At the 2018 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), the overarching theme will be Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. Additionally, Goal 6, Clean Water and Sanitation, is one of the six goals being examined in depth at the HLPF in 2018.

UNICEF encourages countries participating in a voluntary national review during the 2018 HLPF to include the following aspects in their respective reports:

- **Reaffirm their commitment to improve access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene services**, as a key building block for a more sustainable and prosperous future for everyone, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls;
- **Strengthen partnerships with the national statistics offices towards the collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data and routinely measuring progress** towards equitable access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene, in homes, schools and healthcare centers;
- **Report progress on national action** to address low levels of access to basic services through targeting the poorest and most vulnerable children and their families.

**HEADLINE MESSAGES:**

Every child, no matter where they live or their circumstance, has the right to water and sanitation. Without water, children simply cannot survive. Without clean water and soap, a newborn baby risks death from infection. Without basic toilets, entire communities live with human waste in their environment. Without taps and soap for handwashing, disease spread rapidly. Young children are particularly vulnerable, and water and sanitation related diseases remain among the leading causes of death in children under five, and contribute malnutrition and stunting. Children exposed to bodies of polluted water (e.g. with trash, chemical and industrial waste or other environmental pollutants) are also at increased risk of disease and death.

Despite significant progress over the course of the MDGs, today there are still 844 million people without basic water and 2.3 billion without basic sanitation. Progress on sanitation has been particularly slow, with 892 million people practicing open defecation. Globally, 38 per cent of health-care facilities do not have an improved water source and 35 per cent do not have water and soap for hand washing. Without these needs, new mothers and babies are at risk of disease and infection.

Beyond keeping children alive and healthy, access to water, sanitation and hygiene supports progress on nutrition, education, urban services, gender equality, resilience, climate change, reducing poverty and increasing economic growth. Improving equitable access to water, therefore, underpins the success of all SDGs.

The Agenda 2030 Outcome Document calls for “safely managed” water and sanitation services, and introduced new indicators for handwashing, and for WASH in schools. This means that the global standard and scale of what we need to achieve has drastically increased. Yet for many the right to even a basic level of access remains unmet.

The cornerstone for scalability and sustainability depends on good governance, addressing challenges such as limited managerial capacity; poor financial resource administration; and corruption and weak institutions. There must be an intentional focus on sustainable outcomes, within national accountability frameworks which must be maintained throughout programme design, including in emergency situations. Governments, service providers, civil society and communities must all be involved to promote effective participation and strengthen citizen monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms.

There is also a significant role for the private sector in helping to achieve Goal 6. Areas of action include: linking the public sector and larger companies in efforts to strengthen the domestic and small-scale private sector; collaborating to meet the WASH needs of people at work, as well as in their homes and communities; and facilitating forms of engagement at global level that can support country governments to engage their own private sectors.

**DISAGGREGATED DATA COLLECTED FROM OFFICIAL STATISTIC CHANNELS**

The following SDG 6 Targets and Indicators address the following priority areas for children:

- **6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all**
- **6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services**

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1. UNICEF, WHO, 2017 Update and SDG Baselines, June 2017
2. Tackling Anti-Microbial Resistance, Fact Sheet, UNICEF and WHO
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

6.2.1 Proportion of population using (i) safely managed sanitation services and (ii) a hand-washing facility with soap and water

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

6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated

6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

UNICEF also encourages the implementation and monitoring of the following related indicator under SDG 4:

4. A. 1. Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

While national and local governments collect targets and indicators related to SDG 6, we encourage, where appropriate, the collection of data for the following additional indicator areas: use of basic water, sanitation and hygiene services at home; proportion of the population practicing of open defecation; basic water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, health centers and other settings beyond the home. To help identify inequalities, data disaggregated by area (urban, informal urban and rural areas; subnational regions), poverty, and nationally identified disadvantaged groups, as well as gender and disabilities data at the household level.

FINANCING STATISTICS, SOCIAL SPENDING AND PROGRESS ON RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

With an increased ambition in the SDGs, new financing mechanisms and innovative approaches towards achieving universal access to affordable WASH services will be crucial. Current spending on WASH needs to increase threefold\(^9\) in order to meet SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2, the cost of which is estimated at USD $114 billion per year in developing countries from 2016-2030. However notably, poorer regions have to invest a higher proportion of GDP than the rest in expanding service coverage, for example 2% in sub-Saharan Africa and 0.5% in Southern Asia. Hence, investments made by governments and donors are essential to ensure affordable access to services, as well as providing smart subsidies to poorer households to partially finance the costs of WASH services.

Budgeting for water and sanitation at subnational levels is also critical. Extending basic services to populations that remain unserved and increasing the quality of existing services will also require developing new approaches that will work in urban areas and new partnerships with the private sector to leverage all available resources for children. Discussions on financing for development suggest that, while some low-income and fragile states remain dependent on external support, most of the additional financing is expected to come from domestic resources, including private-sector investments.

AWARENESS-BUILDING AND PARTICIPATION, ESPECIALLY AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Evidence from UNICEF’s programmes in water, sanitation and hygiene illustrates the powerful ways in how reaching children and youth with education in schools positively impacts household and community practices. Because norms in sanitation particularly can be associated with social stigma, people’s participation in solutions promotes a sense of ownership, which is a necessary prerequisite for long-term and sustainable practices. Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS)\(^6\) provides more evidence.

UNICEF encourages national partners to involve children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, in national processes regarding the review and implementation of SDGs through participatory means and as part of ongoing efforts to: make children and youth aware of these issues, inspire their positive action and expand the space for their participation in accountability mechanisms and activities. To that end, UNICEF recommends implementing SDG-focused learning throughout schools in their countries and consulting children and youth on their perceptions as to how to improve systems and societies. Existing materials specifically developed for this purpose such as the World’s Largest Lesson are intended to bring the SDGs to the classroom through freely available, multilingual creative and educational content, including specific content related to SDG 6.

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\(^6\) https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Field_Note_-_Community_Approaches_to_Total_Sanitation.pdf