, and Pakistan's Clean Green Pakistan movement is productive.

Tackling difficult social and cultural issues such as sanitation and hygiene are improved through the engagement and empowerment of the affected communities, for example through multi-stakeholder platforms where communities can contribute to the shaping of public policies.



To understand who is excluded, you have to map out where marginalized and disadvantaged people live. National databases would help governments and stakeholders know how countries are progressing in delivering WASH services, leaving no one behind. One of the biggest challenges for ministers responsible for water and sanitation is how to involve other ministers, such as health, climate, agriculture and finance in their programmes, in order to share budgets and benefits. Three country examples given in the dialogues already show that engaging the head of state or prime minister can be very beneficial. One proposal was for ministers responsible for water and sanitation to organize regular monthly meetings between the ministries affected by and that affect water and sanitation to discuss progress on their common targets. In one South American country, where ensuring the human rights to water and sanitation were included in the Constitution, this led to 3% of GDP being invested in water and sanitation.

As was stated in one dialogue, *"to be able to ensure implementation of 'Leave no-one behind' the remaining period of SDG era must be dedicated for this and only then we can translate the spirit into action and achieve the change we want to see"*



MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE 2: Financing strategies to leave no-one behind

During the ministerial dialogues on financing, participants discussed how to engage the ministry of finance effectively, national resources vs. donor financing, how to ensure that services are sustainable, using differentiated tariff systems that ensured affordability of services for all, as well as exploring different technologies that can lead to better service provision.

A few countries have significantly increased their WASH budget due to deeper understanding of the importance of WASH for development. In the long-term, a participant argued, it is better to use national resources than to take loans and increase the indebtedness of countries. As one country said, *„We cannot continue to receive money in loans without considering that this money will have to be repaid. We must strike a balance between providing infrastructure and ensuring that we can maintain and operate it sustainably.“* Countries should therefore use existing funding more efficiently and strategically, increase transparency, and should target funding to areas that are often forgotten, such as rural areas and slums.

Ministries responsible for water and sanitation should also initiate collaboration with the ministry of finance to mobilize resources and get assistance with budget allocation. In Madagascar, they have doubled the budget for water to demonstrate the necessary political will, and to create an opportunity to ask their development partners to double their budget as well – but this can be a challenge. Government leadership has the responsibility of setting tariffs that better reflect operation and maintenance costs, to ensure long-term sustainability. If the water tariff is set too low, in the words of one minister, *“the more water we provide, the more money we lose.”* However, there are also countries where the government itself is not paying for their water and sanitation services on time. *“It’s like the government is robbing itself!”*





Differentiated tariffs that provide a low rate for poorer households are required to ensure that water and sanitation services are affordable to all. It is also possible to charge higher rates for business and industries that use a lot of water, in order to support sustainability of service provision. The cost of not providing a service was also discussed – in the words of one minister, *“our experience is much cheaper to have a good service than to have a bad service.”*

Ministers also discussed the impact of technology. There are technologies that already allow a better use of limited financial resources, for example through the reuse of both water and faecal waste. Better data also aids understanding of what is required in terms of service provision, and what is lacking. Innovative financing and political measures can also be critical, such as catalytic funds, reduction of non-revenue water, rural investment, empowering the district-level public financing and participation of both the private sector and communities.



MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE 3: Partnership in Practice – How to get the most from sector collaboration?

During the final Ministerial Dialogue, common challenges to effective sector collaboration were identified, including resource allocation, weak sector coordination, insufficient local evidence, challenges in harmonizing implementation methods between government and civil society, the enforcement of unrealistic standards, limited systems for coordination at the sub-national level and poor community engagement. Further, inter-ministerial communication and coordination remains a significant challenge.

Participants agreed that sector collaboration needs leadership from the government, as it is governments that have the power and the mandate to convene meetings – governments must have the willingness to welcome others to the table. Beyond this, governments need to put sustainable structures in place that systematise effective collaboration between different stakeholders, for example through organising standing meetings that take place regularly, and ensuring that targets are set in cooperation with all stakeholders. Sometimes these structures are already codified in policies and legislation but are not followed, and this needs to be rectified. Multi-stakeholder processes should also be practiced at sub-national and national levels, as institutional capacity, including human resources, information management systems, and the monitoring partnerships is often weak, and needs support.

All stakeholders need to 'walk the talk' by developing partnerships that respect government leadership and that are based on trust, mutual respect and common goals.



In most countries, the agenda and decision-making on water and sanitation is shared with other ministerial sectors, so working at the highest level can help articulate, focus and prioritize the water and sanitation agenda. However, cross-sector collaboration with health, finance, education and others is still weak and needs further support. Bringing 'the whole world' into one room to learn from and inspire each other would increase understanding of all needs, as all sectors are trying to address very common problems. SWA could potentially enrich these processes through sharing good practices. It is clear that this kind of collaboration needs long-term commitment, which may be at risk through changes in government. One approach has been to incorporate the water agenda into national development plans which expresses political will over a longer timeframe. In one province of the Central African Republic, it was a crisis, an epidemic of parasites, that resulted in effective collaboration between the ministry responsible for water and the Ministry of Health and an immediate solution.

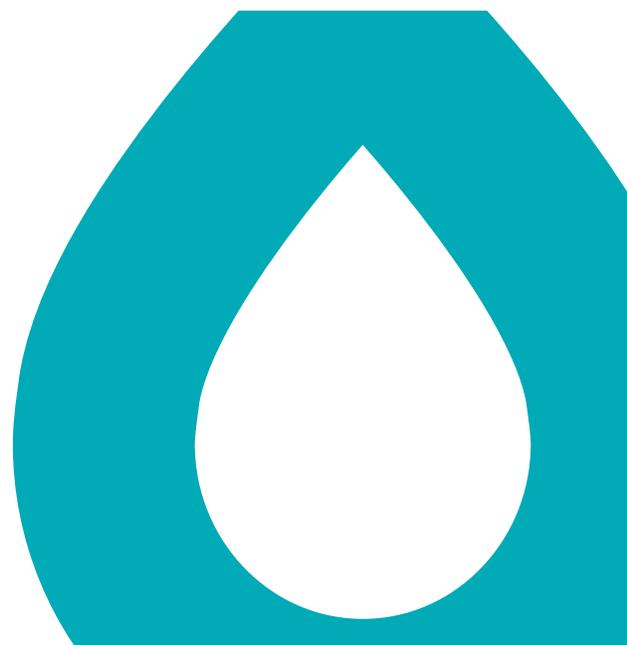


Participants also commented that it is surprising how often there can be lack even in an environment of plenty. Examples were given of two countries where minimal investment in water harvesting infrastructure, such as dams, has meant low coverage for water yet there is a lot of run-off rainwater which could be harvested and supplied to those in need. Often this requires more creative thinking.

Many countries mentioned that donors focus on quick results, and are unwilling to rethink their own priorities and ways of working, which often risk undermining government leadership and systems. Collaboration has to happen at all levels, with the power vested in elected officials as well as in donors used to foster engagement, rather than impose conflicting priorities. To facilitate coordination and partnerships, governments should specify what they expect from the donor community and not vice versa.

Sudan mentioned that political instabilities can disrupt development work as the focus moves towards the immediate needs of the humanitarian response. The speaker recommended that all actors need to be aware of these challenges and keep working collaboratively.

Finally, for effective collaboration, it is important to know who is doing what where, and who is missing from the discussions? In many cases, the private sector, local government, research and learning institutions, marginalized groups and the media are all absent, and could make relevant contributions.



Plenary 4: Mutual Accountability in practice



This session provided an opportunity for countries to report on the process they followed in implementing SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism, and to reflect on its value in achieving progress towards the SDGs. It was chaired by **Ms. Gerda Verburg, Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement** and moderated by **Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, CEO, Sanitation and Water for All.**

Ms. de Albuquerque opened by briefly explaining that this Sector Ministers' Meeting is the first since the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was launched, and countries and partners have made commitments in line with their priorities to achieve the SDGs. She commented that the response has been far more enthusiastic than expected, with over 300 commitments submitted by 47 governments, with many partners making commitments in support of their government. Further, 18 global organizations made commitments.

The Hon. Ms. Keïta Aïda M'Bo, Minister for Sanitation, Mali, explained how they developed commitments through a multi-stakeholder process at national level, using opportunities such as their Joint Sector Review on World Water Day to discuss national priorities, and the roles and responsibilities of different actors.

The Hon. Mr. Shahram Khan Taraki, Minister of Local Government, Pakistan, clarified their regional and national processes that led to the commitments they made. Mr. Taraki stressed the connections that are being made to bring water and sanitation with concerns for the environment, explaining

that 'you have to take an holistic approach to everything that you do' as he introduced the Clean Green Pakistan programme that combines actions to combat climate change with water, sanitation and health programmes.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism

The SWA partnership invites all partners to collaborate in the making of commitments under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, which are to be presented and reported on at High-level Meetings. The identification of commitments should support and strengthen country planning and review processes by ensuring that they are drawn from the plans, strategies, targets and milestones developed by governments and other stakeholders, within the existing government timeframes, through government-led multi-stakeholder processes.

The panel, comprising of leaders representing other constituencies commented on the value of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism for their work.

Ms. Kelly Ann Naylor, Chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, UNICEF explained that the process of developing commitments had been, "very useful at the country level. The things that are the most sustainable are the things that we realize that we need and that enable us to do our jobs better."

Ms. Yunia Musaaazi, Executive Director, UWASNET, Uganda, representing civil society, clarified that, "The only way to hold each other accountable is to have an agreed baseline from which all progress can be measured." She also stated that civil society will provide assessments on government performance, as well as their own.



Dr. Olcay Unver, Vice-Chair, UN-Water, speaking as an external support agency agreed that "We see SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism as exemplary in supporting and strengthening country action". He also said that the UN-Water GLAAS reports would support countries in monitoring their commitments.



Dr. Nicholas Igwe, Managing Partner, Zenith Water Projects, Nigeria, provided the private sector perspective, while bemoaning that, "One of our major problem

is not having enough private sector focal points in different countries," which is preventing more integrated responses at the national level, and that they will be working to address this. He expressed support for, "a platform that evaluates how to sustain the government leadership and how to build political capacity around the government."



Mr. Patrick Moriarty, CEO, IRC-WASH, representing the Research and learning constituency recognised the importance of engaging with the Mutual Accountability

Mechanism at the national level: "It is the national level commitments that matter. We are committed to play a full role in the countries where we are in national processes."

Plenary 5:

What drives real progress towards leave no one behind?



Mr. Darren Welch, Director of Policy, DFID, UK chaired this session exploring what needs to be done to ensure that no-one is left behind. In his opening remarks, he recognised political will, integrity and knowledge management along with sound evidence as critical to driving progress. However, there are issues such as climate change that are increasingly impacting on service delivery – and we need to pay more attention to this.

Keynote addresses were made by **Hon. Julio Cesar Castillo, Vice Minister in Special Functions, Ministry of Health, Panama** and **Mr. Jaime Baptista, former President, Water and Waste Services Regulatory Authority, Portugal.**



Hon. Castillo stated that, “Everything we do has to be inclusive for those most in need.” For this: “The fundamental element for success is community participation. In Panama, we believe this is a fundamental pillar for leaving no-one behind.”



Mr. Baptista discussed how regulation contributes to achieving progress. He made the analogy of a well-oiled machine: *“If you want to improve water and sanitation services, you need a sound and*

holistic public policy, this is the key. Second, to run the policy, you need a good engine and that is regulation. Third, the regulator can only perform well if it is able to get high quality fuel, in other words - high

quality information. And so, yes, the regulator can be a fantastic instrument to run and implement a good public policy if it is based on good information.”

A panel consisting of all SWA constituencies were asked what they feel is essential for driving progress.



Hon. Mr. Rudy Prawiradinata, Deputy Minister for Regional Development, Indonesia suggested, *“When we talk about monitoring governance and transparency, we talk about reliable and accessible data and information. So, among stakeholders, we need to have consensus on definitions and indicators.”* He agreed with Mr. Baptista, that, *“in planning we have to have evidence-based policies so data is really important.”*



Dr. Therese Sjömander Magnusson, Chief Operating Officer of SIWI, Sweden, also said that how information is communicated is critical for ensuring accountability. *“Accountability in relation to service delivery is powerful... ... the triangle of state, service provider and the citizen, connecting service delivery and accountability to the citizen is key.”*



Ms. Lotte Feuerstein, Programme Manager, Water Integrity Network, Germany, picking up on the issue of data commented that, *“the more we are able to translate data that we get into a political language, the more we are able to get action on it.”* She also added that, *“integrity within organizations is crucial... ...to build that trust and to encourage people to complain.”*



Mr. Neil Dhot, Executive Director, AquaFed built on the discussion on data, noting that *“The data we collect on performance is hardly ever used, it is not being presented to the publicYou need this data to get utilities to compete with each other and incentivize them to drive up their performance- and data is the way you can hold them to account.”*

Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr Global Water Partnership, also spoke from the floor to highlight collaboration on climate change as critical for sustainable access to water and sanitation, *“We can now see where there are early drought warning collaborations coming up in West Africa, Niger, in fact there are some really interesting initiatives coming up in collaborating with the data people out of the water meteorological organization that connect with the water access work”*



Ms. Saima Ashraf, President of Able Plus, Pakistan said that there is insufficient national and international leadership by people with disabilities, and that their engagement will ensure better delivery of services, as they have a lot to contribute. On this

point, Murali Ramisetty mentioned from the floor that it is particularly critical to disaggregate data relating to people with disabilities, and engage with individuals, as there are different requirements according to the type of disability. He explained, *“you cannot*

have one design which meets the needs of all the disabled population and going by such an approach is quite time consuming, and it is also quite expensive, but if you really believe in leaving no one behind we need to be prepared to pursue that kind of approach.”



Plenary 6:

What have we learnt and what do we do next? A multi-stakeholder debate



Chaired by **Dr. Canisius Kanangire, Executive Secretary, AMCOW**, this plenary session focussed on the lessons learnt over the two days. He asked the speakers, panellists and participants, *“What do we take home? What did we learn? What do we do next? Inequalities will not be reduced by good speeches!”*



Mr. Simon Chelugui, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Kenya made the keynote address. He reflected on their 1999 national assessment, which showed access to water stood at only 20%, with no statistics available for sanitation. There

have since been changes to legislation and policy, with institutions reformed and power devolved to the regions. There are new priorities, including a Leave no-one behind policy; they have better data, more collaboration and stronger

leadership. Now, he said, *“Participation is a constitutional matter”*. Mr. Chelugui also reflected on what needs to be done to prepare for SWA’s Finance ministers’ Meeting in 2020. To close the gap between WASH and finance

ministry, he proposes reviewing the finance strategy, clarifying roles to operationalize reforms, strengthening governance and regulation and operationalising differentiated water tariffs.



Jon Lane, Senior Adviser, SWA, provided a brief summary of the Ministerial Dialogues (details on pp. 12-17 of this report, delighting

the delegates with a new moniker, proclaiming, “*we are all faecowarriers!*”

The multi-stakeholder panel continued the discussion on what has been learned and what should be done next.



Ms. Meike van Ginneken, CEO, SNV, The Netherlands added that there is progress in the sector – with more women visible at the meeting, significantly different from 10 years ago. There have been successes in access to basic sanitation, with 500 million people gaining access. But there has also been some stagnation. Finance remains an issue – and while we may no longer be waiting for donors, she expressed concern that sector is now waiting for private finance instead.



Ms. Cheryl Hicks, CEO, Toilet Board Coalition, Switzerland, representing the private sector, said that while they are still a small constituency, they appreciated the opportunity to engage, and to join the ministerial dialogues, as identifying challenges is necessary for identifying solutions. She advised governments to create an enabling environment within which businesses can innovate – and then the private sector will be able to support governments more proactively.



Mr. Johan Gely, SDC, Switzerland reminded the participants that the sector is fortunate as it has its own SDG. Everyone talks about challenges, but in Burundi and Guinea the government increased allocations because of data. He advocated, quoting the Swiss constitution, that, “*the strength of a country is measured by the well-being of its weakest member.*”



Ms. Irene Murillo, CEO, CEDARENA, Costa Rica reflected on CSO roles: collaboration implies a commitment from all parties over the long term as you cannot do multi-stakeholder processes quickly. Also, she stated that there has been a lot of discussion about data, but it's important to talk about how these data are shared so that they can be discussed with a common language.



Dr. Olcay Unver, Vice-Chair, UN-Water stated that data has been mentioned a lot. The water and sanitation sectors are more blessed with good data than water resources. However, he reminded the participants that, “*UN Water has been putting together verified data sources under the UN Water Data Portal, where we will find all SDG 6-related data.*”



Ms. Yamileth Astorga, CEO, Aya, spoke about the need for more communication between the regional water and sanitation conferences, as they share the same priorities. The main challenges identified at Latinosan, as indeed at

this Sector Ministers' Meeting, are financing and human capacity, and we also need to continue this strong focus on eliminating inequalities.

Plenary 7: Closing session



Mr. Patrick Moriarty, chair of Sanitation and Water for All's Steering Committee, chaired the closing session, remarking, *"We talk all the time about the need for political leadership and we talk about why have we brought all of you, elected officials, here together. Why does SWA organize Sector Ministers' Meetings? It's for this, it's to inspire each other."*

Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, CEO, Sanitation and Water for All drew participants' attention to the High-level Chair's closing remarks, highlighting, *"The general tone of the meeting balanced a sober awareness of the magnitude of the task with excitement about progress being made. There were many*

positive animated conversations and mutual learning between Ministers. In all sessions, the participants insisted that we need to focus on leaving no one behind and putting the last first." She then gave the vote of thanks and closed the meeting: *"Let's not look just at the ministers and at the governments, for us*

to create a movement, we need civil society, we need other actors demanding their rights and making sure that governments are held accountable to deliver but also making sure that they work together with the governments to goal 6 a reality for all."



Mr. William Kingdom, Lead Water and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank made a final speech with some key messages to take home. He commented that the focus on inequality is fitting, as the results from the WASH Poverty Diagnostic Study demonstrate not only vastly different access to water and sanitation across population groups,

but that efforts to address this, for example through subsidies, are generally captured by the better off. He also reiterated the message from the meeting that we need to reinforce the work on climate change, gender and resilience.

There is a significant business opportunity in the delivery of water, but still service providers

are losing money, so we must address these inefficiencies, and this may include looking at off-grid solutions, particularly for sanitation. There are examples of progress, such as Total Sanitation programmes that are successful due to high-level political leadership, well-coordinated multisector processes and a common vision.

On behalf of the World Bank, he welcomed the plans for a 2020 Finance Ministers' Meeting as an opportunity to educate ministers of finance on issues relating to water and sanitation issues, but that it is critical that finance ministers understand that these are essential for national development.

Three ministers spoke from the floor on the value of the meeting for their work:



The Minister for Water Resources and Irrigation, South Sudan, Ms. Sophia Pal Gai Laam was enthusiastic: *"The two days interactions have given us a revival as we will ensure there is political leadership... in partnership with our development partners, civil society and our communities, women in particular, because we have inequalities in service delivery... every person is important, we need to have the correct data, so that we know we are serving all our people."*

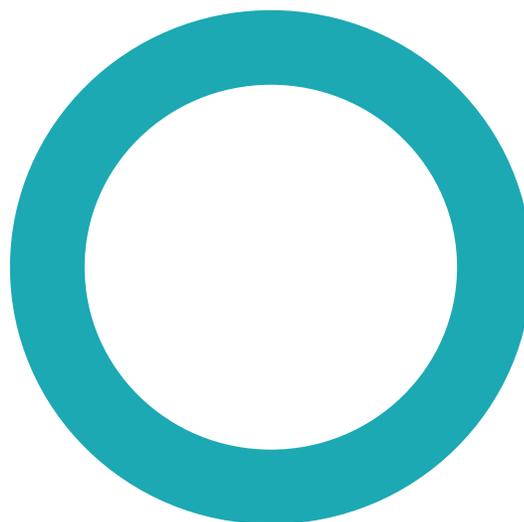


The Minister for Water Resources of Sierra Leone, Dr. Jonathan B. Tengbeh also expressed his appreciation of the meeting, *"Sierra Leone is a new government, about one year old, and we inherited a very weak WASH sector so anything new that I can take home will be of immense benefit for the people of Sierra Leone."*

The Minister of Public Works and Communication, Paraguay, Arnaldo Wiens Durksen made a heartfelt plea for solidarity: *"What is the use for us to make it and the others not to make it, there is no reason to exist, life has no meaning if we leave others behind... ..Either we all make it, or nobody does."*

Ms. Yamileth Astorga, CEO, AyA, Costa Rica, pointed out that those in the room will not always be in government and need to set up the vision and the capacities in their institutions in order to ensure sustainability and progress. She also commented that, *"In Costa Rica we have made very important progress in our green*

agenda ... and something we say is, if we achieved the green agenda, we will achieve our grey and blue agenda." A further priority, she stated, is, *"our indigenous ethnicities, who are the ones that nowadays lack for example basic sanitation, drinking water and of course reaching out to all poor families."*



SWA High-level Chair, HE Kevin Rudd's Closing statement

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a global partnership with over 200 members including national governments, external support agencies, civil society organizations, private sector organizations and other development partners. They all work together to increase political commitment to water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and to strengthen mutual accountability and effectiveness within the sector. The goal of SWA is sanitation, water and hygiene for all, always and everywhere – this is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals targets for WASH.

SWA held its sixth Sector Ministers' Meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica on 4-5 April 2019 hosted by the Government of Costa Rica and co-convened by UNICEF and the Inter-American Development Bank. This – the first SWA ministerial meeting held in Latin America – was attended by over 250 people including over 50 ministers of water, sanitation and hygiene from around the world.

This meeting was part of an ongoing process of engagement with Ministers and other decision makers. The last such meeting, in 2017, resolved to develop sector financing strategies; to assess and strengthen sector policies, institutional arrangements, planning, monitoring and review systems to make the sector more efficient; and to streamline disaster preparedness into sector policies. Since then, SWA partners – both national governments and other organizations – have been working hard in-country on all these resolutions.

The purpose of this meeting was to make a difference, to move the dial, to change the world by a practical set of recommendations for ministers to take home, supported by the other SWA constituencies.

The central theme of this meeting was “Leave no-one behind”. This concept is underpinned by a human rights approach. Every person has equal

human rights, and it is our collective duty to ensure that they are realized for all people, regardless of who they are, where they live or what they do. With ambitious global developments goals, it is easy to go for the low-hanging fruits first, at the expense of attention to the hardest to reach. To achieve universal access, we need a deliberate and targeted focus on those people who are marginalized, vulnerable, who have no voice, or they will be left behind indefinitely.

Under the over-arching theme of leaving no-one behind, the meeting focused on strong leadership, sustainable finance, and government-led participatory planning, monitoring and accountability. The meeting started with a global overview of the current status of the WASH sector, leading into a discussion on how to leave no-one behind. Participants then took stock of progress at a more detailed level in small group discussions, then examined financing strategies to leave no-one behind, also in small groups, and debated how the concept of mutual accountability is working in practice. The next discussions were on ensuring no one is left behind, and on making the most of partnership and collaboration. A short closing session summarized learning to date and pointed the way forward, including previewing some future SWA activities.

The general tone of the meeting balanced a sober awareness of the magnitude of the task with excitement about progress being made. There were many positive animated conversations and mutual learning between Ministers. In all sessions, the participants insisted that we need to focus on leaving no one behind and putting the last first. As one Minister expressed it so elegantly: “Either we all make it or nobody makes it”. Numerous examples of good progress came from around the world, spanning policy, strategies and implementation successes. Some highlights of the discussions both in Plenary and in Ministerial Dialogues included:

- Finance was the most important topic that ran through all the sessions of the Meeting.
- Many speakers confirmed that investments in WASH lead to economic development that generates more tax revenue and help businesses and people to flourish. Politicians can derive a political dividend from this.
- Transparent and predictable regulation is vital to enable investments in WASH and to win the trust of the customers. Tariff reforms and increases can then be achieved if individual customers can see that those increases generate an improved service.
- “Shit Matters” stated the President of Costa Rica. Indeed, it was great to see sanitation and hygiene no longer being a taboo topic, more and more in the news, more openly discussed. The participants of the meeting were acclaimed as “faeco-warriors”.
- Several speakers emphasized that there is no point in having good health systems without good water and sanitation. WASH is the best investment that can be made in health.
- The commitments tabled at the meeting by so many countries and other partners were a sign that the sector understands the importance of international cooperation and accountability.
- The actions and next steps that I propose include:
 - Fulfil your obligations as governments, and embrace human rights as guiding principles.
 - Identify who are the people who have been left behind, and assess how you can address those people’s needs.
 - Establish systems that integrate laws, a strong regulatory framework, policies and, institutions that can ensure you are able to deliver services for all. A better-performing sector becomes more credit-worthy.
- By the time of the next SWA Finance Ministers’ Meeting in 2020, develop financing strategies for WASH for all, specifically for the people you have identified: reducing the financing gap; reforming tariffs; integrating the WASH programme into overall national plans and budgets; persuading the Minister of Finance and of Health that WASH is a good investment for them both, not an expense.
- Be courageous, take risks! Considered investment in sanitation and water for all will pay off for your population.

The Ministers of water and sanitation were gathered here in the right place at the right time – SDG 6 is a very difficult one, and WASH may not be a glamorous sector, but it is a profoundly important topic on which to be a Minister. WASH is a national priority issue, not a sectoral issue. As Chair of SWA, I congratulate countries on their successes to date, and I urge everybody who attended this meeting to implement the ideas and plans discussed here in order to reduce inequalities and serve the people who are always left behind. Leaders must lead from the front. You are not alone: as the President of Costa Rica reminded us, don’t believe the people who say it is impossible.



Other resources related to the 2019 SMM

Beyond the SMM: this document outlines suggestions of the activities all SWA partners can do to maintain focus on Leave No One Behind and continuously engage with decision-makers

Mutual Accountability Mechanism: the commitments tabled by partners can be found here

Photos and videos

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

3 United Nations Plaza, 14th floor
New York, New York, 10017, USA
info@sanitationandwaterforall.org
www.sanitationandwaterforall.org