



SANITATION
AND WATER
FOR ALL

WATER &
SANITATION:
**REALIZING
HUMAN RIGHTS
AND ACHIEVING
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



A HANDBOOK FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS

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- Republic of Costa Rica - República de Costa Rica
- Republic of Liberia
- Toilet Board Coalition
- Water Integrity Network
- WaterAid
- Zambia NGO WASH FORUM

Abbreviations and acronyms

HRC	Human Rights Council of the United Nations
JMP	WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWA	Sanitation and Water for All global partnership
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UPR	Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council
VNR	Voluntary National Review

FOREWORD



Duarte Pacheco



Catarina de Albuquerque

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership believes in the power of political will to change the world. We work to engage key decision makers, encouraging multi-stakeholder processes to strengthen countries' water, sanitation and hygiene sectors – and address critical broader development challenges.

Duarte Pacheco

President, Inter-Parliamentary Union

Effective parliamentarians understand the everyday realities of people's lives. They aim to represent everyone in their constituency to the best of their ability. They are motivated by democratic principles; to deliver on the commitments they make and to be held accountable by their constituents. They understand that a failure to deliver on their promises risks failure at the ballot box at the next election.

Water and sanitation are central and foundational to all our lives. They are essential services and basic human rights – and as such often feature in political manifestos, at both national and local elections. However, the means to achieve lofty manifesto promises are often not as clear as the promises themselves. This handbook is designed to help parliamentarians deliver on their commitments, by exploring and identifying potential resources and opportunities, as well as examples of how access to water and sanitation have been improved for communities around the world.

Global commitments such as human rights or the Sustainable Development Goals may be agreed at the international level – but they are achieved by nations. It is only through national legislation, policies, institutions, budgets and plans that they are delivered. These processes are where parliamentarians can – and must – use their influence, showing leadership and

responsibility, to ensure that these international commitments are met.

To quote Eleanor Roosevelt, replying to how we can measure the progress in human rights, in fact “where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world”.

There are many global challenges to overcome, not least the climate crisis and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Often, it can feel as if more obstacles appear with every step we take towards a better world. But we are honoured to be able to offer this resource for parliamentarians, to assist them in their important work to promote water and sanitation, not simply for the services themselves, but to further sustainable, resilient development for everyone.

Catarina de Albuquerque

Catarina de Albuquerque

CEO, Sanitation and Water for All

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This handbook has been prepared in response to requests by SWA partners to provide support to parliamentarians, in order to contribute to their understanding of the legal, political, and programmatic implications of realizing the human rights to water and sanitation and achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

Parliaments and parliamentarians play a critical role in ensuring the accountable, participatory, transparent governance which is necessary for inclusive and sustainable development. However, this critical role faces numerous challenges. This handbook aims to provide parliamentarians with information and inspiration, to help them deliver on their responsibilities to ensure effective water and sanitation services for the constituents and communities they serve.

Currently, nearly half of the world's population uses sanitation services that leave human waste untreated. Poor sanitation devastates public health, as well as the environment and social and economic development. In 2020, around one in four (or two billion) people lacked good quality, safely managed drinking water in their homes, and 767 million were without access to even basic water services. Meeting the SDG target for access to water requires a quadrupling of current efforts.

The Sustainable Development Goals are more ambitious than the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that preceded them. The SDGs include one goal – SDG 6 – specifically dedicated to water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as other related goals that are particularly relevant for how parliamentarians can act to achieve the SDGs. All of these goals are explored in this handbook.



The handbook explores how parliamentarians can act to realize the human rights to water and SDG 6, framed by several of their key roles and functions. These key roles are:

1

Representing constituents and communities

One of parliamentarians' most significant roles is to engage with their constituents and communities. In the context of water, sanitation and hygiene, understanding communities' service needs is crucial, to enable effective legislation, resource allocation and advocacy within parliamentary processes

2

Legislating

Parliamentarians are responsible for drafting, reviewing and passing legislation. This role is key to ensuring that laws further the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation, and that they contribute to the implementation of the SDGs

3

Oversight of the executive

Parliamentarians work to monitor and oversee the work of the executive branch of government and to ensure that they comply with international, regional and national legislation, policies and commitments relating to water and sanitation service provision.

4

Approving and monitoring national budgets

Parliamentarians' role in authorizing and monitoring budgets is one of the most important and powerful tools in their arsenal, as ensuring that resources are available to comply with legislation and regulations and implement policies and plans is critical to realizing the human rights to water and sanitation and achieving the SDGs.

The handbook goes on to consider how parliamentarians can use several parliamentary structures and tools to draw attention to the importance of water and sanitation services. These will vary by country, but they include parliamentary committees, public inquiries and hearings, parliamentary motions and debates, written or oral parliamentary questions and multi-stakeholder initiatives that promote water and sanitation.

01.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



1.1 RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook has been prepared in response to requests by SWA partners to provide support to parliamentarians, in order to contribute to their understanding of the legal, political, and programmatic implications of realizing the human rights to water and sanitation, and achieving the related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Parliaments and parliamentarians play a critical role in ensuring the accountable, participatory, transparent governance which is necessary for inclusive and sustainable development. However, this critical role faces numerous challenges. This handbook offers parliamentarians both information and inspiration, to help them deliver on their responsibilities to ensure effective water and sanitation services for the communities they serve.

The primary audience for the handbook is elected representatives. The handbook will also benefit parliamentary staff, parliamentary budget offices and individuals, or organizations interested in learning more about how parliaments and parliamentarians can use their core functions to advance the human rights to water and sanitation and the SDGs. The handbook can also be a training and advocacy resource for civil society organizations and others, to inform their work engaging parliaments and parliamentarians.



1.2 URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED

Some progress has been made towards universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. However, the current rate of progress suggests that globally neither universal access to safely managed sanitation, nor to water services, will be achieved by 2030.²

Currently, nearly half of the world's population (3.6 billion people) use sanitation services that leave human waste untreated – threatening human and environmental health. Over 490 million people lack toilets and practise open defecation, while nearly 700 million school-age children are without basic sanitation services at their school.¹ Poor sanitation devastates public health, as well as social and economic development.

Meeting the SDG water target requires a quadrupling of current efforts. In 2020, around one in four (or two billion) people lacked good quality, safely managed drinking water in their homes, and 767 million lacked access to basic water services.²

Between 2015 and 2020, around half a billion people gained access to basic hygiene services. While this was remarkable, at that rate of progress the world will only achieve 78 per cent coverage for

basic hygiene services by 2030. That would leave 1.9 billion of the world's population still living without access to even basic hygiene services. There are also worrying signs of persistent inequalities behind these headline figures. For example, the available data shows that a significant proportion of women and girls are unable to meet their menstrual health needs, with additional disparities between people with or without disabilities, and between sub-national regions.²

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges of ensuring adequate hygiene facilities. Estimates suggest that three out of ten people worldwide could not wash their hands with water and soap at home during the pandemic. While it is welcome that awareness of the importance of access to hygiene services has increased, this is not enough in itself – action to achieve universal access will be an enormous task. COVID-19 has also highlighted challenges of access to water and sanitation services. People without access to water and/or sanitation within the household have struggled to practice social distancing, deepening existing inequalities and further marginalizing poor and vulnerable individuals and communities. Unfortunately, even where a hygiene plan is in place, the 2020 WHO/UN-Water GLAAS survey shows that these plans are seldom costed or financed.

**OVER
490
MILLION**
people lack toilets and
practise open defecation

The inequalities in access to services affect communities across the globe – they are particularly significant between rural and urban areas, and the situation for refugees is particularly severe. The regional and global outlook for access to basic drinking water services reveals persistent inequalities between and within countries.²

There is an urgent need – indeed, a legal obligation – to act now to tackle these persistent inequalities and improve services. Enshrining the rights to water and sanitation in legislation and policy at the national level, for example, can be an effective first step. The SDGs explicitly mention the human rights to water and sanitation, indicating a fundamental shift towards addressing inequalities compared to the MDGs, and their clear failure to make progress on services for the poorest and most vulnerable individuals and groups.

The unprecedented pressures on services will only grow in the coming years, particularly given the impacts of climate change, which will increasingly affect water quality and resources, and risks worsening communities' access to water and sanitation services. As daunting as these challenges are, the sooner we act, the easier it will be to overcome them. There is scope to improve services, through deliberate and concerted actions at the national level, as well as a more focused and integrated global response to support those actions. Parliamentarians are central to this shift. They have a critical role to play promoting the importance of water and sanitation for sustainable development, and ensuring that appropriate legislation, policies and budgets are in place – as well as holding those responsible for implementing the human rights to water and sanitation to account.

1.3 THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION

On 28 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a historical resolution recognizing “the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”.^{11,12} In 2015, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council (HRC) went further, recognizing both the right to safe drinking water and the right to sanitation as closely related, but distinct, human rights in themselves.

These rights are derived from the right to an adequate standard of living under Article 11(1) and the right to health (Article 12) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.¹⁴ The human rights to water and sanitation also contribute to the realization of the right to life, the right to food, the right to education, the recently adopted right to a safe and healthy environment¹⁵ as well as to the furtherance of gender equality, children's rights, and freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment.

The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.¹⁶

States must ensure that everyone, without discrimination, has physical and affordable access to sanitation in all spheres of life, which is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, provides privacy and ensures dignity.¹⁷

The human rights to water and sanitation require that they must be accessible, affordable, of good quality and acceptable to the users at home, at work, at educational and healthcare facilities, and at other places where people gather. Fulfilling these rights arguably contributes to achieving every other goal of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the rights to water and sanitation

Human rights define States as duty-bearers and individuals as rights-holders. Every person is entitled to adequate water and sanitation services, and States are obliged to guarantee access for all, using the maximum of their available resources. The legislative branch of a State's government (including all parliamentarians) therefore plays a central role, bearing a major responsibility for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation.

The State bears the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.¹⁶ In the context of the rights to water and sanitation, this means States cannot prevent people from enjoying these rights – for example, by arbitrarily disconnecting services without providing an adequate alternative.¹⁶ It also means that States must prevent third parties from interfering with people's enjoyment of these rights – for example by blocking access to services following a sale of land. The obligation to fulfil the rights to water and sanitation requires States to ensure that conditions and assistance are in place for all citizens to access safe, affordable, and appropriate services.

States must work to progressively realize the rights using the maximum resources¹⁴ available to them, to continuously improve service provision and eliminate inequalities in access (e.g., through increased budgetary allocations). States must therefore



refrain from taking retrogressive measures (such as unjustified funding cuts, or policies and laws that negatively affect service provision) that threaten the enjoyment of human rights. Parliamentarians have a clear role to play ensuring these things do not happen.

The human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, participation, access to information, accountability and non-regression are key. They define how States should approach the process of ensuring that everyone has access to water and sanitation services. These principles guarantee the enjoyment of the rights to water and sanitation without discrimination, prioritising the needs of marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups.

STATES' OBLIGATIONS TO RESPECT, PROTECT AND FULFIL THE RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION

RESPECT

States must refrain from arbitrary or unjustified disconnection or exclusion from water services or facilities; or discriminatory or unaffordable increases in the price of water

PROTECT

Where water services are controlled or operated by private sector entities, the State must ensure pricing regulation to ensure water rates (if they apply) are affordable; it also must effectively regulate and control water services providers;

FULFIL

The State must take steps to ensure that all persons are progressively connected to a safe drinking water supply; States must allocate sufficient expenditure to ensure the enjoyment of the right to water by individuals or groups, particularly the vulnerable or marginalized

1.4 THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals are more ambitious than the Millennium Development Goals³ and consist of 17 goals and 169 targets⁴. In contrast to the MDGs, the SDGs were conceived to be universal, applying to all countries regardless of their economic or development status.

There are strong interconnections between each of the SDGs. This is deliberate, and underscores the value of an integrated approach to implementation, including cross-cutting coordination with multiple stakeholders, fostering synergies and managing considerations between competing objectives.

SDG 6 covers the targets relating to water. The targets for access to water and sanitation for personal and domestic use are 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, and these should be the primary focus of parliamentarians' work on drinking-water and sanitation. However, they should be considered as part of a wider development picture. The strong interdependencies²⁰ between the 17 SDGs mean that progress on SDG 6 can be hugely beneficial to other sectors, including food (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), energy (SDG 7), and climate action (SDG 13). It follows that lack of progress on SDG 6 undermines the achievement of all the other goals.

SDG 16 and 17 are also significant for parliamentarians, because they define how States should act in delivering all of the goals. To ensure integrated implementation, parliaments can create opportunities for inter-sectoral dialogues, promote holistic development processes and assess the likely effects on other sectors. Parliamentarians can play a role in championing policies and legislation that facilitate the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into existing national development strategies.

“As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.”

- UN General Assembly, 21 October 2015

What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

During a meeting of Heads of State and Government and High Representatives in September 2015, which coincided with the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity was agreed and adopted by all Member States. This global partnership of countries, developed and developing, came into effect on 1 January 2016.

Source: SDGs.un.org/goals.

WATER AND SANITATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

SDG 6 aims to 'ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'. It includes eight targets that address drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, wastewater treatment, water quality, water use, water management, transboundary cooperation, water-related ecosystems, official development assistance and participation of local communities.² It goes beyond the provision of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene services to include targets on water scarcity, water pollution, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, disaster risk reduction, leveraging water for peace, and water management, reflecting increasing global pressures on water as a precious and finite resource.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE TARGETS OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

6.3 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

6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

SDGS 16 AND 17: PEACE, JUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONS, AND THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

SDG 16 and 17 are not about specific development sectors. Instead they apply to the implementation of all of the SDGs. They are particularly relevant for States and parliamentarians, because they help define the processes and approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development effectively.

[SDG 16](#) promotes peace, justice and institutions. Some of the SDG 16 targets speak directly to the role of parliamentarians, defining opportunities for action. These include addressing corruption, promoting participatory decision-making and information sharing, creating non-discriminatory legislation and building stronger institutions for development – all critical elements for ensuring universal access to water and sanitation.

[SDG 17](#) focuses on the means of implementation for all of the SDGs, as well as the revitalisation of the global partnership for sustainable development. As such, it helps parliamentarians consider how they can strengthen their role in working towards universal access to water and sanitation – but also the achievement of the other goals. SDG 17 promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships and strengthening global, regional and national links (such as working with civil society organizations). It also highlights the importance of data, monitoring and accountability – and advocates respect for each country's policy space and leadership.



EXAMPLES OF CROSS-INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES WHICH INCLUDE PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGs.



In **Pakistan**, following the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015, a cross-party working group of parliamentarians was established by the National Assembly to work on coordinating action and sharing information on the newly developed SDGs.



In **Sierra Leone**, each of the National Budget's spending categories has been aligned to both the SDGs and the 8 Pillars of the Agenda for Prosperity and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. This was approved by parliament in November 2015.

ParlAmericas worked with UNDP to publish specific guidance for parliamentarians in the Latin American region on their role in meeting the SDGs. The examples below are reflected in more detail in the UNDP/ParlAmericas publication



In **Costa Rica**, a 'National Pact' was signed in 2016 by representatives of all three branches of government – the President, the Legislative Assembly and the Supreme Court. The Pact also included representatives of local governments, the private sector, social and religious organizations and the academic sector.



In **Paraguay**, a similar pact was endorsed in 2017 by the President of the Republic, the country's Congress, and the Supreme Court.

A key aspect of such pacts is that they transcend administrations and set a commitment that remains binding for successive legislatures and governments.



In **Chile**, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are represented at a 'National Council' on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



In **El Salvador**, the Legislative Assembly is represented in the country's National Council for the SDGs, coordinated by the Office of the President of the Republic.



In **Trinidad and Tobago**, a private members' motion was approved by the Senate ensuring that the implementation and monitoring of policies relevant to the SDGs would be the responsibility of the Parliament. A joint Select Committee was also created to further review, analyse, and provide recommendations for a draft national strategy on achieving the SDGs.



MONITORING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the national level, the SDGs are monitored through a Voluntary National Review process led by the executive branches of government. According to the International Parliamentary Union, of the 47 countries reporting on SDG progress in the Voluntary National Review in 2019, only about one third (34%) involved their parliaments. Engaging with the process can strengthen the oversight function of parliamentarians, helping them hold the executive to account on progress towards the SDGs. It can enhance their role as elected representatives, as the process means they can give voice to the concerns of their constituents. In many cases, civil society has been engaged in the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews, and parliamentarians can both advocate for and help lead this process.

For example, the process for Papua New Guinea's 2020 Voluntary National Review included a review by parliamentarians through its National SDG Inter-ministerial Committee. The committee is a high-level policy-making body composed of members of the national parliament, which provides oversight for implementing the SDGs in the country, assessing performance and encouraging accountability.

At the global level, all SDGs are monitored through the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, which convenes in New York every year, with a specific focus on each individual goal every four or five years. SDG 6 on water was a focus goal in 2018, and will be again in 2023. Goal 17 is in the spotlight every year. States make submissions to the High-Level Political Forum through their Voluntary National Reviews, to which non-governmental organizations can contribute through multi-stakeholder platforms. The Voluntary National Review process provides an opportunity for parliamentarians to engage with monitoring their

country's progress towards SDG 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. This could involve asking specific questions of their government, or discussing progress with parliamentarians of other countries, through forums such as the International Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The UNICEF / WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) has been actively monitoring access to water and sanitation since 1990. Since the adoption of the SDGs, the JMP has been working to strengthen how progress on the reduction of inequalities is monitored, including assessing how different income groups are accessing services. There are many data challenges for tracking such progress, as the national statistics are drawn in the main from household surveys, and tend not to monitor access to water and sanitation in informal settlements or other areas where marginalized populations live. Analysis of the available data, however, indicates that despite some progress made, much more remains to be done if the water and sanitation targets are to be achieved by 2030.²

02.

PARLIAMENTARIANS' KEY ROLES TO IMPROVE WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SERVICES

Parliamentarians have several key roles and functions, which fall into four main areas. All of these roles can help promote and protect the human rights to water and sanitation, and realize the ambitions of SDG 6.

These key roles are:

1. Representing constituents and communities;
2. Legislating;
3. Oversight of the executive; and
4. Approving and monitoring national budgets.

Parliaments work most effectively when there is a strong culture entrenched through parliamentary institutions, to uphold democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. As custodians of rights, parliaments and parliamentarians approve human rights treaties for ratification by their Head of State, and integrate them into national law for implementation.



Parliamentarians across the world played an active role in the development of the SDGs, shaping the content by contributing perspectives on gaps, opportunities, and priorities for action through global, regional, and national groupings. As a result, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes that parliamentarians have a critical role to play in the adoption and achievement of the SDGs – not only as lawmakers, but also as elected representatives. Since the adoption of the SDGs, countries have made significant advances in incorporating them into national development plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks (although much work remains to be done in these areas). There is a clear role for parliamentarians to be engaged in this and all other aspects of the SDGs, from planning and budgeting to implementation and review.²⁵

Parliamentarians have similar critical functions in the realization of human rights. This includes engaging in processes such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The UPR provides an opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations, as well as engaging with the UN Special Rapporteurs on their country missions and on thematic issues.

Parliamentarians can use their roles of representation, legislating, oversight, and budget scrutiny to address the bottlenecks hindering both the implementation of the SDGs and the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation in their countries.

“We also acknowledge the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.”

– United Nations General Assembly.¹⁹

First global parliamentary meeting on achieving the SDGs ³⁰

From September 28-30, 2021, 70 parliaments representing all the regions of the world attended a virtual event organized by the IPU and the House of Representatives of **Indonesia**.

At the meeting, IPU President, Duarte Pacheco, said “Parliamentarians are instrumental in the realization of the SDGs through the ability to turn the voluntary commitment to the SDGs into enforceable laws, to hold governments to account on development policy choices and strategies, and the adoption of national budgets.”

EXAMPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS AND THE SDGS

Several countries have established parliamentary mechanisms to give impetus to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and create opportunities for cross-party collaboration around the SDGs.



In **Mexico**, the Senate established a working group with representatives of several parliamentary committees coordinated by the Committee on Relations with International Organizations. This group establishes the methodology for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs of the United Nations Organization, which includes monitoring on water resources.



In **Ecuador**, the National Assembly created a Parliamentary Group for the Eradication of Poverty and fulfilment of the SDGs in 2017. The group includes a coordinator and fifteen assembly members from different political parties, whose objective is to present legislative initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and ensuring the execution of the SDGs.



The **Pakistan** Parliament created an SDG Secretariat to support parliamentarians in their work overseeing the implementation of the SDGs. This secretariat supports through identifying gaps in legislation and methods to oversee SDG implementation and protect constituents' human rights. ²⁷



In **Sri Lanka**, the parliament passed a motion in 2016 establishing a Select Committee of Parliament mandated to ensure that the SDGs are achieved. ²⁷



In **Nigeria**, two SDG select committees were established in 2017 in Nigeria to strengthen and prepare parliamentarians in their legislative and oversight roles to achieve the SDGs. ²⁷



In **Finland**, the Government also mandated its parliamentary Development Policy Committee to monitor and follow up on SDG implementation.



In **Kenya**, the Kenyan Parliamentary Human Rights Association (KEPHRA) has been working with the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Chief Justice and the NGO *Kituo cha Sheria* to promote SDG 16 on peace, justice and institutions. This has included drafting legislation and strategies that incorporate SDG 16, including the National Human Rights Policy and Action Plan. ³¹

2.1 REPRESENTING CONSTITUENTS AND COMMUNITIES

One of parliamentarians' most significant roles is to engage with their constituents and communities. In the context of water, sanitation and hygiene, understanding communities' service needs is crucial, to enable effective advocacy on their behalf within parliamentary processes.

Advocating and championing universal, equitable access policies

Although there are numerous (and often competing) demands for scarce water resources, the human rights to water and sanitation prioritize water and sanitation for personal and domestic use. As human rights, water and sanitation must be accessible regardless of cost or ability to pay. Parliamentarians can ensure that the gaps and disparities in service provision between the poor and the rich are addressed as part of their legislation, budget, representation, and oversight roles. This requires parliamentarians to engage with (or initiate) discussions that focus on who does not have access to services, and why they are being left behind.

In their roles as representatives, parliamentarians can:

- Ensure that water, sanitation and hygiene issues are included in party manifestos;
- Listen to and articulate constituents' concerns and needs – highlighting the barriers and concerns around water, sanitation and hygiene to help define solutions, including advocating for better policies and enacting inclusive laws that reflect their communities' needs;
- Promote public awareness of water, sanitation and hygiene issues, including engagement with the media;
- Seek or request disaggregated evidence, data and analysis from research networks and other relevant stakeholders on access to water and sanitation;
- Foster coherence and provide evidence based on their constituents' needs in relevant parliamentary debates;
- Raise awareness among relevant government agencies regarding water and sanitation needs of their constituents, and engage the relevant parliamentary groups and standing committees;
- Build alliances with civil society, academic institutions and other relevant actors to further advance advocacy.

EXAMPLES OF WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



In **Liberia**, civil society organizations have worked with media to influence candidates to discuss water and sanitation as part of their campaign platforms. For over a decade, civil society organizations have encouraged candidates for the legislature to sign a pledge to advocate for better water and sanitation services, if elected.



In **Costa Rica**, the Legislative Assembly approved a law in November 2009 that strengthened the ASADAS (a network of more than 2000 community organizations), helping to enable the effective operational management of communal water and sewage systems. The ASADAS network administers the communal aqueduct and sewerage systems under a scheme of delegated administration, agreed with the Costa Rican national Institute of Aqueducts and Sewerage, through a 'delegation of administration agreement'.³³

The human rights framework is clear that the principles of non-discrimination and equality, participation and access to information as the principles should govern how human rights are to be realized. These principles are critical for parliamentarians to consider in representing their constituents.

SDG target 6.b also requires that States 'support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management'. Parliamentarians can fulfil this by engaging with constituents to ascertain any issues that they may have in accessing water and sanitation.

Some of the targets under SDGs 16 and 17 also specify actions for parliamentarians' engagement with and representation of their communities. This includes outlining their role in helping to ensure responsive, inclusive participatory decision-making (16.7), public access to information (16.10) and in promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships (17.17).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that 'everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status [...]'.
(Article 2)



2.2 LEGISLATING

Parliamentarians are responsible for drafting, reviewing and passing legislation. This role is key to ensuring that laws further the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation, and that they contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.

In their roles as legislators, parliamentarians can:

- Examine water, sanitation and hygiene legislation and policies. Identify gaps, and propose legislative amendments using human rights and SDG perspectives, with a particular focus on non-discrimination and equality;
- Advocate for a legislative and policy framework, including service standards that comply with the human rights to water and sanitation and the SDGs, such as water quality and affordability;
- Ensure legislative and policy framework for creating a regulatory framework, including the necessary institutions and standards;
- Ensure legislation for raising adequate financing for water and sanitation, including legislation on subsidies, tariffs and cost recovery, microfinance, working with investors and the private sector;
- Invite expert submissions on positive implementation of SDGs and the human rights to water and sanitation and common pitfalls, consult with relevant bodies, including ministries and departments responsible for water and sanitation to feed into committee work;
- Build full, free and meaningful public participation that includes marginalised individuals and groups, into the legislative development process by inviting public submissions and comments on draft bills, holding public hearings etc.;
- Ensure national compliance with international and regional treaties;
- Institute legislative mechanisms to monitor and enforce implementation of laws and policies;
- Collaborate within and across countries and attend international events to share experience in legislating for better access to water and sanitation.



EXAMPLE OF MECHANISMS FOR MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN DRAFTING LEGISLATION

Many parliaments in Latin America have created online mechanisms and portals for citizens to participate. In **Brazil**, the 'e-Democracia portal' helps the Chamber of Deputies engage citizens in drafting legislation. In **Chile**, the Senate uses a 'Virtual Senator portal'. In **Argentina**, they have an 'Open legislation Portal'. And in **Peru** Congress uses a 'Virtual Legislative Forums' website.²⁵



In **Burkina Faso**, in 2018, the civil society network SPONG and WaterAid Burkina coordinated a submission during a revision process of the constitution. The rights to water and sanitation are now recognized in Article 18 of the Constitutional Law Burkina Faso.



In **Nigeria**, the Senate Committee for implementation of the SDGs invited stakeholders including the private sector and civil society to discuss the relevant legislation for the realisation of the Clean Nigeria programme. The private sector has also engaged the ministries of finance and water resources through an organized network for water, sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria (OPSWASH). This has resulted in development of tax incentives to support a presidential commitment to end open defecation in the country by 2025.³⁵



In **Brazil**, the Chamber of Deputies launched a 'Mixed Parliamentary Front in Defense of Water and Sanitation' in 2019. The initiative enables joint efforts between parliamentarians and experts from outside parliament, such as from civil society and the private sector. The Front was crucial to the process for the approval of a new law on water and sanitation, which seeks to achieve universal access to services and was approved by Congress in 2020.



While SDG 6 does not specifically require or mention legislation in order to achieve its aims, SDG 16 explicitly mentions the importance of adequate legislation, including the rule of law and equal access to justice for all (16.3); the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6); and the promotion and enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies (16.b). SDG 17 specifies the need for policy coordination and coherence for sustainable development (17.14) and for the need for each country's leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication (17.15).

Integrating human rights and SDG implementation into national legislation

The human rights to water and sanitation require States to ensure access to safe, clean water and sanitation for all, with a particular focus on equality and non-discrimination. Enshrining the rights to water and sanitation in the constitution and national legislation is a clear indication of political will and prioritisation of these issues. Furthermore, in accordance with article 2, paragraph 1, of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, States parties are required to utilize "all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures" in the implementation of their Covenant obligations.

The rights to water and sanitation were formally recognized in July 2010. International law requires that all State signatories to the treaty must ensure their domestic laws and practices are consistent with what is required by the treaty. In some countries, the constitutional structure is such that ratifying an international human rights instrument automatically makes its contents part of that country's domestic law, and applicable by the courts. In other countries, where international and national law are considered independent and separate, the provisions of the treaty must be incorporated into national legislation to be applicable.¹⁸ In either case, enshrining the rights to water and sanitation in national laws (constitutions and specific legislation) is a powerful tool for holding States accountable for realizing these universal human rights and contextualizing human rights norms with national legal systems.

A country's constitution provides the strongest general guarantee of human rights within national legal frameworks. If the human rights to water and

sanitation are explicitly mentioned in the constitution, parliamentarians can work to ensure that they are incorporated into all relevant legislation, regulations and policy. However, regardless of whether the human rights to water and sanitation are enshrined within national constitutions, they should still be integrated into national legislation, policies, development plans and strategies. For example, a country's national legislative framework for water, sanitation and hygiene should be examined to ensure it complies with human rights standards – ensuring services are available to all, especially to vulnerable or marginalized individuals and groups.

Legislation can also provide legal obligations for oversight and monitoring of human rights implementation, which can be a powerful tool to increase transparency, identify clear responsibilities and boost accountability.

Constitutions often also protect other aspects of the human rights to water and sanitation, such as equality and non-discrimination, and the right to participation and the right to information.

More information on legislation incorporating the human rights to water and sanitation can be found in the UN Special Rapporteur's handbook on realizing the human rights to water and sanitation.



EXAMPLES OF LEGISLATION THAT INCORPORATES THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION



In **Colombia**, a decree was issued in 2012 to guarantee access to water and sanitation services for the most vulnerable. It includes promoting the use of subsidies where necessary in both urban and rural areas, and is rooted in specific articles of the Colombian constitution (articles 49, 365 and 366).



In **El Salvador**, the Legislative Assembly approved the “General Water Resources Law” (Ley General de Recursos Hídricos) in December 2021, following a consultative process with input from civil society, academia, and private sector associations as well as a wide range of public agencies. This law recognizes the human right to water and sanitation and emphasizes that water resources cannot be privatized. Community-based water system management boards are also recognized as service providers where the State cannot itself deliver services.

Many States have incorporated these human rights into their constitutions.



In, **Uruguay** recognized the human right to water and sanitation were recognized in its 2004 Constitution, stating in article 47 that access to clean water and access to sanitation constitute fundamental human rights.



In **Kenya** the 2010 Constitution states that, “Every person has the right to accessible and adequate housing and to reasonable standards of sanitation”.



In **Costa Rica**, the human right to access to drinking water was added through Article 50 of its Constitution, through the Law No. 9849 on June 5, 2020: “Every person has the basic and inalienable human right of access to drinking water, as an essential good for life. Water is a national asset, indispensable to protect this human right.”



ACTIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS TO INTEGRATE HUMAN RIGHTS INTO NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Identify gaps in legislation, propose and enact comprehensive legal framework for water and sanitation- a legal framework provides a basis for accountability

Review and audit existing laws on water and sanitation for effectiveness and make amendments as needed - e.g. repeal discriminatory provisions

If absent, draft and advocate for water and sanitation legislation to protect marginalized and vulnerable populations; expand access, ensure affordability

Engage vulnerable and marginalized groups in legislative processes through consultations and other mechanisms for public participation

Enact legislation to institute an independent, well resourced parliamentary budget office or unit to ensure expert and critical budget engagement

Ensure the quality of formulation of laws in terms of language clarity, adaptation to local circumstances and compliance with human rights standards

Review the proposed legislation from the perspective of whether it unintentionally opens any potential for multiple interpretations or corruption



EXAMPLES OF LEGISLATION TO HELP ACHIEVE THE WATER AND SANITATION SDGS

Parliaments have taken legislative steps in many countries aimed at aligning national policy with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.



In **Ecuador**, the National Assembly passed a resolution adopting the SDGs as a mandatory reference for all legislation and other parliamentary acts.



In **Mexico**, Congress approved changes to the planning law to better integrate the SDGs into national development planning processes and align them with the national budget.



In **Argentina**, the Observatory of Human Rights of the Argentinian Senate considers links between legislation and the SDGs.



Regulation and setting standards

States are responsible for setting legal standards for service provision and regulating the performance of service providers whether public or private. Parliamentarians can help ensure the State sets relevant legal standards for service provision, based on the human rights to water and sanitation and the definitions of the SDGs.

Specific and time-bound targets are key to effective monitoring and implementation. The global targets and indicators for the SDGs provide a benchmark for adaptation to national contexts, against which parliaments can assess and track progress (or lack thereof) in their countries.

Parliamentarians can also work to identify and outlaw discriminatory and unequal practices and processes that prevent people from accessing water and sanitation, undermining realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation. Disaggregated data (by sex, age and location) is key to revealing inequalities. Parliamentarians can use this data to increase political visibility and to support prioritisation of those communities where they can demonstrate discrimination and unequal access to water, sanitation and hygiene services.

EXAMPLES OF LEGISLATING FOR THE REGULATION OF SERVICE PROVISION



In **Egypt**, Parliament approved a Water Law which provides greater powers for the Egypt Water Regulatory Authority to regulate drinking water and wastewater licensing and auditing, including enforcement of sanctions for non-compliance.



In 2016, **Kenya** passed an Act of Parliament was passed in 2016 to provide for the regulation, management and development of water resources, water and sewerage services; and for other connected purposes. (Water Act, 2016, No. 43 of 2016). In 2021, the corresponding regulatory framework for water services was published following multi-stakeholder consultations.



In **Portugal**, the regulatory entity for water and sanitation was established by a law passed on 30 August 1997, and in 2009 the law was changed to strengthen its powers, as well as to widen the scope of its attributions to cover all 500 service providers. In 2014, a new law was passed to make it an independent administrative entity with strengthened autonomy and sanctioning and regulatory powers.

2.3 OVERSIGHT OF THE EXECUTIVE

Parliamentarians work to monitor and oversee the work of the executive branch of government and to ensure that they comply with international, regional and national legislation, policies and commitments.

SDG 16 provides opportunities for parliamentarians to strengthen their country's capacity to monitor the achievement of the SDGs, including through: Reducing corruption (16.5); Developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions (16.6); Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (16.7); Ensuring public access to information in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (16.10); and Enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development (16 b).

In their oversight roles, parliamentarians can:

- Monitor and evaluate the impact and implementation of laws and policies on water and sanitation in collaboration with other stakeholders to ensure that they comply with the human rights to water and sanitation and will lead to achievement of the SDGs;
- Contribute to the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) submitted to the UN High Level Political
- Forum on sustainable development, and to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council;
- Work to support or establish dedicated parliamentary mechanisms for monitoring the implementation and progress of the SDGs, and the monitoring of human rights;
- Pose oral and written questions on access to water and sanitation to the relevant members of the government;
- Create and/or use standing committees on water and sanitation to monitor the work of relevant ministries and departments and dedicate committee hearings to monitoring SDG 6 and the human rights to water and sanitation;
- Intervene on water and sanitation at parliamentary questions, motions and debates;
- Work to ensure the collection of accurate and useful data for monitoring progress and implementation of SDG 6;
- Make provision for annual reporting by the government on the progress towards the achievement of SDG 6;
- Encourage engagement between parliamentary committees and civil society and support field visits to assess progress and impact of SDG implementation on communities

EXAMPLES OF DEDICATED PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING THE SDGS



In **Paraguay**, the Senate has created the 'Institutional Program for the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals'. Different internal entities participate in this mechanism, promoting legislation focused on the fulfilment of the SDGs.



In **Trinidad and Tobago**, parliament created the 'Select Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development'²⁷ to consider all matters related to SDG implementation.



In **Jamaica**, parliament has designated the Internal and External Affairs Committee to monitor progress on the SDGs.

Fighting corruption

Parliaments and parliamentarians have considerable power in contributing to the fight against corruption in the water and sanitation sectors. Actions could include:

- Ensuring that parliament itself is transparent and accountable and able to withstand corruption;
- Setting an example of incorruptibility to society as a whole by implementing and enforcing anti-corruption practices and codes of conduct;
- Ensuring that legislation for the water and sanitation sector, or other national legislation, covers:
 1. Access to information
 2. Protection for whistle-blowers
 3. Rights of communities to participate in decisions that affect them and
 4. Clear roles and responsibilities for water and sanitation sector bodies.
- Ensuring that public water and sanitation expenditure, revenue collection and public procurement is effectively audited and, where necessary, is able to be independent;
- Taking specific measures to protect the life, position and career prospects of 'whistle-blowers' in the water and sanitation sector. i.e. individuals who report cases of corruption;
- Simplifying and clarifying regulations, permits, administrative procedures etc, to reduce the potential for bribery;
- Supporting national programmes to fight corruption and organized crime;
- Enhancing public scrutiny over the decision-making around and implementation of public projects;
- Seeking evidence from State and non-State institutions, actors and the general public on water and sanitation delivery and governance, including through anonymous reporting routes;
- Engaging civil society and other stakeholders in the fight against corruption;
- Using the tools of parliament, such as tabling questions, motions and debates to raise issues around potential corruption and malfeasance.

Source: Water Integrity Network

2.4 AUTHORIZING AND MONITORING BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURE

Parliamentarians' role in authorizing and monitoring budgets is one of the most important and powerful tools at their disposal, as ensuring that resources are available to comply with legislation and regulations and implement policies and plans is critical to realising the human rights to water and sanitation and achieving the SDGs. There are many opportunities within the budget cycle of budget formulation and allocation, approval, execution (expenditure) and review where parliamentarians can play a role.

In their budgetary monitoring roles, parliamentarians can:

- Assess budget proposals and budget allocations for water and sanitation services from a human rights perspective, to assess progress towards the SDGs and the human rights to water and sanitation;
- Assess whether the previously excluded individuals and groups are being prioritised in budget allocations;
- Request and review information on budgets and expenditure;
- Advocate for budget transparency; and
- Foster prudent public finance management through holding the executive to account for its revenue generation and spending decisions and actions.

Budgeting for achieving SDG 6 is also linked to SDGs 16 and 17. SDG 16 requires that governments develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (16.6), while SDG 17 requires that governments strengthen domestic resource mobilization to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection (17.1). Target 17.4 calls on donor countries to 'Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress'.

Budgets are a key economic policy tool for States.

They are the means for implementing government policies and plans, including those enacted to realize human rights and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

There are opportunities for parliamentarians to engage the budget process for the improvement of water and sanitation services throughout the budget cycle: from budget formulation and allocation, to approval, execution and review.





According to a study by the Office for the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and International Budget Partnership (IBP), “The most common forms of discrimination in government budgets are those based on gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Discrimination is often multi-dimensional, because, for example, ethnic minorities are often disproportionately poor, and women are typically the poorest of the poor.” (p89)

Budget formulation

A pre-budget statement from the executive often outlines anticipated resources and spending priorities that will underlie and shape the Government’s upcoming budget. However, it is often the case that figures for water and sanitation are not included at this stage. This is because funding for the sector often comes either partly or entirely from municipal budgets and from tariffs, as opposed to the main national budget. Parliamentarians may therefore have to ask specific, targeted questions of the executive, in order to obtain sufficient information to understand what money is available for the sector and how it is planned to be spent.

Such information is critical for parliamentarians, so they can then analyse and assess the plans during the budget approval stage. Sectoral analysis of budgets can assist parliamentarians to assess revenue sources and prioritization, in the context of the rights to water and sanitation and the SDG 6.

Budget allocation

The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) requires States to take steps to progressively realize economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum of their available resources.¹⁴ Parliamentarians can therefore advocate for a human rights-oriented budget in line with this international commitment. Specific guidance is available to support parliamentarians in such an approach.

Specifically, the commitment calls on States to maximize resource mobilization, prioritize economic, social and cultural rights in budgetary allocations and avoid wasteful spending. Parliamentarians can use this commitment as the basis to engage in the budget allocation process – to influence budget proposals and spending priorities, and audit expenditure to ensure requisite resources are allocated and utilized accordingly.

Parliamentarians can also require that budgets are developed, implemented and monitored to withstand possible discriminatory practices. For example, geographical disparities can occur in budget allocations where revenue allocation formulae (often inadvertently) foster bias and discrimination. Allocations should factor in existing disparities and inequalities, to the benefit of disadvantaged individuals and groups. Parliamentarians can play a role in advocating for an audit of budget allocations. This may include a gender audit, to ensure the budget is prioritizing the elimination of inequalities in access to services for women and girls.

Advocating for earmarked budgetary allocations can be an effective way to guarantee funding to critical public services such as water, sanitation and hygiene services. It can be key to realizing universal access if earmarked based on human rights priorities. For example, Ukraine's 'Drinking Water for Ukraine 2006–2020' programme outlines the commitment to a specific budget line for rural areas.

Budget approval

This includes the review and amendment process by parliament, and is typically where the most extensive consideration of the executive's budget proposal happens. Review and scrutiny of the budget and revenue proposals usually takes place within a dedicated committee of parliament that subsequently reports to the full parliament.

As part of the budget approval process, parliamentarians should consider and assess the choice of revenue-generation mechanisms for their compliance with human rights. Well-designed tariff structures, can ensure sustainable revenues for services, which remain affordable for the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals, households and communities. Relevant taxes should be progressive and not overburden low-income populations. Where parliament or parliamentarians feel they would benefit from it, they should push for external, independent experts to conduct assessments (for example, from think-tanks or civil society organizations). There is often scope for legislative hearings on the budget, providing an opportunity for civil society to make submissions, and such opportunities could be championed by parliamentarians.⁵⁵ In **Zambia**, the 'Expanded Budget Committee' has provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to study and analyze the executive's budget with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from civil society and academia. The committee can make recommendations to parliament to inform policy formulation and implementation of future budget estimates – with water and sanitation services forming part of the considerations.

Budget execution

After the budget has been approved, the executive implements the budgetary proposals. The enacted budget and subsequent reports are key to monitoring the implementation of the budget, including both revenue generation and expenditure.

Parliamentarians can use tools such as the World Bank's 'Public Expenditure Tracking Survey' (PETS) to identify where finances are not being effectively transferred from the national to local budgets, or where they are not being properly used. Such public expenditure reviews are often used in the water and sanitation sector.



Budget review

This is usually undertaken by a 'supreme audit institution' (or its counterparts) to assess the budget's accuracy and compliance with the law. The audit reports they produce are extremely valuable for oversight processes – to parliamentarians and other actors with a responsibility or interest to hold the executive to account.

Assessing government spending or the implementation of budget can reveal whether expenditure and implementation comply with human rights. This includes examining whether governments are utilizing the maximum resources available, ensuring that specific sectors such as water, sanitation and hygiene have access to the resources required under a State's formal international obligations. It also includes considering whether the way in which the government is allocating resources is alleviating or further deepening existing inequalities, for example in levels of access to services between different regions. It also includes assessing whether the government is underspending the budget, which could be hampering progress. Such underspending could be due to capacity deficits among implementing agencies, low uptake of services, service obstacles (such as complicated processes or expensive user fees affecting access), or delayed transfers to implementing agencies.

The executive often makes re-allocations on its budget after the parliamentary approval process, for various reasons. These re-allocations can result in resources shifting away from approved priorities during the budget formulation and approval processes (such as water, sanitation and hygiene services). Parliamentarians can enact specific, explicit provisions during the budget review process, in order to prevent such discretionary re-allocations away from water and sanitation services.

EXAMPLE OF INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ON BUDGET INFORMATION



In **India**, the Right to Information Act (RTI) creates the ability to demand and receive information regarding budgets and service delivery. The RTI has become a useful tool for both parliamentarians and communities to increase transparency around the budget process, improve local governance and push for full entitlements.



In **Malawi**, parliamentarians and parliamentary committees have worked with civil society organizations to analyse the 2020-2021 national budget, highlighting the absence of a budget allocation for water, sanitation and hygiene in schools prior to reopening schools following closures due to COVID-19. This absence was presented to the president and to the minister of finance. As a result, the Government of Malawi allocated the equivalent of about US\$6.6 million to the Ministry of Education to improve its COVID-19 response, including construction of 640 boreholes on school sites.



In **Serbia**, the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) worked with the National Assembly and UNDP to develop a portal for monitoring public finance.²⁷

The need to consider 'off-budget' spending

While some external sources of financing are part of a country's official budget process and therefore relatively straightforward to consider and scrutinize in many countries, some funding is dealt with outside of the formal budget process. This may include, for example, official development assistance (ODA), social security and pension funds, or income from domestic natural resource extraction. Since the transparency of such off-budget financial resources is often limited, the scope for scrutiny is much diminished. However, parliamentarians have the power to bring attention to this type of spending, using their legislative mandate. Where such funding is spent on water, sanitation and hygiene services, they can insist that it is spent in accordance with human rights principles.

Financing for water and sanitation

There are significant long-term social and economic returns to investing in water, sanitation and hygiene services in terms of better health and a more resilient population – and significant costs associated with not improving services.

According to UNICEF⁵⁹ waterborne diarrhoeal diseases are responsible for 2 million deaths globally each year, with the majority occurring in children under five. On average, children under five around the world are more than 20 times more likely to die from illnesses linked to unsafe water and bad sanitation than from conflict. Unsafe water and poor sanitation often result in malnutrition, stunting, increased disease, and other negative impacts, preventing children from learning and adults from earning a livelihood.

In rural areas, for every US\$ 1 invested in basic drinking water, an average of nearly US\$ 7 is returned in saved medical costs and increased productivity.



Parliamentarians can advocate for both increased and more efficient public funding in the budget for water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as promoting water and sanitation as a good investment for private sector financiers. SWA's [Water & Sanitation: How to Make Public Investment Work](#) is a useful resource for both finance ministers and parliamentarians. It considers how and why to increase financing for water and sanitation, as well as providing arguments for increasing national budgets to achieve the relevant targets of the SDGs. Parliamentarians play a vital role in ensuring the effective and efficient use of existing finances, including through reducing corruption in the water and sanitation sector.

Considerable progress in water and sanitation can be achieved through political will and effective, focused funding



In **India**, a country-wide services tax was created and earmarked for sanitation, to support the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission, or SBM) a nation-wide campaign led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which ran from 2014-2019. The campaign included eliminating open defecation by constructing 100 million toilets in rural and urban India, and keeping streets and roads clean. The tax of 0.5% on all taxable services, was effective from November 2015 and was levied, charged, collected, and paid to the Government, independent of existing service tax.



In **Mali**, there is a commitment to allocate at least 0.2% of GDP to hygiene and sanitation, and 5% of the national budget for water and sanitation. Achieving this required focussed support directly from the prime minister and cabinet. Consultations between government, parliamentarians, civil society, technical and financial partners, the private sector and research institutions were instrumental to achieving this increase in financing, and these discussions have led to better inter-sector understanding and cooperation.⁶⁴



In **South Korea**, to maintain the 100% water and sanitation coverage, the central government provides substantial subsidies for water supply and sanitation to local government and other service providers, as tariffs alone are insufficient to cover the full operational costs of sewerage systems. The Government has used a national alcohol tax specifically to generate the income meet the shortfall.⁶⁴

2.5 HOW PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM COUNTRIES THAT PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE CAN SUPPORT ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

Parliamentarians from countries that make financial contributions to other countries have additional obligations to increasing access to water and sanitation. Some of the targets of the SDGs, particularly SDG 17, emphasise the role that donor States play in supporting other countries in their efforts to achieve the SDGs. States also have extraterritorial obligations to comply with the human rights to water and sanitation: human rights obligations do not stop at a country's national borders.

Parliamentarians from donor countries should therefore consider how they can support other countries to achieve the SDGs, through their own roles of representation, legislation, oversight and budget review, recognizing how this affects access to water and sanitation. In 2011 the Swiss parliament also approved an additional 0.5% credit, reflecting Switzerland's response to the increasing international priority given to water and climate change challenges.

SDG target 6a requires donor countries to: "By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes."

Target 16.8 requires that governments 'Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance'. Parliamentarians of donor countries can support this target and the importance of engaging developing countries by highlighting them in relevant parliamentary debates and committees. They can actively work to support developing countries to be more actively involved in global governance, for example through providing additional resources for representatives to attend global meetings, or by ensuring that their voices are heard. This includes supporting developing countries' representation at global meetings such as the UN High-Level Political Forum where SDG progress is discussed, as well as engagement with bodies such as UN-Water or the

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, where the human rights to water and sanitation are discussed.

Under target 17.2, developed countries should 'Implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries...' As of 2021 only 7 countries reporting to the OECD met or exceeded the United Nations' ODA as a percentage of GNI target of 0.7%. Since 1960, only fourteen countries have ever met the target, which of course has an impact on progress towards achieving SDG targets. Parliamentarians of donor countries draw attention to these failures in various ways – through their general advocacy work, as well as officially through, for example, engaging the appropriate parliamentary committees, by asking formal parliamentary questions, or during parliamentary debates.

Other relevant targets under both SDG 16 and 17 require donor countries to support developing countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. SDG 16 requires that governments 'broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance (16.8). SDG 17 calls on donor countries to 'mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries' (17.3), 'assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability' (17.4), 'adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries' (17.5), 'strengthen regional and international cooperation' (17.6) 'enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals' (17.9).



03.

PARLIAMENTARY STRUCTURES AND TOOLS FOR IMPROVING WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES

Parliamentarians can use several parliamentary structures and tools to draw attention to the importance of water and sanitation services. These will vary by country, but they include parliamentary committees, public inquiries and hearings, parliamentary motions and debates, written or oral parliamentary questions and multi-stakeholder initiatives that promote water and sanitation.

3.1 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Parliamentary committees are a central element of many democratic parliaments. They are usually the focal point for conducting parliaments legislating and oversight roles. Committees provide scope for in-depth analysis of issues and for thorough reviews of public policies. They provide the means for parliaments to conduct business on multiple issues simultaneously. One of the critical functions of a parliamentary committee is its power to seek evidence from a wide range of individuals and organizations on the subject in question (including, for example, representatives from civil society and academia). When such hearings are public, they can be a very powerful tool, particularly if they are structured to ensure that the most marginalized communities can participate and be heard.



Committee findings and recommendations are eventually brought to the full parliament for consideration and conclusion, making it possible for parliamentary decisions to be taken from the most informed perspective possible. Committees can therefore be a powerful way of influencing the work of parliaments and parliamentarians.

There are different types of parliamentary committees. For example, they may be permanent, with their members serving for an entire term of parliament (also referred to as 'standing committees'), or they may be adjourned to consider a specific topic or issue (often known as 'select committees').

Committee roles and membership also vary by country. They are influenced by factors such as the governing system, the strength of political parties,

available resources, and other political dynamics. Standing orders or house rules outline the mandate and functions of committees. Generally, committees have the power to take evidence, call for documents and summon persons to appear before them. Committees can be extremely powerful and highly effective, particularly if they have a clear mandate, a dedicated and high-profile chair, and have both human and financial resources to manage the work. One of the benefits of parliamentary committees can be the scope for cross-party consensus building.

Human rights committees can play a significant role in terms of guiding parliament on ratifications of and accessions to international treaties, and developing legislation that integrates human rights into national law, as well as leading the oversight of human rights within the country.

EXAMPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES WORKING ON WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE



In **Portugal**, parliament has a permanent Committee on Environment, Energy and Spatial Planning, with representatives from different parties. This committee monitors the Water and Waste Regulatory Authority (ERSAR), which prepares a detailed report on its activities each year for parliament.



In **Iraq**, a parliamentary service committee considered the issue of drinking water, which remained a significant problem despite huge levels of investment. Their research found evidence of large-scale corruption, which was tackled as a direct result of the committee's investigation.



In **Fiji**, it is mandatory for all parliamentary committees to determine how the SDGs have been addressed as part of any inquiry, including water, sanitation and hygiene and considerations of gender equality.



In **Serbia**, the parliamentary Committee on Environment has a 'special seat' for a representative of civil society, which is filled on a rotating basis.



In **Croatia**, the parliamentary Committee on Human and National Minority Rights includes members from human rights associations and interest groups dealing with women and youth issues.



In the **United Kingdom**, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on water, sanitation and hygiene, is a group of parliamentarians from across political parties. It raises awareness within parliament and government of the impact that a lack of water, sanitation and hygiene has on the lives of people around the world, and of the government's obligation to help meet the SDG 6.

3.2 PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

Parliamentarians can ask specific questions relating to water and sanitation of the executive, to highlight issues that have arisen in a parliamentary committee or public hearing.

This opportunity has been used in the **United Kingdom**, for example, when a parliamentarian asked the prime minister about government commitments to investment in water resilience projects around the world, during the COP 26 conference that was being held in Glasgow that week. In **South Africa**, a parliamentarian asked a question to the Minister of Water and Sanitation in December 2021, regarding their plans to resolve contaminated water supplies and the impact on the local community.⁷¹

3.3. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ENQUIRIES

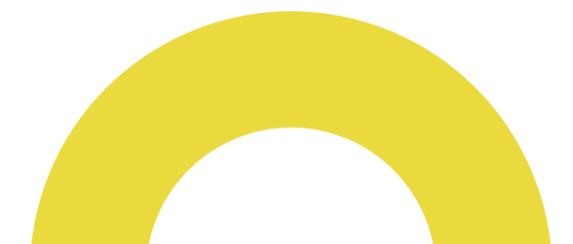
Public hearings can be a high-profile way of soliciting citizens' views and feedback on access to water and sanitation, the human rights to water and sanitation and on SDG implementation. Such hearings and enquiries can then gather and refer these insights to parliament for official discussion, as well as to specific government planning and delivery mechanisms (for example, to the national SDG working group or equivalent body in which parliamentarians participate). In Australia, the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee held public hearings to consider and report on the regulation of farm practices that impact water quality outcomes in the Great Barrier Reef.⁷²

3.4 PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS, AND COALITIONS

Parliaments and parliamentarians can build alliances with other actors (such as representatives from civil society organizations, academia, think-tanks, and media organizations) to advocate for and champion the rights to water and sanitation and to achieving SDG 6. Such work can strongly enhance parliamentarians' representation roles, because it offers a way to engage directly with constituents' concerns and needs and provides a space for them to advocate for their welfare.

Parliaments and parliamentarians can work to strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to claim their rights to water and sanitation. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores that an integrated, partnership approach will be critical for its successful implementation. This could mean, for example, developing strong partnerships with academic research and evidence institutions, to bolster the work of parliamentary committees seeking to improve the country's water and sanitation services.

Parliament can also draw upon the expertise of civil society organizations. Collaboration with organizations that have specialist experience of championing communities' needs enables parliaments (or individual parliamentarians) to get the clearest picture of the issues before them – it expands their reach, and helps ensure that voices that might not otherwise be heard get a chance to influence parliamentary work.



EXAMPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKS, AND COALITIONS



In **Uganda**, the ‘Parliamentary Forum on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene’ was set up in 2012 to respond to water, sanitation, and hygiene issues in the country. It is an independent network of over 120 Ugandan parliamentarians, civil society organizations, and members of the private sector. The forum has successfully advocated on issues such as sanitation at transport hubs and the provision of menstrual materials in schools, and worked on a bill recognizing the importance of community participation in issues relating to water and sanitation.



In the **European Union**, The [StandUp4Water](#) campaign ahead of the 2019 EU Parliament’s elections called on candidates for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to champion development aid for water and sanitation. 45 MEPs pledged to be water champions during their term in office and this has been converted into action, with MEPs publishing opinion pieces, asking written and oral parliamentary questions to the European Commission, and tabling WASH-related amendments on EU legislation related to the global response to COVID-19, on global education and on EU-Africa relations. MEPs are now working on a parliamentary report on access to water, with both the human rights and development committees involved.



The **United Kingdom’s** Commons Library carries out impartial research to provide an information service for parliamentarians and their staff. When parliament voted to reduce overseas development assistance from 0.7% of GDP to 0.5%, the Commons Library published two reports on the issue.⁶⁹

3.5 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS AND INITIATIVES

Parliaments play a crucial role in ensuring governments’ compliance with their international obligations. There are several key regional and international mechanisms that parliamentarians can engage with on water, sanitation and hygiene. This includes, for example, mechanisms that work to incorporate international human rights into national policies and legislation.

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review is a review mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC), used to assess the fulfilment of human rights obligations and commitments of all 193 UN Member States every four to five years. Each Member State submits a written report, ideally developed through an extensive and consultative national process where diverse stakeholders (including parliamentarians) participate and provide information. The reports and recommendations coming out of the UPR process are crucial for the effective monitoring



of progress in implementing human rights. The human rights to water and sanitation are seldomly a focus of States’ Universal Periodic Review, but parliamentarians can change this, using the process to raise the profile of these critical human rights.

Most UPR recommendations require parliamentary action. Parliamentarians can therefore call on ministers heading delegations to the HRC to include information on the status of progress regarding the implementation of the human rights to water and sanitation in their national report, but also to report back to parliament – including to the relevant parliamentary committees.⁷¹ UPR recommendations can also be key to initiating official processes to incorporate human rights into national legislation. In 2016, for example, Jordan’s UPR made recommendations regarding realization of the human rights to water and sanitation, including to “Enact a comprehensive law for water that ensures the concept of the right to access water in sufficient, safe and clean quantities, as well as sanitation services for all members of society, including the marginalized groups of women, children, refugees, and others.”

United Nations Special Procedures

United Nations Special Procedures are either an individual (known as a ‘Special Rapporteur’ or an ‘Independent Expert’) or a Working Group composed of five members, one each from the five United Nations regional groupings. The Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and members of the Working Groups are appointed by the Human Rights Council, and serve in their personal capacities. They are independent human rights experts with a mandate to report, monitor and advise on human rights with either a thematic or country focus. The UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation promotes and advocates for the realization of the rights through various actions. These include country fact-finding missions, the production of thematic reports, and identifying and appealing to States who have allegedly violated those human rights. Parliamentarians can engage with and support the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation by engaging on thematic reports, or during a country fact-finding mission. They can also advocate for a Special Rapporteur fact-finding mission to their country.

Thematic reports of the Special Rapporteur are highly relevant for parliamentarians working to realize the human rights to water and sanitation, covering extensive issues such as how to mobilize the maximum resources available to realize the rights.

"Enact a comprehensive law for water that ensures the concept of the right to access water in sufficient, safe and clean quantities, as well as sanitation services for all members of society, including the marginalized groups of women, children, refugees, and others."

EXAMPLE OF UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROCEDURES SUPPORTING WATER AND SANITATION

Catarina de Albuquerque, then Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation visited **Uruguay** in February 2012 on a fact-finding mission to understand and assess how the rights to water and sanitation were being implemented in the country. The mission provided an opportunity to facilitate discussions on strategies for improvements for improving recognition and realization of the rights, including by allowing the Special Rapporteur to meet with the National Parliament. Article 47 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uruguay has recognized water and sanitation as a human right since 2004,⁴¹ but the Special Rapporteur's mission helped to focus minds on the issue. Subsequently to the mission, Decree N° 59/013 was enacted in February 2013 and Decree N° 343/018 was enacted in October 2018. All have primarily focused on the promotion, expansion of and connection to sanitation infrastructure, networks and systems for the most vulnerable populations, which had been some of the topics of concern highlighted in the Special Rapporteurs findings.

During her fact-finding mission to the **United States of America** in 2011 the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation participated in a hearing convened by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission foreign policy and the human right to water. At the hearing the Rapporteur reminded the United States of their responsibility not only to incorporate human rights, but to target its help to other countries so as to reach the poorest of the poor. She also recalled that the **United States** internally had to take all necessary steps to make sure that the right to water becomes a reality for all people living in the country.⁸¹



The SWA partnership's Mutual Accountability Mechanism⁸²

Since its inception, the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership has considered accountability processes to be a critical element of achieving universal access to water and sanitation.

SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism was launched in 2018, as a process for governments and other stakeholders to make commitments together, on specific actions that each actor will take to achieve the water and sanitation targets of the SDGs. The mechanism is an opportunity for parliamentarians to engage their national sector stakeholders and get involved in the process, for example through participating in national multi-stakeholder platforms on water and sanitation.

The SWA partnership's [first report](#) on the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was published in 2021.



Global and regional conferences and events

Regional conferences, such as SACOSAN in South Asia, Africa Water Week, and AfricaSan provide an opportunity to discuss water and sanitation issues between countries within a region, benefiting from similar shared experiences and building on common contexts. They can be instrumental in generating political will for the rights to water and sanitation. For example, at the second AfricaSan meeting held in 2008, ministers from 32 countries signed the eThekweni Declaration, committing to public sector budget allocations for sanitation and hygiene of a minimum of 0.5% of GDP. This was reiterated at the 4th AfricaSan with the adoption of the 2015 Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene. This is used by all African member states as a tool for advocacy, and is monitored by the African Ministers on Water (AMCOW).

The World Water Forum, held every three years, and hosted by the World Water Council also holds a Parliamentarian Conference as part of the wider deliberations at the forum, in recognition of the role that parliamentarians play in establishing legislation as well as national budgets for the implementation of legislation and policies.

Global and regional initiatives for parliamentarians

There are several initiatives on water, sanitation and hygiene that can provide inspiration for parliamentarians, as well as offering opportunities for advocacy and engagement on the regional and global stage.

In April 2015, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) passed a resolution, 'Shaping A New System of Water Governance: Promoting Parliamentary Action on Water and Sanitation', which calls on national parliaments to "enact legislation for the appropriate implementation of international treaties, customary law and resolutions related to water management and to the human right to water and sanitation".

Working with UNDP, the IPU has produced a self-assessment toolkit as a framework to assist parliaments evaluate their readiness to engage on the SDGs. The toolkit supports parliamentarians in identifying good practices, opportunities and lessons learned on how to effectively institutionalize the SDGs and mainstream them into the legislative process.

'Right2Water' is a European Citizens' Initiative, which advocates for the European Parliament to legislate the right to water. The

European Parliament is the parliament for the European Union (EU), with parliamentarians elected from each Member State. In December 2020, the EU Parliament and Council formally adopted the revised 'Drinking Water Directive', and it entered into force in January 2021. It addresses the quality of water intended for human consumption and seeks to protect human health from adverse effects of water contamination by ensuring that it is safe. EU Member States have two years from the date it entered into force to translate it into national legislation. There are also parliamentary committees on the environment and on human rights, which have organized hearings on the human rights to water and sanitation and on the SDGs.

At a roundtable of the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions in July 2017, parliamentarians from six of the union's member States agreed to agreed concrete measures to "tackle the water crisis that threatens to further aggravate regional instability" as well as set up a committee to consider water governance in the region.

In 2019, the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network on Climate Change, a regional forum that facilitates the exchange of parliamentary good practices and promotes cooperative political dialogue, called attention to, "the increasing

intensity and number of fires affecting the Amazon region in 2019", specifically mentioning the importance of the water systems of the Amazon region.

3.6 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEGAL AND POLITICAL STANDARDS ON WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

Global standards for water and sanitation can be a powerful tool for parliamentarians' advocacy in their respective countries. The most critical global standards are those outlined in the human rights conventions focusing on treatment of women, racism, and children (CEDAW⁹⁶, CERD⁹⁷, CRC⁹⁸). In particular, General Comment No. 15 on the right to water, adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' in 2002 sets out human rights standards for water¹⁶, and the equivalent standards for the right to sanitation are outlined in the same committee's 2010 Statement on the Right to Sanitation.¹⁷ Such international standards should be integrated into relevant national legislation and domestic legislation and policy should be harmonized with State obligations under human rights treaties.

Regional standards can complement international instruments, often elaborating on and contextualizing human rights. Such regional and international mechanisms are useful because they can act as a safety net, helping to enforce the rights to water and sanitation when domestic remedies are not available, or are insufficient.



EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL STANDARDS ON WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE



In **Africa**, the 'African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child' includes a commitment to take all necessary measures to ensure the provision of safe drinking water to children (Article 14, Paragraph 2).

Also in **Africa**, the 'Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa' makes a commitment to ensure access to safe drinking water for women (Article 15) and to regulate the management, the processing, the storage, and disposal of domestic waste (Article 18).⁹⁹

In the **Americas**, the 'Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' (Article 11.1) states that: "Everyone shall have the right to live in a healthy environment and to have access to basic public services."

In the **Middle East**, the 'Arab Charter on Human Rights' (Article 39e), which states that measures taken by States should include the "provision of the basic nutrition and safe drinking water for all".



In **Europe**, the 'Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes', adopted in 1999, acts as a mechanism for implementing SDG 6 and for realizing the human rights to water and sanitation. The Protocol is the first international agreement adopted specifically to ensure the adequate supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone, by linking water management and health issues.

In **Asia**, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, in 2013, recognising the human rights to water and sanitation.



04.

USEFUL AND FURTHER RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership

The [website](#) of the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership offers a wealth of materials about how governments and other stakeholders are working towards the achievement of the SDG targets relating to water and sanitation and the human rights to water and sanitation. There are also discussions and communications toolkits on various water, sanitation and hygiene topics. Each partner country has a dedicated webpage

SWA's [Handbook for Finance Ministers](#) looks at how to make public investment work in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector.

SWA's pages dedicated to the UN Special Rapporteur's handbook for realising the [human rights to water and sanitation](#).

SWA's compendium of [impact stories](#) which looks at the work of the partnership in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector.

You can contact the SWA Secretariat at info@sanitationandwaterforall.org.

Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)

The website of the [Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights \(OHCHR\)](#), has useful information on human rights, including the treaties and resolutions relating to water and sanitation. www.ohchr.org

The OHCHR has produced an outline of how parliamentarians can engage with the Universal Periodic Review process: Universal Periodic Review: The specific role of Members of Parliament before – during – and after the Review. Available [here](#)

See also resources under IPU.

Special Rapporteur on the human rights to water and sanitation

The [UN Special Rapporteurs' webpages](#) contain many

materials for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation, including reports on specific themes relevant to parliamentarians, as well as country mission reports since the creation of the mandate in 2008.

UN-Water

UN-Water coordinates the efforts of UN entities and international organizations working on water and sanitation issues. Information relevant to achieving SDG 6 is available through the [UN-Water webpages](#).

The [UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water \(GLAAS\)](#) reports analysis of the status of States' policies, enabling environment and financing commitments for water, sanitation and hygiene.

Interparliamentary Union (IPU)

The [IPU](#) is the global organization of national parliaments, working to empower parliaments and parliamentarians to promote

peace, democracy and sustainable development.

There are many resources available through the IPU website, regarding the role of parliamentarians with respect to the SDGs, water and sanitation, and addressing corruption, among other issues. These resources have been referenced throughout this document, and are listed again here for ease of reference:

IPU and OHCHR (2016). [Human Rights: A handbook for parliamentarians](#).

IPU (2016). [Parliaments and the Sustainable Development Goals: A self-assessment toolkit](#).

IPU and UNDP (2017). [Global Parliamentary Report 2017](#). Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's power to hold the government to account.

IPU and OHCHR (2019). [Parliamentary engagement on human rights: Identifying good practices and new opportunities for Action](#).

United Nations Sustainable Development

There is a [Knowledge Portal on UN Sustainable Development](#).

SDG targets, indicators and progress towards SDGs 6, 16 and 17 can be found [here](#).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF (2017). [WASH Guidelines](#): Choosing Public Expenditure Analytical Tools for Use in the WASH Sector.

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals

The [High-Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals](#) provides information on the achievement of the SDGs by year and theme.

ParlAmericas Open Parliament Portal

More information on digital tools for citizen participation in the legislative process is available on the ParlAmericas [Open Parliament Portal](#).

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