



WaterAid response to UN Secretary General's synthesis report on the post-2015 agenda

December 2014

Welcoming the report and its inputs

- WaterAid congratulates the Secretary-General for his leadership and vision expressed in the synthesis report. The compelling narrative, framing the importance of dignity for all citizens, serves as an important contribution for member states' efforts to create a post-2015 sustainable development agenda.
- *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet* builds on a solid foundation laid by the Open Working Group report and acknowledges the important work done by the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Global Compact and the UN thematic consultations.
- The Secretary-General has moved the debate forward significantly by identifying the six key elements of People, Planet, Prosperity, Dignity, Justice and Partnership. An opportunity now exists for member states to consider how the 17 draft goals and targets might integrate with this narrative.

Principles made clear

- A key theme of the report is the universality of challenges facing us. It is clear from the report that the post-2015 framework must ensure we not only build a universal 'floor' of basic services but that we move to raise the 'ceiling' of our ambitions.
- We welcome the Secretary-General's call for governments to fulfil their moral responsibilities in delivering dignity for citizens and to fight against tolerating the 'lowest common denominator' in setting new goals and targets.
- Recognition is given to the value of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The duty to complete the 'unfinished work' of the MDG agenda is clear from all inputs. With the sanitation target of the MDGs lagging sorely behind nearly all others and progress on water highly inconsistent, the Water and Sanitation goal of the Open Working Group is necessary to achieve this.
- The importance of a holistic response to both measuring and fighting extreme poverty is evident. Recognising that poverty is not experienced simply relative to wealth but in

multiple-dimensions, including access, or not, to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), is an important principle for member states to consider when negotiating the post-2015 framework.

- The statement of principle that the framework should ‘leave no one behind’ is welcomed. We were pleased to see the even more practical statement that ‘no goal or target be considered met unless met for all social and economic groups’. We call on member states to make this a core principle in the new framework. Furthermore, we believe that more work should be done with a variety of partners within and outside of the UN system to ensure the targets and indicators fully reflect this.
- Ensuring consistency with current political commitments and existing obligations under international law is important. The human right to water and sanitation was recognised in 2010 and we call on member states to deliver the new framework through adherence to this and other human rights.

The role of the six elements

- The Secretary-General has made a substantial contribution to the debate through the introduction of the six elements identified to help frame the ambitions of member states. WASH is named explicitly in the People element, water and sanitation in the Prosperity element, and water in the Planet element.
- How member states take forward the six elements will be discussed in the inter-governmental negotiations in 2015. We offer the following thoughts on each of the six in relation to WASH:
 - People – We welcome the inclusion of WASH in this element. Given the impact of inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene on health outcomes, particularly for women and children, it is imperative that the goal on water and sanitation is seen through this frame. We call on member states to build on the language used by the Secretary-General. While other aspects of these elements, such as health coverage and education, are framed as ‘universal’ and for ‘all’, water, sanitation and hygiene are only included as ‘behaviours’ to be ‘promoted’. Member states should refer to the ambition of the draft targets of the Open Working Group and ensure that the aim of universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene is explicit, rather than implicit in developing healthy lives for all.
 - Prosperity – The sustainable management of water and sanitation is core to economic and social prosperity. The inclusion of water and sanitation in this element is vital and we encourage member states to refer to the Secretary-General’s opening statement in this section that ‘economic growth should lead

to shared prosperity'. The role of water and sanitation should be included as a driver of 'sustainable production and consumption, job creation, as well as sustainable and equitable growth', however we urge member states to ensure the primacy of safe water for human life first and foremost. We also note the importance of decent employment for all, especially for women. A clear link exists between eliminating time spent by women on unpaid labour (such as collecting and transporting water, and caring for children sick from inadequate WASH) and the opportunity to pursue meaningful work.

- Planet – We are pleased to see a reference to fostering 'sustainable management of water resources' in this section. Freshwater resources are indivisible from the ecosystems they help to sustain, and if the framework's environmental aims are to be achieved, effective management of water resources will be imperative. As the pace of urbanisation increases in many developing countries, safe treatment and disposal of human waste becomes even more important to protecting the environment. Furthermore, the impact of climate change is greatest for the lives of poor and marginalised communities.
- Dignity – With one billion people openly defecating each day, the role of sanitation in ensuring a dignified life cannot be clearer. We encourage member states to include access to WASH within any definition of multi-dimensional inequalities.
- Justice – We reaffirm the importance of the human right to water and sanitation and welcome the call for states to deliver on their duty to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Partnership – We are pleased to see the reference to the role for inclusive partnerships at all levels of implementation, and call on member states to consider the role of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership. We believe that this partnership of member states, UN agencies and civil society organisations can play a key role in driving accountability for the Water and Sanitation goal. Furthermore we recognise that the crisis faced by people living without water and sanitation requires governments, the private sector and civil society to be able to work in partnership to realise universal access to these services. This requires the right enabling and legislative environment to promote effective partnerships.

Delivering effective financing and implementation

- The Secretary-General's report recognises the scale of the challenge facing the international community in mobilising the means to implement the sustainable

development framework. This challenge will require a transformation in funding for development and the environment, with public, private, domestic and international financing streams coordinated and aligned behind the framework.

- It is critical that the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015 does not fall short on this agenda. The conference must deliver ambitious and concrete commitments and outcomes to set the stage for successful UNGA and COP 21 summits in New York and Paris later in the year.
- WaterAid supports the emphasis placed in the Secretary-General's report on national responsibility for development. Effective domestic resource mobilisation is essential for eradicating poverty and delivering the public services and infrastructure that are needed to promote sustainable development. However, international action is urgently needed to address the factors that continue to undermine domestic policies, such as tax evasion and avoidance, corruption and illicit financial flows.
- WaterAid particularly welcomes the renewed call from the Secretary-General for all developed countries to meet the 0.7% aid target. Binding timetables need to be adopted, together with action to increase aid effectiveness and improve targeting, with strengthened country ownership, transparency and accountability. To tackle the major inequalities between and within countries, priority for this aid must be for low-income and least developed countries. It must also be used to address the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, including the substantial failure to meet the sanitation MDG target.

Ensuring an accountable framework

- We welcome the substantial contribution of the Secretary-General to furthering the discussion around both the targets and indicators and the wider accountability structures.
- We encourage member states to interpret broadly the report's call for a 'review of targets'. Collaboration between member states and sector partners (including NGOs such as WaterAid) led to productive outcomes during the meetings of the Open Working Group. We believe that this collaboration should continue and highlight the work of the international technical experts' consultation on WASH targets and indicators facilitated by the World Health Organization and UNICEF's Joint Monitoring Programme. This group (representing more than 60 WASH sector experts) has proposed a series of targets and indicators that can be used to further refine and improve the draft goal on Water and Sanitation.

- We are pleased to see the suggestion of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on the development of a draft set of indicators. This should be an inclusive process that captures the needs and views of the poor and marginalised. It is imperative that the UN system looks at all available indicators and works with a range of sector experts (including NGOs) to achieve this.
- We welcome proposals for components of a universal review process, particularly for country-led and thematic components for accountability.
- The prioritisation of the country-led, national component for accountability to the people will be critical in ensuring the longevity of the framework. These processes will require resourcing and support, alongside the delivery of the goals, for them to be effective.
- For the thematic component, we welcome the expectation that this will build on existing review processes and highlight the role of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership in relation to the thematic area of water and sanitation.

Recommendations of the WASH sector expert consultation on targets and indicators

- As member states begin their preparations for the intergovernmental negotiations, we would like to remind them of the work of the WASH sector expert consultation on targets and indicators. Coordinated by the WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme between 2011 and 2013, and endorsed by over 60 organisations, it proposes four targets and a number of subsidiary indicators.
- **The targets are as follows. By 2030:**
 - **To eliminate open defecation**
 - **To achieve universal access to basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for households, schools and health facilities**
 - **To halve the proportion of the population without access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services**
 - **To progressively eliminate inequalities in access**
- We have previously welcomed the targets relating to water and sanitation within Goal 6 of the Open Working Group's draft goals and targets. We are pleased to see the Secretary-General's recommendation that UN technical experts are available to work with member states on reviewing the targets.

- Should member states decide to further improve targets 6.1 and 6.2 recommended by the Open Working Group, we would draw attention to the following areas:
 - ‘Non-household settings’ – under the MDGs, universal access to drinking water and sanitation was monitored only at household level. There is broad consensus that post-2015 targets should also apply to non-household settings, with initial priority given to schools and health facilities. Future iterations should reference non-household settings in the targets themselves or accompanying indicators.
 - Universal access language for targets 6.1 and 6.2 should be consistent. The language used in 6.1 is preferable, i.e. ‘achieve universal and equitable access to’.
 - The targets do not currently address a target for ‘safely managed services’, i.e. access beyond basic levels. Given that this is relevant to countries that have met and exceeded the MDG target, we recommend this is considered within the discussions of how nationally relevant targets will be incorporated into the framework.
 - We urge member states to go further than the inclusion of solely ‘women and girls and those in vulnerable situations’ in target 6.2. With reference to the aforementioned WASH sector consultation target on ‘progressively eliminating inequalities in access’, we strongly recommend that both targets 6.1 and 6.2 reference this language.

Conclusion – 2015 can be a transformative year for water, sanitation and hygiene

- WaterAid welcomes the sharp focus the report brings to discussions on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The opportunity lies ahead for the international community to use next year’s Sustainable Development summit to fully commit to the eradication of extreme poverty by 2030 and, in turn, universal access to WASH.
- We firmly agree with the Secretary-General’s conclusion that that Sustainable Development Goals offer a transformative agenda towards a future free from poverty and built on the principles of human rights, equality and sustainability.
- We call on member states and the wider international community to fulfil their responsibilities to all citizens and make 2015 a milestone year on the road to dignity for all. We offer WaterAid’s full support in achieving this.