Main policies and frameworks for human rights and water and sanitation

- UNICEF WASH Strategy 2016-2030
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (normative mandate)

Main human rights WASH policy priorities

UNICEF’s vision for WASH is the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation for all.

The objectives of the WASH Strategy align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 targets for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

WASH outcome indicators

UNICEF’s current Strategic Plan (2014-2017) outlines a WASH indicator framework including quantitative targets for access in households and schools. Each of these targets is expressed through additional indicators:

a) Enhanced support for children & families leading to sustained use of safe drinking water, adoption of adequate sanitation and good hygiene practices (includes targets for access to services in schools)

b) Increased national capacity to provide access to sustainable safe drinking water & adequate sanitation

c) Strengthened political commitment, accountability and national capacity to legislate, plan and budget for scaling-up of interventions to promote safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and good hygiene practices.

d) Increased country capacity and delivery of services to ensure girls, boys and women have protected and reliable access to efficient safe WASH facilities in humanitarian situations

e) Increased capacity of governments and partners, as duty-bearers, to identify and respond to key human rights and gender equality dimensions of WASH practices

f) Enhanced global and regional capacity to accelerate progress in safe WASH practices

1. UNICEF disaggregated WASH expenditure, 2014/2015

![Pie chart showing WASH expenditure breakdown](chart)


2. Bar chart showing Beneficiaries of non-emergency water and sanitation projects (millions), 2014/2015

![Bar chart showing WASH project beneficiaries](chart)


3. Average annual WASH disbursements: UNICEF vs. DAC2 Members and multilaterals (ODA), 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE $ MILLION</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>DAC + MULTILATERAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>5,889</td>
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</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE $ MILLION</th>
<th>UN-EARMARKED, UNRESTRICTED</th>
<th>RESTRICTED TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>2,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*UNICEF provides funding exclusively in grant form

1 An analysis of UNICEF’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan is not included in the present brief as the bulk of the information researched herein was prepared before the publication of said Strategic Plan. It is notable, however, that the new Strategic Plan includes targets concerning water supply and sanitation in both household and institutional settings.

2 The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is a 30-member forum of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) made up of many of the largest funders, including the European Union.

3 OECD defines official development assistance (ODA) as financing that is concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 per cent (using a fixed 10 per cent discount rate).


Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation • srwatsun@ohchr.org • www.ohchr.org/srwaterandsanitation • +41 22 917 9391 • Oct. 2017
### Incorporation of normative content & principles relevant to the human rights to water and sanitation in development cooperation policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normative content</th>
<th>Description of policy/measure</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability</strong></td>
<td>Concrete part of policy mandate as per SDG agenda; Direct and indirect policy goals related to guaranteeing availability</td>
<td><strong>UNICEF Strategic Plan:</strong> Beyond targets to guarantee universal, continuous access, other targets aiming at preparing governments for climate change and risk management provide further assurances for availability.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Accessibility</strong></td>
<td>Concrete part of policy mandate as per SDG agenda</td>
<td><strong>UNICEF Strategic Plan:</strong> Several specific targets to increase total percent of countries’ population with access to improved sources of water/sanitation/handwashing facilities. Access to a minimum of basic sanitation systems is promoted by concrete targets to eliminate open defecation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordability</strong></td>
<td>Concrete part of policy mandate as per SDG agenda</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> UNICEF’s normative interpretation of SDG 6 targets is that payment for water and sanitation services must not present a barrier to access or prevent people meeting other basic human needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptability</strong></td>
<td>Normative interpretation of SDG goals provides a rationale for acceptability</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> UNICEF’s normative interpretation of SDG 6 targets is that services must be suitable for use by men, women, girls and boys of all ages including people living with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality/Safety</strong></td>
<td>Concrete part of policy mandate as per SDG agenda</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> Committed to providing water that is: “compliant with national water quality standards with respect to fecal contamination &amp; chemical contaminants, including arsenic, fluoride.”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human rights principles</th>
<th>Description of policy/measure</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Policy commitments and strategic targets</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> Includes supporting communities in actively participating in WASH-related processes (programme design, delivery); obtaining necessary support and resources; and creating, changing or reinforcing social norms to establish and sustain health WASH practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transparency / Access to information</strong></td>
<td>Policy commitments</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> Includes supporting communities in accessing information, knowledge and tools – including monitoring tools - on WASH-related processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td>Central part of policy framework and programming principles;</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> Includes a focus on strengthening regulation and accountability frameworks between service providers, policy-makers and communities/users. “[Accountability] refers to sets of mechanisms that make institutions in the public and private sector answerable for their actions and ensures that sanctions can be applied against poor performance, illegal acts and/or abuses of power”. Related targets for the WASH strategy specifically seem to improve accountability, political commitment and national capacity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Discrimination / Equality</strong></td>
<td>Reducing inequality is the first programming principle of UNICEF’s Strategy for WASH; Several methods and targets aim at boosting equality and universality</td>
<td><strong>UNICEF Strategic Plan:</strong> Several targets aiming to reduce inequalities and particularly gender equality: “countries undertaking WASH bottleneck analysis to identify barriers to reaching disadvantaged populations”; “countries having developed/revised policies/plans that provide guidance on women’s participation in all WASH decision-making processes” <strong>Gender Action Plan:</strong> Prioritizes reducing the time it takes for women and girls to access water and sanitation services. Performance benchmarks include: programme expenditures on gender results, gender staffing and capacity. Targets to achieve, by 2017, 15% of programme expenditure on programming that advances gender equality and empowerment of girls and women.</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>Part of policy mandate as per SDG agenda; thorough articulation throughout programming principles.</td>
<td><strong>Strategy for WASH:</strong> UNICEF and other partners in the UN family commit to providing strategic long-term support for strengthening national capacity to deliver quality and sustainable services at scale. Support is intended to focus not only on technical factors, but also on financial, social, institutional and environmental factors.</td>
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With respect to the average yearly disbursements for WASH by all bilateral and multilateral funders in the period 2011-2015, in 2015 UNICEF disbursed comparatively more for WASH projects in the world regions: South of Sahara and North of Sahara & Middle East. More than 80% of all UNICEF funding was allocated to those regions.

Compared to all funders’ disbursement of funds for WASH in the period 2011-2015, UNICEF disburses comparatively more to Least Developed Countries and, to a lesser extent, to Other Low Income Countries. In 2016, UNICEF affirmed that “over two-thirds of UNICEF WASH expenditure is in LDCs.”

**Key tools**
- UNICEF has prepared and supported the creation of several operational instruments to develop and manage WASH services. Such tools report on lessons learned and provide guidelines and matrices on WASH and other cross-cutting human rights issues:
  - Making Rights Real: Clarifying human rights to local government officials (UNICEF and partners of Rural Water Supply Network, 2016)
  - Gender-Responsive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (UNICEF, 2017)
  - Disability-Inclusive WASH practices (2017)
  - Accessible and Inclusive WASH Mapping & Matrix (UNICEF, 2015)
  - Guidance on Application of Monitoring Results for Equity Systems in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Programmes
  - Sanitation Monitoring Toolkit (UNICEF, 2014)
  - Handwashing Promotion - Monitoring and Evaluation Module (UNICEF, 2013)
  - Water & Sanitation Health Facility Improvement Tool 'WASH FIT': A field guide to improving water, sanitation & hygiene in health care facilities in low-income countries (UNICEF/WHO, 2016)

**Partnerships & Projects**
- UNICEF is present in more than 190 countries in both development and emergency/humanitarian contexts. “In many countries, UNICEF is the only large WASH agency to support government and work with partners from multiple constituencies: in communities, and at the district, provincial and national levels.” UNICEF also acts in the education, health, nutrition, social policy sectors.
- Country programmes are elaborated through dialogues and analyses performed together with partner State governments, providing broad context on a number of themes and key problems. They are a basis on which further analyses (e.g. “WASH bottleneck analysis tool”) can help to determine the specific needs, difficulties and enabling factors related to the WASH sector in a given country or region.
- UNICEF hosts the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Secretariat, a global partnership with over 170 members including the largest funders for WASH.
- Partnerships with private actors are an increasing part of UNICEF’s WASH strategy, especially as a part of attaining the SDGs. A number of initiatives involving corporate partners are under way, such as the “WASH4Work” initiative which brings together 11 leading organizations to promote WASH in global workplaces and supply chains. There is no comprehensive assessment of the contribution of these partnerships to achieve human rights standards.
- A large part of UNICEF-funded projects is implemented through partnerships with NGOs. There is no comprehensive assessment of these partnerships’ alignment with the principles that underpin UNICEF’s action, notably those concerning the human rights to water and sanitation.
- UNICEF is one of the custodian agencies for SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2.