

Workstream 1 — Annex E: Scoring results and Submissions received

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People - Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts — 2026 United Nations Water Conference

Dated: June 2026

The selection process

Participating organisations were invited to submit Priority Actions and Flagship Initiatives in response to the agreed approach (see the attached Concept Note for the Proposed Approach and Work Plan). A total of 11 submissions, six Priority Actions and five Flagship Initiatives, were received and assessed by participating organisations, with each organisation scoring all proposals except its own on a scale of 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong) and against the agreed criteria.

Nine organisations submitted scoring forms. Each submission was assessed using the agreed weighted criteria¹. Weighted scores were then averaged across all scoring organisations, and submissions were ranked within their respective categories.

Results of the scoring

Weighted scores on a 1–5 scale; selected outputs shaded.

Priority Actions

Rank	Proposal	Submitting organisation	Score
1	Just Water Partnership Principles	WaterAid	4.28
2	Scaling the Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM)	Sanitation and Water for All	4.14
3	0.5% GDP minimum baseline for universal sanitation	SuSanA	4.10
4	Realising the human right to water through women-centred approaches	World Vision	3.68
5	Recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' water governance	Consortium of Indigenous Peoples' Organizations & Networks	2.80
6	Strengthening inclusive water governance in rural Senegal	ONGAWA	2.73

Flagship Initiatives

Rank	Proposal	Submitting organisation	Score
1	Heads of State Initiatives (HoSI)	Sanitation and Water for All	4.29
2	Citywide Inclusive Sanitation Accelerator	SuSanA	4.11
3	Water Equity Charter	Water Integrity Network	3.80
4	Know Your Rights, Meet Your Obligations	OHCHR	3.49
5	Reaching Universal WASH Services Coverage	World Vision	3.29

¹ For Priority Actions, the weighting was: evidence (30%), feasibility (30%), scalability (25%), and human rights (15%). For Flagship Initiatives, the weighting was: transformational impact (30%), partnership (25%), evidence and alignment (25%), and resource mobilisation (20%).

Flagship Initiative: F1_WIN

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Water Integrity Network</i>
Focal point	<i>Barbara Schreiner, bschreiner@win-s.org.</i>
Date of submission	<i>18 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Water Equity Charter: A Global Commitment to Dismantle Systemic Inequality and Secure a Fair Water Future for All
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
1, 3, 4 and 5
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
The initiative addresses systemic inequalities that prevent progress towards universal water security and the human rights to water and sanitation. Despite sufficient global knowledge, technology and wealth, 2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water and progress towards SDG 6 remains off track. The Unequal Waters analysis shows that water insecurity follows the distribution of power through six reinforcing mechanisms: political exclusion, resource capture, rights denial, knowledge suppression, process capture, and the social reproduction of disadvantage. These mechanisms are rooted in historical dispossession, political capture and the unaccountable application of market logic to a non-substitutable public good. Because these inequalities operate across governance, finance, law, data systems, professional practice and social norms, they cannot be addressed through isolated technical interventions. A coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required to dismantle the inequality trap and secure a fair water future for all.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
The Water Equity Charter is a global commitment to dismantle systemic inequality and secure a fair water future for all. Proposed by the Water Integrity Network and informed by

the Unequal Waters initiative, the Charter reframes the challenge from closing the water gap to addressing the inequality trap.

The Charter seeks commitments from governments, civil society, development partners, development banks, researchers, indigenous peoples, youth networks and other stakeholders to implement six principles:

- Power redistribution – ensuring meaningful participation, representation and accountability to affected communities.
- Resource reorientation – directing finance and investment towards those furthest behind and ensuring decent wages and working conditions in high water-use enterprises.
- Rights recognition – strengthening protection of the human right to water, customary water rights, the rights of poor and marginalised communities and the workplace rights of workers.
- Knowledge democratisation – closing data gaps and mainstreaming local and indigenous knowledge into water science and decision-making.
- Process transformation – reforming institutions and funding systems to ensure transparency, accountability and inclusion.
- Social transformation – addressing the structural inequalities that determine who bears the burden of water insecurity.

The Charter provides a practical framework for action, accountability and collaboration and seeks to place equity, accountability and rights at the centre of future water governance and action.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

The initiative seeks transformational change by addressing the six reinforcing mechanisms that perpetuate water injustice rather than treating their symptoms. It aims to shift water governance, finance, legal frameworks, knowledge systems and institutional practice towards greater equity and accountability.

Expected results include:

- Stronger participation, representation and accountability for communities most affected by water insecurity.
- Increased allocation of finance and investment towards underserved and marginalised populations.
- Stronger legal protection for human, customary and indigenous water rights and improved protection of workers in water-dependent industries.
- Improved visibility of underserved populations through better data and recognition of local and indigenous knowledge.
- More transparent, inclusive and accountable institutions, funding systems and policy processes.
- Greater attention to structural inequalities linked to gender, class, caste, ethnicity, geography and indigeneity.

The Charter moves beyond dialogue by establishing a practical framework for action and accountability that governments, civil society organisations, development partners and other stakeholders can adopt and implement. By addressing the root causes of exclusion and inequity, it seeks to accelerate progress towards SDG 6 while contributing to climate resilience, poverty reduction, gender equality, public health and sustainable development.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)

The Charter is explicitly grounded in the human rights to water and sanitation and seeks to ensure that those furthest behind are prioritised in decision-making, financing and implementation. It promotes meaningful participation, representation and accountability for affected communities and strengthens protection of human, customary and indigenous water rights.

The initiative recognises that water insecurity is disproportionately experienced by women and girls, indigenous peoples, lower-caste groups, informal settlement residents, workers in water-dependent industries and other marginalised populations. It seeks to address the structural barriers that limit access to safe, acceptable, accessible, affordable and quality water and sanitation services by advancing rights recognition, equitable resource allocation, improved accountability and inclusive governance.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative contributes directly to several SDG 6 accelerators.

Financing and investment: through resource reorientation towards underserved and marginalised populations.

Capacity development: through commitments to participation, accountability, institutional reform and community empowerment.

Data and information systems: through knowledge democratisation, closing data gaps and improving visibility of excluded populations.

Innovation and governance practice: through a new framework that addresses systemic inequality, strengthens rights, values local and indigenous knowledge and promotes transparency and inclusion.

By addressing structural barriers to equitable water governance and service delivery, the Charter supports accelerated and more inclusive progress towards SDG 6.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

The Charter draws on case studies, evidence, practice and learning accumulated across four decades and synthesised through the Unequal Waters initiative. The underlying analysis demonstrates that the principal barriers to shared water security are structural and political rather than technical.

The evidence highlights that approximately 2 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water and that progress towards SDG 6 would need to accelerate sixfold to achieve global targets. The analysis identifies six mutually reinforcing mechanisms of water inequality: political exclusion, resource capture, rights denial, knowledge suppression, process capture and social reproduction of disadvantage.

The background paper documents how these mechanisms operate across diverse contexts. Examples include informal settlements in Nairobi where residents pay many times the formal water tariff, the gendered burden of water collection affecting millions of women and children in sub-Saharan Africa, the exclusion of indigenous and customary rights from formal legal systems, and the depletion of shared groundwater resources in Peru's Ica Valley through unequal patterns of water allocation and economic development.

The analysis further demonstrates that isolated technical interventions frequently fail because they do not address the structural mechanisms that reproduce inequality. Lasting change requires coordinated action across governance, finance, legal systems, data systems, professional practice and social norms.

The Charter translates this evidence into a practical framework for collective action built around six disruption principles: power redistribution, resource reorientation, rights recognition, knowledge democratisation, process transformation and social transformation.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative builds directly on the Unequal Waters seminar series convened by the Government of South Africa, Water Integrity Network, Water Witness International and Sanitation and Water for All. It draws on extensive evidence, practical experience and multi-stakeholder dialogue developed through this process.

The Charter complements and strengthens existing commitments to SDG 6, the human rights to water and sanitation, water integrity, climate resilience and social justice. Rather than creating a parallel process, it provides a unifying framework that connects existing efforts through a common focus on addressing systemic inequality and ensuring that those furthest behind are prioritised.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative is proposed by the Water Integrity Network and has been developed through multi-stakeholder and multi-country collaboration. It draws on engagement with Sanitation and Water for All, the Government of South Africa, Water Witness International and a broad range of practitioners, researchers, policymakers and civil society actors.

The Charter is intended as a multi-stakeholder commitment involving governments, civil society organisations, development partners, development banks, indigenous peoples' representatives, youth networks, researchers and other actors. Its governance approach is grounded in participation, accountability, transparency and inclusion, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that communities most affected by water insecurity have meaningful representation in decision-making and implementation

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The initiative is being advanced by the Water Integrity Network and draws on collaboration with the Government of South Africa, Water Witness International and Sanitation and Water for All through the Unequal Waters process. These organisations and partners have

contributed to the development of the underlying analysis and the proposed Charter framework.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

Potential champions identified in the proposal include South Africa, Zambia and Finland. Additional support may come from indigenous peoples' representatives, youth networks, progressive development banks, civil society organisations, research institutions, development partners and a coalition of Global South governments. The Charter is intended to remain open to endorsement by all UN Member States, development partners, private sector actors and civil society stakeholders.

Existing financing / resource mobilisation

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

Existing collaboration, technical contributions and partner engagement is taking place through the Unequal Waters seminar series and associated partnerships involving the Water Integrity Network, Water Witness International, Sanitation and Water for All and the Government of South Africa.

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

The Charter is intended to mobilise political commitment, collaboration and action across governments, civil society, development partners, development banks, researchers and other stakeholders. Through endorsement and implementation of the Charter principles, it seeks to influence future policy, investment and institutional reform towards equity-focused water outcomes.

The initiative aims to build a broad coalition committed to addressing systemic water inequality and to encourage the alignment of existing programmes, investments and partnerships with the Charter's six principles. Potential support may come from governments, development partners, development banks, civil society organisations and other stakeholders committed to advancing water justice, human rights and SDG 6.

The proposal does not establish a dedicated financing mechanism. Instead, it provides a common framework through which existing and future investments, programmes and partnerships can be aligned to address structural barriers to water security and ensure that resources reach those furthest behind.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

The Charter is intended to operate beyond the 2026 United Nations Water Conference as a medium- to long-term framework for action, accountability and collaboration. It will remain open to endorsement and implementation by governments and stakeholders committed to dismantling systemic inequality and securing a fair water future for all.

Flagship Initiative: F2_World Vision

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>World Vision</i>
Focal point	<i>Lindsay Lange</i>
Date of submission	<i>18 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Reaching Universal WASH Services Coverage in Defined Areas
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
#2, 4 and 5
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 sets an ambitious goal of ensuring access to water and sanitation for all. This means that all people have access to water, sanitation and hygiene services that are safe, affordable, and sustained. This is an aspirational goal, and one that will never be fully achieved in a strict technical sense, because populations and communities are always changing. Because of the ambitiousness of the goal, investments from governments and funders are often spread out resulting in a perceived lack of progress that makes it difficult to build momentum and excitement from both potential funders and from government stakeholders.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
Therefore, a Universal Services Coverage (USC) approach that focuses all actors on a specific geographic area (or “district”) allows for significant measurable change in a small amount of time that can be leveraged for catalytic change. The underpinning of the whole initiative is mobile data collection that allows for visualisation of progress and transparency for all stakeholders (preferably through mWater). Using a combination of spatial analysis and survey data, each USC initiative works with government in a defined administrative area (a “district” or “sub-district”) to identify and reach unserved or underserved communities. As new water points are constructed, water systems and water points are mapped, and using

population data that is freely available, districts can be shown on a map to reach 90% drinking water coverage. Household sanitation and hygiene initiatives can also be tracked through household data collection until the whole “district” has access to WASH services. Since all the data is already in a digital format, private operators or government entities can use the mWater system for water service fee collection and to track water point breakdown, to allow for long term sustainability well after the initial infrastructure push is over. You can see more of the spatial approach to WASH services here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a73563c0d11b433fa35e0bd10a546087>

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

In partnership with government, the goal of each USC initiative is to reach 90%+ coverage of the targeted district's population with basic water and/or sanitation services. During planning and implementation, USC initiatives will:

1. **Empower the most vulnerable and marginalised.** USC initiatives offer opportunities to empower the most vulnerable communities. Each USC initiative should consider potential vulnerabilities (e.g. poverty, disabilities, and gender) and how vulnerable households can be prioritised.
2. **Align with government priorities and boundaries.** In general, the chosen administrative boundary should align with the service authority—that is, the level of government responsible for providing water and sanitation services.
3. **Increase collaboration and coordination across stakeholders.** Planning for USC requires close collaboration and coordination with the district government and other water supply actors working in the district. USC initiatives should leverage the participation and investments of others.
4. **Strengthen sustainable service delivery.** USC is not only about building new WASH infrastructure—it must also be about strengthening the capacity of local government and local operators to deliver services sustainably. “Hard” interventions like new infrastructure must be combined with “soft” interventions like asset management, billing and accounting, monitoring and regulation, and water resources management. USC initiatives adopt a “service-centred approach” that supports the sustainability of the service and not just the construction of infrastructure.

Through spatial data and household baseline and endline surveys, coverage rates for water, sanitation, and hygiene rates will be measured and celebrated when they reach over 90%.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)

A focus on 90% coverage of WASH services ensures that we do not leave the most vulnerable behind. Too often, if a WASH project comes in and raises access from 30% to 60%, that was because the project prioritised the low hanging fruit and the easiest people to reach. By setting our target at the 90% level, we are intentionally targeting the hardest to reach and including the most vulnerable as a key part of program planning.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

This initiative centralises data within the mWater system and allows government and implementing partners to contribute to and utilise the same data source. In addition, focusing on a specific area with a measurable success point (90% access) allows for more concrete investment from donors and rallies stakeholders around common goals. In the experience of World Vision, individual donors are more excited about supporting a specific area they can see on a map, than generally supporting WASH work globally or in a specific country. Working in defined USC areas will help catalyse additional investment, and the use of the mWater asset management features will allow for ongoing tracking of water payments and long-term sustainability.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

We first launched a large universal service coverage effort in Rwanda. From 2019 through 2023, we worked with the government in 39 sectors across the country to reach universal access to water. All of our data and memos of completion can be found here: <https://portal.mwater.co/#/dashboards/a064bcf4921342278a62cc3c03929d09>. Building on lessons from Rwanda, World Vision's new 5-year Business Plan (2026-2030) encourages priority countries to select a "district" for USC. More information on these plans can be found here: <https://mappingthebluethread.global/place-based-initiatives/universal-service-coverage>. We currently have 22 countries with active USC areas.

From our experience over multiple contexts and working with multiple different governments, we feel strongly that this is the way forward for World Vision, and we think it can be a strong model for other stakeholders to partner and expand their reach.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

The USC initiative is a great way to bring together multiple focus areas that are already happening in the sector:

- Direct implementation of water systems
- Professionalisation of WASH services so WASH operators see the running of water systems as a viable business
- Integration of geospatial data for better planning and decision making
- Building sanitation markets to catalyse growth for improved sanitation
- Innovative financing to snowball from one project directly into the next with repayable financing

All of the major WASH focus areas can fit within the USC umbrella to allow for alignment of vision and strong partnership between stakeholders.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

These initiatives should be government- led. Partners should support governments in making larger USC master plans, and then step up to provide funding for part of the plan in

coordination with the government. In this way, government and partners can look for areas with overlapping interests within the larger plan, and work can be spread equitably through the country with different stakeholders responsible for different areas. World Vision has the expertise to help craft these master plans and train all stakeholders in the mWater mapping and survey tools, but ultimately the government is the head of the initiative.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

We are implementing USC projects in the following countries with strong government support and commitment: Angola, Cambodia, Chad, DRC, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, PNG, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

World Vision has significant WASH programming in 42 countries across six regions, and has strong relationships with many of these governments. Any of these member states could be strong advocates. The full list is here: <https://mappingthebluethread.global/where-we-work/>.

Existing financing / resource mobilisation

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

World Vision has a 5-year Business Plan (2026-2030) where we have committed over 1 billion dollars from our donors and partners to WASH implementation work. We estimate that about 200 million dollars will be spent on USC. We are pushing for more co-financing from governments to increase this overall effort and are expanding our work in repayable and innovative financing to bring more banks and financial institutions into the WASH space. We are aiming to have 30% government co-financing on USC projects.

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

In a specific “district”, the first step is to map all existing water points and their functionality status. This allows for a clear visualisation of who is served and who is unserved in each district, and then costs can be clearly articulated to show the path to reach USC. This specific need is more attractive to donors who can more easily see the benefit of investment. This is also a great way to encourage governments to give more towards their WASH commitments. In Rwanda, for example, we were able to agree with the government that they would pay for 30% of every new water system while World Vision would pay for 70%. This blended approach allowed us both to expand our work more quickly and reach a larger number of people.

In addition, the digital first approach lends itself to more transparency that allows for the option of more repayable financing. By mapping where water systems will go and showing the population distribution on a map, private operators can model how much funding they will receive in operating the system. This transparency allows for more funders to be willing to

jump in when they see that they will eventually be able to recoup their capital expenditures to be able to then invest that funding in future water projects.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

Each USC district has a 2-5 year time horizon to complete full WASH services coverage. The key first step is getting buy in from all stakeholders around a specific area, which is something that can happen at the 2026 conference. Once buy-in is achieved, projects can expand rapidly and we can start to have a drumbeat of success as we celebrate “districts” that have reached Universal Services Coverage.

Flagship Initiative: F3_SWA

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Sanitation and Water for All.</i>
Focal point	<i>Anjani Kapoor</i>
Date of submission	<i>22 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Heads of State Initiatives (HoSI): Political Leadership for Water Security and Sanitation
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
1, 3, 4 and 5
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
The most persistent gap in water and sanitation governance is not the absence of strategies, plans, or technical solutions. It is the absence of sustained political ownership at the level where cross-sectoral priorities, budgets, and reforms sit. Water and sanitation compete with health, education, and energy for political attention and public resources. World Bank analysis across 68 countries found water received roughly 1 percent of government spending between 2009 and 2020, against 60 percent for human development. Yet investment in water and sanitation carries among the highest returns a government can make: in Africa, every dollar invested returns seven dollars, and adequate investment could boost the continent's GDP by 5 percent. Even where governments commit to SDG 6, implementation is often constrained by fragmented mandates and weak political leadership. Accelerating progress requires leadership at the highest level of government, able to mobilise institutions, financing, and accountability across sectors.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
The Heads of State Initiatives (HoSI) unite political leaders at the highest level to achieve sustainable and resilient water and sanitation for all. Through HoSI, national leaders make vital contributions to poverty reduction, peacebuilding, and the realisation of human rights, working directly with Presidents, Prime Ministers, and other Heads of State and Government

to elevate water, sanitation, and hygiene as a national political priority, with increasing focus on water security and resilient sanitation. Initiated at the 2023 UN Water Conference, HoSI has grown to more than 32 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, with national leaders mobilising action, coordinating multi-stakeholder support, and driving concrete change on the ground. The initiative is supported by the Netherlands, UK's FCDO, UNICEF, SWA, and IRC-WASH, with WaterAid subsequently joining. Each HoSI is nationally owned and tailored to country context, taking the form of Presidential Compacts, Executive Orders, national flagship programmes, royal seals of approval for new sector strategies, or other high-level political instruments capable of driving implementation across ministries, helping countries strengthen climate resilience, address waterborne disease, and end open defecation. The initiative also seeks to mobilise sustainable financing and reinforce accountability for commitments. By elevating water, sanitation and hygiene as political priorities and strengthening whole-of-government responses, HoSI ensures commitments translate into tangible results rather than remaining declaratory. Operating at the highest political level, HoSI creates the enabling conditions countries need to accelerate SDG 6 implementation: political leadership of this kind promotes long-term stability and a more equitable, resilient future.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

HoSI drives systemic change by embedding water and sanitation priorities within national political agendas.

Results demonstrate outcomes from SWA partner countries: in **Dominican Republic**, water received a 60 percent budget increase in the first year of the national Water Pact, with a Water Cabinet now coordinating national response and infrastructure spending reaching a USD 600 million annual target. **Ghana's** Presidential Compact mobilises approximately USD 1.7 billion annually and has supported a National Sanitation Authority and Fund; a change in government has reinforced rather than weakened it. **Indonesia's** Presidential Instruction targets closing the access gap for 3 million people; a subsequent government revised the financial commitment while retaining the coordination architecture. **India's** Swachh Bharat and Jal Jeevan missions have driven a record 160 billion dollar investment, with India now mentoring other HoSI countries. **South Sudan's** Compact contributed to a thirteen-fold increase in the Ministry of Water budget, though disbursement has not yet matched that ambition. **Nepal's** Prime Minister's Initiative is being carried forward through a significant political transition, with the new administration committing to convene an international financing conference. **Nigeria's** Clean Nigeria Executive Order has helped 174 cities and towns reach Open Defecation Free status, covering 23 million people, and extended to 2030.

Each HoSI country moves through the partnership's TIDE model: Triggering, Incubation, Delivery, and Evaluation, with governments across different stages, signalling a shift in how governments are positioning water and sanitation politically. Expected outcomes include increased domestic financing, stronger accountability, improved cross-sectoral coordination, and expanded access for underserved populations.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)

Who has access to water and sanitation is rarely a question of resources alone. It is a question of political choice: which populations a government serves first, and whose claims are weighed as a priority. The human rights to water and sanitation are progressively realised through these choices, and HoSI ensures the choice is made deliberately, not left to chance. Climate change makes these choices more consequential. As droughts intensify, governments decide which populations receive protection and which absorb the shock. Without sustained political attention, decisions tend to favour those with voice, rather than those furthest behind. HoSI places water and sanitation in front of the leaders who make these trade-offs, embedding climate resilience and equity as structural requirements of each compact. By securing whole-of-government ownership, HoSI ensures these issues are weighed in finance and planning, not only by sector ministries, so populations furthest behind are not left waiting.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

HoSI contributes directly to all four SDG 6 accelerators:

- Financing and Investment: mobilises domestic and external financing through political leadership and budget prioritisation.
- Capacity Development: strengthens institutions and governance structures responsible for implementation.
- Data and Information: promotes monitoring and accountability through national reporting mechanisms and integration with SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM).

Innovation: supports innovative governance arrangements and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms tailored to national contexts.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

HoSI builds on examples of countries mentioned above, where initiatives led by the head of state or government delivered transformational results.

HoSI was created in response to a recurring challenge identified across the water sector: strong technical solutions often fail to achieve scale because water and sanitation lack sustained political prioritisation. The head-of-state-led initiatives have demonstrated measurable results across multiple governance contexts: budget increases, institutional reform, and service delivery outcomes in countries such as South Sudan, Ghana, and the Dominican Republic. These results sit within a wider movement, with countries at every stage of the TIDE process, from triggering through to delivery and evaluation, and results expected to deepen as more countries advance towards signed compacts. HoSI also responds directly to findings highlighted in global monitoring processes, including GLAAS assessments, which repeatedly identify fragmented institutional responsibilities, insufficient political prioritisation, and financing constraints as major barriers to achieving SDG 6. These findings reinforce the rationale for a mechanism that elevates water and sanitation within national political decision-making and sustains attention beyond individual projects or electoral cycles, which the country evidence above demonstrates HoSI is already doing.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

HoSI strengthens and complements existing global and national initiatives rather than replacing them. The initiative provides the political leadership necessary to accelerate implementation of commitments made through the national SDG processes, climate adaptation strategies, and sector reform programmes. HoSI also complements other initiatives, including Water Forward, by raising the political support needed to develop, implement and regularly track national initiatives. HoSI also builds on itself as a movement. Countries that have established compacts and are delivering results support others earlier in the process, through country-to-country exchange and shared lessons coordinated by HoSI's technical team, so that experience gained in one country accelerates progress in the next. This peer support runs alongside HoSI's complementarity with SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM), which provides a structured accountability framework for tracking commitments and monitoring progress over time.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

Founding partners include Government of Netherlands, FCDO, UNICEF, SWA, and IRC-WASH with WaterAid subsequently joining the initiative. Implementation is nationally led and government-owned, with Heads of State and Government providing political leadership and national institutions coordinating delivery. The initiative engages ministries responsible for finance, planning, water, sanitation, health, climate, local government and related sectors, alongside development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

HoSI currently operates in more than 32 countries. Supporting partners include DGIS, UNICEF, IRC-WASH, SWA, FCDO and WaterAid. HoSI has received support from senior political leaders and champions, including former presidents and prime ministers from SWA's Global Leadership Council, such as H.E. Michelle Bachelet, H.E. Laura Chinchilla, H.E. Jigmi Y. Thinley and H.E. Dr. Aminata Touré. Ghana, Co-Chair of Interactive Dialogue (a), is itself implementing a Head of State Initiative and can speak directly to the value of high-level political leadership in advancing water and sanitation priorities.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The 2026 United Nations Water Conference represents a strategic opportunity to expand HoSI to a new cohort of countries and strengthen political leadership for water and sanitation globally. Potential supporters include additional Member States participating in the Water Action Agenda, UN-Water members, regional organisations, development finance institutions, philanthropic foundations, civil society networks and private-sector partners seeking to strengthen implementation and accountability for water and sanitation commitments. Building on existing momentum, HoSI could serve as a vehicle for countries seeking to translate Water Action Agenda commitments into nationally owned political compacts, reforms and implementation frameworks.

Existing financing / resource mobilisation

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

Current support is provided through participating governments and partner organisations, including technical assistance, policy support, advocacy, coordination and country engagement activities.

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

HoSI's financing strategy focuses on leveraging political leadership to unlock domestic public finance, align development partner investments, and mobilise additional external resources. HoSI's catalytic role is to leverage national budget processes, strengthen financing frameworks, and create the enabling conditions for long-term investment, achieved primarily through high-level political engagement and technical support rather than through substantial funding of its own. The growing network of more than 32 countries reinforces this effect: as more governments sign compacts and demonstrate results, peer learning and country-to-country exchange build the evidence and confidence that attract further investment, both from within the countries already engaged and from those preparing to join. Future resource mobilisation opportunities include bilateral donor support, multilateral financing, climate finance mechanisms, philanthropic partnerships, and private-sector engagement aligned with national priorities.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

2026–2030 and beyond, with expansion to additional countries and continued support for implementation, accountability, financing mobilisation and political leadership for water and sanitation.

Flagship Initiative: F4_OHCHR

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Focal point	Jana Al Hassanieh
Date of submission	18 June 2026

Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Know Your Rights, Meet Your Obligations: Global Campaign on Human Rights to Water and Sanitation
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
Guiding Questions 1, 3, 5
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
Access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a fundamental human right, yet it remains far from realized for hundreds of millions of people. A critical and persistent driver of this failure is a structural deficit of human rights literacy on both sides: rights holders and duty bearers. Duty bearers (including States, regulators, local governments, and service providers) frequently lack the practical guidance to translate their binding obligations under international human rights law into concrete policies and accountable regulatory standards. Rights holders (including women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, migrants, stateless persons, and communities in informal settlements) are often unaware of what they are legally entitled to and how to seek remedy when those rights are violated. Bridging the gap between legal obligation and lived reality requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response anchored in the normative authority that only OHCHR, as the principal UN human rights body, can provide.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
Know Your Rights, Meet Your Obligations is a multilingual globally coordinated campaign led by OHCHR that develops and disseminates legally grounded, practical tools and guidance

materials for both duty bearers and rights holders, transforming existing international human rights law into actionable knowledge for the people who need it most.

For duty bearers, the campaign will produce:

- A State Compliance Self-Assessment Framework against AAAQ obligations, with remediation pathways;
- Human Rights Checklists for local governments and utilities on non-discrimination, affordability tariff design, grievance mechanisms, and participatory planning;
- A Legislative Review Tool identifying gaps between domestic law and international obligations, with model regulatory language;
- Guidance for Regulators on embedding human rights standards into licensing, tariff-setting, and enforcement.

For rights holders, the campaign will produce:

- Plain-language and audio-visual Know-Your-Rights guides in all UN languages;
- Population-specific guides for Indigenous Peoples, migrants and stateless persons, persons with disabilities, women and girls, and people in informal settlements;
- Guidance on engagement pathways to NHRIs, treaty bodies, and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

The initiative operationalises existing universally accepted norms and standards. The campaign does not create additional obligations for governments, but implements the ones they have already made. Launched at the 2026 UN Water Conference with a Duty Bearer Pledge mechanism, it can generate measurable political accountability from day one.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

The initiative will drive systemic change by addressing the accountability deficit at the root of persistent non-realisation of human rights. Its transformational logic is straightforward: rights cannot be claimed if rights holders do not know what they are entitled to; obligations cannot be met if duty bearers do not understand what the law requires. Legal literacy is the precondition for all other accountability mechanisms to function.

Measurable outcomes will include:

- At least 20 core tools and guidance documents developed and publicly available by 2030, available in different UN languages;
- NHRIs in at least 80 countries implementing duty-bearer tools by 2030;
- At least 100 Member States signed to the Duty Bearer Pledge by 2030;
- At least 2 million rights holders reached through community advocates and civil society networks by 2030.

Accountability is built into the campaign architecture from the outset. The Duty Bearer Pledge creates a public verifiable record of State commitments that civil society, NHRIs, and treaty bodies can monitor and act upon. Community reports on increased capacity and knowledge as well as impact including promising amendments in law and policies linked to the human rights to water and sanitation feed directly into NHRI reporting cycles and the Universal Periodic Review. OHCHR will report annually to the Human Rights Council on implementation progress. Every tool is designed to produce a concrete accountability outcome.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)

OHCHR promotes human right-based approach to water and sanitation. As the principal UN human rights body, OHCHR brings a unique normative approach to water and sanitation governance, grounded in binding international human rights law: setting global standards, providing legal guidance, and holding States and duty bearers accountable to their obligations to progressively realize the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation for all, without discrimination, with particular attention to those in vulnerable and marginalized situations.

Every tool developed under this initiative is structured around the AAAQ framework (availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality) derived from General Comment No. 15 (2002) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and elaborated through successive Human Rights Council resolutions.

The initiative applies a non-discrimination and equality lens throughout, with dedicated materials for individuals and groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative directly operationalises the enabling environment accelerator of the [SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#) (GAF). It also advances the GAF accelerators linked to:

- capacity development: The initiative builds the legal and institutional literacy of duty bearers and the rights awareness of communities across all governance levels and geographies (the foundational human capacity on which effective WASH delivery depends).
- Data and information: Community scorecards and NHRI monitoring tools generate structured rights-based data on AAAQ compliance, feeding into national reporting cycles, GLAAS, JMP, and the Universal Periodic Review (strengthening the human rights dimension of existing global data systems).
- Innovation: A digital open-source platform enables real-time adaptation and dissemination of tools across legal systems and contexts in different UN languages, building on the [ESCR Knowledge Hub](#) already operational within OHCHR's UN Human Rights Knowledge Gateway.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

Where States have received targeted practical guidance and operational support from OHCHR, including legislative review, model regulatory frameworks, and checklists, there have been documented measurable uptake in policy reform, regulatory revision, and budget allocation.

One example is: OHCHR supported national efforts to reform Mexico's National Water Law and the publication of a new General Water Law, in December 2025, which incorporates several international human rights standards on the human rights to water, sanitation, a healthy environment, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and business responsibilities. It also submitted tailored proposals for an amendment during legislative hearings to strengthen key provisions in the new Water Law.

Additionally, landmark rulings affirming the right to water (including by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2017) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights) were in

part enabled by communities and civil society organisations equipped with legal literacy materials. These cases demonstrate the direct causal link between rights awareness and accountability outcomes at the highest levels of the international human rights system.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

OHCHR developed the [UN-Water Policy Brief](#), entitled "Towards a Human Rights-Based Approach to Water, Sanitation and Environmental Action". The brief outlines the legal and policy foundations of the human rights to water and sanitation, alongside the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. It identifies structural barriers and policy gaps, draws on promising practices from diverse regions, and provides targeted recommendations for States, local governments, UN entities, civil society and other stakeholders.

OHCHR also published key messages on "[What Human Rights can bring to SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation](#)", offering a rights-based analytical frame to accelerate progress towards universal access in alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

This flagship initiative's tools and guidance documents as well as the wider campaign through this initiative can build upon the existing policy briefs and key messages.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

OHCHR has several partnerships that could be built on, to support this initiative.

- 1- OHCHR engages substantively as a member of UN-Water, a 'coordination mechanism' comprised of United Nations entities (Members) and international organizations (Partners) working on water and sanitation.
- 2- OHCHR is part of the *UN-Water Expert Group on WASH*, the *Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health*, and the *FAO Water Tenure Expert Group*.
- 3- OHCHR leads the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation Roadmap, an effort for mainstreaming human rights in the work of all UN-Water members.
- 4- OHCHR also works in coordination with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation as well as other relevant partners, including for the Water Action Decade and the UN 2026 Water Conference.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

In regard to human rights council resolutions on water and sanitation, supported and co-sponsored by Member States, we can count on Germany and Spain as the main co-sponsor of the HRC resolution on human rights to water and sanitation.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The initiative may be supported by Member States which sponsored the latest Human Rights Council resolution on human rights to water and sanitation ([A/HRC/RES/60/9](#)), including but not limited to Germany, Spain, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland,

Marshall Islands, Mexico, Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Switzerland, Thailand and Ukraine.

Additionally, several organizations which contributed to the [UN-Water Policy Brief "Towards a Human Rights-Based Approach to Water, Sanitation and Environmental Action"](#) may be interested in supporting, championing or financing this initiative, such as: UN Women, WHO, IOM, ILO, UNHCR, IUCN, GCF, WaterAid, and Human Right 2 Water (HR2W).

Existing financing / resource mobilisation

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

- 1- OHCHR's regular budget and extra-budgetary resources fund the existing normative work and mandate that underpin this initiative, providing a funded institutional base from which to launch.
- 2- OHCHR's existing [UN Human Rights Knowledge Gateway](#), particularly the [ESCR Knowledge Hub](#), can serve as the open-source digital space to access the existing and new human rights to water and sanitation knowledge, including promising, good and innovative practices, to support rights holders and duty bearers in implementing international human rights norms, standards and recommendations of international human rights mechanisms.
- 3- The UN-Water Human Rights to Water and Sanitation Roadmap offers an administrative and partnership platform at no additional overhead cost.
- 4- Several NHRI networks in target regions already receive ODA from bilateral donors for governance and accountability programming.

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

In addition to the mentioned existing financing and resource mobilization possibilities, this campaign can adopt a financing model designed to minimize upfront costs and to maximize outcomes and benefits.

Where additional financing is needed, funding from states with existing strong human rights-based WASH portfolios and priorities may be mobilized. Human rights-based public-private partnerships and blended financing can also be mobilized to fund this flagship initiative.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

The initiative launches at the 2026 UN Water Conference and is structured in three phases: seed and tool development (2026-2027); scale-up through NHRI networks and civil society channels (2027-2028); and institutional embedding for sustainability (2029 onwards). The campaign is designed to remain relevant into and beyond the post-2030 development agenda, anchored in the human rights framework rather than any specific SDG architecture.

Flagship Initiative: F5_SuSanA

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Sustainable Sanitation Alliance - SuSanA</i>
Focal point	<i>Prit Salian and Alexandra Dubois</i>
Date of submission	<i>18.06.2026</i>

Part 2 — Flagship Initiative

Initiative title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words)</i>
Citywide Inclusive Sanitation Accelerator for Water Forward Country Compacts
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
This initiative addresses guiding questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 by focusing on institutional reform, local government capacity, innovative financing, and the post-2030 agenda
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
Urban sanitation is the weakest link in the water agenda. Most people without safely managed sanitation live in fast-growing towns and cities where most households rely on on-site systems, yet investment and institutions remain sewer-centric and serve only a connected better-off minority. Faecal sludge goes uncollected, untreated and discharged into the environment, exposing the poorest to disease and indignity. National plans count toilets but rarely address the whole service chain or assign responsibility for non-sewered sanitation. This systemic failure undermines the human rights to water and sanitation, particularly the principles of accessibility and affordability. Across the new Water Forward country compacts, urban wastewater is the least-specified commitment: several set access targets with no treatment metric, faecal-sludge chain or costed plan. Closing this gap requires governments, utilities, regulators, financiers and communities to act together around a common service model. A coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required to deliver citywide safely managed sanitation.
Description <i>Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)</i>
The Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) Accelerator is a partnership platform embedding CWIS as the delivery framework for the urban-sanitation pillar of Water Forward country

water compacts. CWIS is a public-service approach where cities or utilities ensure safely managed sanitation for all across the entire service chain—using a strategic mix of sewered and non-sewered solutions rather than defaulting to conventional sewers. Rooted in established thematic hubs, regional platforms, and projects, the Accelerator formalizes CWIS within the Water Forward Framework, streamlining existing efforts.

Shared objective: Every resident in participating cities benefits from safely managed sanitation, leaving no group behind.

The Accelerator is catalytic, integrating into existing government compacts by providing: (i) a citywide service-planning method converting coverage targets into costed sewered-plus-faecal-sludge programs; (ii) an institutional reform package with clear mandates, regulation, performance indicators, and utility creditworthiness; and (iii) a bankable finance structure blending public budgets, concessional finance (including climate, green, and blue funding), results-based financing, and private capital.

It is transformational and scalable, as CWIS aligns with compact architecture (policy reform to responsibility, institutions to accountability, and investment to resource planning) enabling replication across ~25 compacts and beyond. It unites stakeholders (ministries, regulators, local governments, utilities, enterprises, development banks, and communities) through a common language, shared SDG 6.2 and 6.3 metrics, and a single accountability framework, turning fragmented projects into a coordinated, country-led program.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

The Accelerator drives systemic change by shifting urban sanitation from counting infrastructures and facilities to delivering measurable, citywide services at scale. It standardizes the Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) method across compacts, transforming one-off projects into a replicable national program and regional benchmark, with early adopters like Kenya, Angola, and Sierra Leone leading the way.

Expected outcomes, set by each country, include:

- Citywide service plans adopted for priority cities, covering all residents through sewered and non-sewered solutions.
- Safely managed sanitation and treated-wastewater indicators (SDG 6.2 and 6.3) added to compact monitoring, with annual public reporting.
- Faecal-sludge treatment capacity and safe-management rates increased along the whole chain.
- Utilities placed on creditworthiness and performance pathways, unlocking repeatable finance.

Accountability is ensured through a public results dashboard tracking progress against targets, independent verification of safely managed sanitation, and mutual-accountability reviews involving government, regulators, and civil society. Equity-disaggregated indicators (e.g., informal settlements, gender) should also be reported.

Moving beyond dialogue, the initiative is anchored in binding, signed compacts and costed investment pipelines, delivering actionable plans, financing packages, and monitoring

frameworks for immediate implementation. Compacts demonstrate a return of US\$5–10 for every US\$1 invested, while creating jobs across the sanitation service chain.

Human rights and inclusion focus *Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)*

CWIS operationalizes the human rights to water and sanitation by making a public authority accountable for service to everyone in a city, explicitly including those that markets and conventional sewer networks frequently bypass. It embeds the AAAQ principles:

- Availability: whole-chain service, not just toilets
- Accessibility: priority for informal settlements, peri-urban and unserved neighborhoods
- Affordability: tariff and subsidy design that protects low-income households
- Quality and safety: safe containment, treatment and disposal protecting public and environmental health

Equity is a design principle, not an add-on: planning starts from the unserved, and progress is measured with disaggregated indicators covering informal settlements, women and girls, persons with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable situations. By eliminating open defecation and unsafe faecal-sludge and wastewater discharge, the initiative directly reduces the disease, dignity and time burdens borne disproportionately by the poorest and by women and children.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative contributes to all four SDG 6 accelerators:

- Financing and Investment: structures bankable sanitation programmes blending public budgets, concessional finance (including climate, green and blue funding), results-based financing and private capital, and strengthens utility creditworthiness.
- Innovation and Technology: promotes a technology-neutral mix of sewerred and non-sewerred solutions, digital monitoring of service delivery, and resource recovery and water/sludge reuse.
- Capacity Development: builds the mandates, regulatory capability and utility performance systems that sustain services, and develops a professional mixed faecal-sludge- and wastewater management workforce that operates with health and safety.
- Data and Information Systems: institutionalizes SDG 6.2 and 6.3 monitoring (safely managed sanitation and treated wastewater) with equity-disaggregated, publicly reported indicators feeding national systems.

Aligning these accelerators within government-led compacts reinforces the Framework's emphasis on country-led, coordinated delivery rather than fragmented projects.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

There is strong evidence that CWIS is an effective pathway to safely managed sanitation at scale. The World Bank has influenced approximately US\$5.6 billion in sanitation funding using CWIS principles, benefiting an estimated 16 million people over the last decade. While

the International Water Association has recently published a discussion paper on the current status and future directions of CWIS, which synthesises insights from interviews with numerous sanitation stakeholders globally, providing evidence-based reflections to refine CWIS as a practical and adaptable framework to accelerate urban sanitation progress in the coming decade.

Proven examples span diverse contexts:

- **Senegal:** the national utility ONAS runs a structured faecal-sludge management system in Dakar, combining scheduled desludging, treatment infrastructure and private-sector delivery.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** the Grand Abidjan programme integrates sewerage expansion, faecal-sludge management and wastewater treatment in a metropolitan-scale CWIS approach supported by PPP arrangements.
- **Uganda:** embedding CWIS within governance structures formalised private service providers and improved service continuity.
- **Odisha, India:** inclusive service models empower women and transgender groups to operate septage treatment facilities.
- **Bangladesh:** digital monitoring strengthens oversight across the sanitation service chain; and research confirms that targeted, pro-poor subsidies for on-site services significantly increase access in low-income communities.

SuSanA's global network of 15,000 members provides a robust, practice-based evidence platform for scaling these results. Supported by the extensive knowledge base of SuSanA, these experiences show that institutionalizing CWIS principles within national policies, regulatory frameworks and financing mechanisms is critical for achieving sustainable, equitable and resilient sanitation outcomes.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative is deliberately additive. Its primary vehicle is the Water Forward platform of the World Bank, other development partners and government counterparts, and their country water compacts (14 formalised, around 25 in preparation), supplying a delivery method for their urban-sanitation pillar. It draws on the global CWIS movement and tools developed by the World Bank, the Gates Foundation and partners, and on the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) partnership's mutual-accountability mechanisms. It aligns with the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and UN-Water monitoring (JMP/GLAAS) for measurement. At country level it builds on existing national WASH and sanitation strategies, utility-reform programmes and faecal sludge and wastewater management initiatives already named in the compacts (for example Senegal's ONAS, Côte d'Ivoire's Grand Abidjan, Sierra Leone's WASH programme). Rather than creating new institutions, it connects and strengthens these efforts around a shared citywide service model and common metrics.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

The CWIS Accelerator operates through a clear division of roles and multi-layered governance. The Country Compact, owned by national governments, is implemented by ministries, regulators, local governments, and utilities, with development banks and other funders financing the pipeline.

The Accelerator, convened by SuSanA, serves as the enabling platform, supported by its 15,000 members and connected to existing CWIS hubs including the World Bank CWIS Initiative, the AfDB's Africa Urban Sanitation Investment Initiative, the Gates Foundation's CWIS Hub for Africa, ESAWAS, and UN-Habitat/GWOPA.

Governance includes a steering group of hub and funding partners, country focal points linked to compact coordination units, and a public results dashboard with civil-society oversight. Decision-making rests with countries, while the Accelerator convenes, standardizes, and tracks progress.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

Two foundations already exist.

- On the **Compact side**, governments have signed Water Forward water compacts (2026) that prioritise urban sanitation, including Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cambodia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Angola.
- On the **Accelerator side**, CWIS hubs are already operating: the World Bank CWIS Initiative, the Gates Foundation's CWIS Technical Assistance Hubs for Africa and Asia, and the ESAWAS regional regulators' network. The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) and its 15,000 members provide an established global platform.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) and its global membership are well placed to champion and convene the Accelerator. The roughly 25 countries preparing Water Forward compacts are natural candidates to adopt it, alongside early movers (Kenya, Angola, Sierra Leone). Further support could come from CWIS hub partners (World Bank, UN-Habitat/GWOPA, ESAWAS, Eawag/Sandec, IHE Delft), bilateral agencies (German Development Cooperation, AFD), philanthropic funders (Gates Foundation, Stone Family Foundation, Water Aid), regional bodies (AMCOW, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank), UN-Water, WHO and UNICEF, and utilities and private sanitation operators seeking bankable pipelines.

Existing financing / resource mobilization

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

The CWIS Accelerator leverages existing resources and partnerships to drive impact. Country Compacts, financed by a combination of the World Bank, regional development banks, other development partners and national budgets (e.g., Senegal: ~US\$2.4bn, Côte d'Ivoire: ~US\$3.5bn, Kenya: US\$7.6bn), carry large, costed sanitation pipelines.

The Accelerator's enabling work is supported by the Gates Foundation (CWIS Technical Assistance Hub for Africa and tools) and the World Bank's CWIS Initiative (~US\$6bn influenced across 25 countries). SuSanA, with financial and in-kind support from partners like BMZ, WaterAid, UNICEF, and the World Bank, contributes expertise, knowledge exchange, peer learning (via working groups and regional chapters), facilitation, coordination,

knowledge management (library), and global tools/digital platforms (SFD Portal, Sanitation Workers Hub, Resource Recovery Toolbox).

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

The CWIS Accelerator mobilizes financial resources, investments, and partnerships through a two-layered financing strategy to ensure implementation and scale-up.

Enabling Layer (Accelerator Funding):

The Accelerator's core functions—secretariat, citywide service planning, capacity development, knowledge tools, and results dashboard—are funded through catalytic, grant-based resources. These include a light multi-donor facility hosted by SuSanA, philanthropic grants, bilateral technical-assistance grants, and multilateral trust funds, such as the World Bank's Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership. This layer sustains and connects existing CWIS hubs (e.g., Africa TA Hub), providing them a permanent home through SuSanA.

Compact Layer (Capital Mobilization):

The Accelerator transforms citywide plans into bankable projects leveraging project-preparation facilities and transaction advisory services (e.g., MDB project-preparation funds, IFC advisory, Global Infrastructure Facility). This unlocks significant capital for delivery and enables smaller investments to attract substantially larger funding.

By aligning with Water Forward's financing coalition, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, and the Sanitation and Water for All platform, the initiative ensures coordinated resource mobilization. A standardized CWIS method reduces preparation and transaction costs, creating replicable, investable urban sanitation investment programs. This approach maximizes public budgets, private-sector engagement, and blended finance, ensuring sustainable scale-up.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

The Flagship is a multi-decade initiative designed to outlast the 2026 Conference. Its foundation phase (2026–2028) focuses on establishing the platform, developing the first citywide service plans, and forging key partnerships. The scaling phase (2028–2032) expands these plans and secures financing across participating compacts. Finally, the consolidation phase (2032–2040 and beyond) drives progress toward universal safely managed urban sanitation, aligning with national compact cycles and the post-2030 global agenda.

Priority Action: P1_World Vision

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>World Vision</i>
Focal point	<i>Lindsay Lange</i>
Date of submission	<i>18 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Realising the human right to water through women-centered, multi-sectoral approaches
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
4 and 5
Description of the action <i>Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)</i>
World Vision's Beyond Access program is a sequenced, multisector initiative that tackles the root causes of extreme poverty by intentionally linking mindset change, water and sanitation access, and economic empowerment — with women and girls at the center. The programme operates across multiple countries, targeting communities where women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of water insecurity. Proposed activities include: • Water infrastructure and WASH services: Bringing clean water sources closer to communities, improving sanitation facilities, and delivering hygiene behaviour change programming — including menstrual health — to reduce waterborne illness and free women's time. • Mindset change programming: Implementing mindset change training (in World Vision's case, the Empowered Worldview and Celebrating Families models) to shift harmful norms, reduce gender-based violence, and foster equitable household decision-making around water use and hygiene. • Economic empowerment integration: Through the savings group model as well the Inclusive Market Knowledge and Access approach, women gain financial literacy and access to capital, enabling them to sustain and advocate for household and community WASH improvements.

These activities are deliberately sequenced, so each intervention reinforces the others: improved water access frees time for economic participation, while stronger household relationships support sustained hygiene practice adoption.

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

Women and girls living in extreme poverty bear the greatest burden of water insecurity, commonly spending hours and energy daily collecting water instead of attending school or earning income. Harmful cultural norms further limit women's decision-making power and economic participation. Even when water access improves, without addressing underlying gender inequities and economic barriers, transformation stalls. Current WASH investments often operate in isolation, missing the compounding benefits of integrated programming. Beyond Access addresses this gap by sequencing WASH, mindset change, and economic empowerment interventions, because the human right to water and sanitation cannot be realised without dismantling what holds women back.

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

World Vision's Beyond Access program completed a three-year Phase 1 pilot (October 2022–September 2025) across Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, providing rigorous evidence that intentionally sequencing behaviour change, WASH, and economic empowerment interventions produces measurable, statistically significant gains for women and girls.

Independent evaluations conducted by local research partners, in collaboration with Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, measured outcomes at baseline, midline, and endline. Key results include:

Water and Sanitation Access

- Women gaining access to a basic clean water source within a 30-minute round trip improved by an average of 29 percentage points across all four countries, with Kenya showing the greatest gain — nearly 60 percentage points (from 3% to 62%).
- Household sanitation coverage increased across all countries by 16 to 25 percentage points, reducing waterborne disease risk while improving privacy, dignity, and safety for women and girls.

Economic Outcomes

- Women with personal savings increased by an average of 51 percentage points, with Guatemala rising from 14% to 80% and Honduras from 7% to 78%.
- Women earning income from a small business or employment increased by an average of 42 percentage points, with Honduras showing a 72-point gain.

Empowerment and Agency

- Women's participation in community water decision-making increased by an average of 31 percentage points — particularly significant given that women historically bore

primary responsibility for water collection while being excluded from planning processes.

Emory University's Water Journeys research further confirmed that water collection imposed substantial physical, time, and economic burdens on women, and that improved access directly enabled greater economic participation. Two peer-reviewed publications in PLOS further document these findings.

These results informed the design of Phase 2, now scaling to 12 countries through 2030.

[Endline research report link](#)

[Emory Water Journeys Research Publication](#)

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

The primary target group is women and girls in rural settings, though can also be applied in urban and peri-urban contexts. Extra priority is given to people with intersecting vulnerabilities, such as women and girls from indigenous communities or women and girls with disabilities. While these are the primary target group, Beyond Access engages at a broader level, including men and community leaders, recognising that women and girls cannot be empowered without broad stakeholder engagement.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

Beyond Access pairs WASH investment with gender norm transformation and economic empowerment, dismantling compounding inequalities. Women's participation in community water decision-making increased from an average of 19% to 46% on average, directly advancing the inclusive governance essential to realizing water and sanitation as human rights. On **availability** and **accessibility**, basic water access improved by an average of 29 percentage points across four countries — nearly 60 points in Kenya alone. On **acceptability** and **quality**, sanitation coverage rose 16–25 percentage points, improving dignity, privacy, and safety for women and girls. **Affordability** is addressed through community-led infrastructure and savings group models building local financial resilience.

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

Beyond Access Phase 2 (2025–2030) targets measurable change across WASH, mindset change, and economic empowerment across 12 countries, tracked through rigorous baseline, midline, and endline evaluations.

Key Phase 2 targets include:

- 360,000 people gaining access to a basic drinking water source
- 150,000 people trained in Empowered Worldview, shifting dependency mindsets and strengthening household economic planning

- 130,000 savings group members, with women in leadership positions and digitized groups

Other key indicators include:

- Increased household access to basic sanitation facilities and handwashing with soap
- Trained WASH Committees with resource mobilisation systems in place
- Participants in Celebrating Families workshops, equipping men and women to build equitable, violence-free homes
- Women producers trained in market systems development, strengthening income generation and food security

Progress will be tracked quarterly against sex- and age- and disability-disaggregated indicators, building on Phase 1's statistically significant gains and ensuring the program remains evidence-based and responsive to community needs.

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

Beyond Access Phase 2 is currently being implemented (2025–2030) across 9 countries — Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, and will be in 12 by 2028 (adding Ghana, Viet Nam and Zambia). It is being implemented by World Vision US in partnership with World Vision national offices and local implementation partners. The implementation timeline in a specific location depends on contextual factors (existing water access, market access, financial credit availability, etc.), but takes, on average, three years.

Implementation follows a deliberate three-component sequence:

Mindset Change is initiated first, using the Empowered Worldview model and Celebrating Families workshops to shift harmful gender norms and build household agency. Faith and community leaders are engaged as champions of change. Training of Trainers ensures local capacity and sustainability beyond program closure. Community Voice and Action groups support local-level advocacy.

WASH Infrastructure and Services are delivered in parallel, constructing and rehabilitating water supply systems, sanitation facilities, and handwashing stations in communities, schools, and healthcare facilities. WASH Committees are trained with resource mobilisation systems for long-term operations and maintenance. Hygiene behavior change programming, including menstrual health, accompanies all infrastructure investment.

Economic Empowerment through the Savings for Transformation model equips women with financial literacy, business planning, and market linkages. Mature savings groups access microfinance through VisionFund International, extending program reach and sustainability.

Coordination mechanisms include: quarterly digital (mWater) and narrative reporting to World Vision US; and baseline, midline, and endline evaluations led by local research partners.

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

Within World Vision, Beyond Access is funded via blended, leveraged funding, including local government investment, project-specific funds, and funds from World Vision's child sponsorship approach. Shared funding is integral to the success of this multi-sectoral program.

Specific costs are dependent on the needs in the area of implementation. Budget must be allocated to support:

- GEDSI assessment in communities
- Baseline and endline activities
- Staff training on relevant models
- Community mindset change trainings, including individual empowerment (Empowered Worldview), women's leadership, family empowerment (Celebrating Families), and male engagement
- Community WASH infrastructure, inclusion schools and healthcare facilities
- Economic empowerment programming, including savings groups and market access
- Coordination staff to support integrated activities

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

Beyond Access was explicitly designed for replication. Phase 1 demonstrated that the integrated, sequenced model produced statistically significant gains across four diverse contexts — Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, and Zimbabwe —confirming cross-regional adaptability.

Phase 2 expansion to 12 countries on three continents validates this scalability. The model's core architecture — sequencing behaviour change, WASH, and economic empowerment — is context-adaptable, with localised materials, local research partners, and community-led implementation ensuring cultural relevance in each setting.

World Vision has the scale, expertise and core models to expand the programme. Other stakeholders could implement the same methodology, using these or similar models.

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

Government engagement is critical to the success of all World Vision programming. This engagement typically occurs at the community level, but given World Vision's strength of government relationships from the local to national level, member state endorsement is highly likely. Beyond Access is currently being implemented in: Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Ghana, Viet Nam and Zambia are beginning implementation in the next two years.

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

This initiative also contributes to ID (b): water for prosperity. When freed from the burden of water collection, women and girls have more time for economic participation. It also connects

to the data and accountability workstream as it utilises mWater to track participation and outcomes, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Priority Action: P2_CIPON

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Consortium of Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and Networks (Indigenous Environmental Network, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, Tukisivallirutitsanut Parnaitiit, Working Group with Indigenous World Forum on Water and Peace)</i>
Focal point	<i>Aminta Menjivar</i>
Date of submission	<i>17 June 2026</i>

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title: <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' Water Governance and Management
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
Indigenous Peoples' governance and knowledge systems about water contribute to all five guiding questions above because Indigenous Peoples' Water Governance Systems are regulated by Indigenous principles and customary institutions, representing the collective responsibility and accountability to protect and preserve water bodies and sources to keep them clean and healthy. The Indigenous Knowledge, wisdom, spirituality, and culture upholds the protection and the continued reciprocal and ecological relationship between water biodiversity and ecosystems. Indigenous Peoples respect and revere water bodies and water sources, upholding their protection and preservation because they are sacred to Indigenous Peoples, connecting them to their ancestors and nature. In current water management practices, Indigenous Peoples apply Indigenous knowledge, laws, values, and practices in water decision-making. These include using only the water quantity that is needed without any disturbance to the water ecosystem and to water quality. By working with the water cycle rather than against it, traditional Indigenous water practices do not waste or pollute water, thus generating sustainable water management systems. SDG6 was created in 2015, whereas Indigenous Peoples have time-tested knowledge and practices about sustainable water governance and management since time immemorial.

The world must learn from the Indigenous Peoples about how Indigenous institutions on water governance and management, and Indigenous knowledge and practices have been contributing to SDG 6 without financing from outsiders. This has been possible due to the collective work of Indigenous Peoples' guided by the principle of Self-Determination.

Description of the action

Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)

Indigenous Peoples have been protecting and preserving water bodies and water sources in their lands and territories since time immemorial. These practices uphold the tradition of respect and reverence of water. Water connects all of life. The increased commodification and industrialization of water in the name of the blue and green economy has led to violations of the human right to water, the natural rights of the water to flow, the rights of the biodiversity living under water, and the right to water and sanitation. These actions are needed: 1) it is imperative that Indigenous Peoples' right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent is upheld; 2) to stop the commodification and the industrialization of water bodies and water resources; 3) to acknowledge, respect, and uphold the Indigenous governance systems, knowledge, science, and practices to protect, preserve, and respect their dignity, existence, perseverance, and the natural right of water to flow in its cycle; 4) the hydrological cycle, which includes snowpack in the mountains, glaciers, rainforests, rivers reaching the ocean, and the ocean itself must not be disrupted further, rather it must be protected and restored; 5) states and corporations who destroy the water bodies and water sources for their economic benefit and income, with little or no respect for nature, people and the planet must be accountable and responsible. Irresponsible policy formulation, excessive extractions, and the destruction of biodiversity have exacerbated the water crisis, water pollution in various forms, and climate change; and 6) to allocate financial resources to support the Indigenous Peoples for upholding their Indigenous governance systems, knowledge, science, and practices for the preservation of the natural water bodies and sources. (273/300)

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

The exclusion of Indigenous Peoples in water governance leads to the commodification and industrialization of water in the name of the blue and green economy and to violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the natural right of water to flow and to be clean and healthy. Indigenous Peoples must be included in decision-making as a solution and achieving SDG6. Indigenous Peoples have a track record of upholding environmental sustainability in their lands and territories. 80% of the world's biodiversity is found in Indigenous lands and territories. Freshwater ecosystems are not separate from marine ecosystems. (95/100)

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

Engagement of Indigenous Peoples in global water governance is relatively new. It is due to Indigenous Peoples' efforts to gain equitable participation at decision-making processes that this is happening and it is a historic and pioneering endeavor. When Indigenous Peoples do have input at these governance tables, all life benefits. Recent examples include the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf), local/regional/global Indigenous declarations on water rights (<https://www.iitc.org/indigenous-peoples-declaration-for-the-2023-united-nations-water-conference/>), and the restoration of Indigenous practices, sciences, and value systems around water. Examples are The Okanagan Nation Alliance in British Columbia, Canada, which created the Sylx Water Declaration (<https://sylx.org/natural-resources/water/water-declaration/>) that is the foundation for their Kindergarten to Grade 12 water education (<https://sylx.org/natural-resources/water/siw%c9%ack%ca%b7-water-curriculum-k-12-teachers-resource-guide/>) and also have been actively engaged with the local and provincial (BC) governments to implement their Indigenous water laws, values, and practices; the achievement of legal personhood of waterways like the Whanganui River in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Magpie River in Quebec, Canada (<https://openrivers.lib.umn.edu/article/when-a-river-is-a-person-from-ecuador-to-new-zealand-nature-gets-its-day-in-court/>; <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/these-rivers-are-now-considered-people-what-does-that-mean-for-travelers>); the recognition of the Sipapu Spring at the Hopi Tribe in Arizona, United States by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage as a historical and cultural heritage site (<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/water/environmental-stewards-sacred-hopi-site-in-arizona-awarded-icomos-water-and-heritage-shield-88464>); and the legal recognition of the aquatic reserve status of the Kovik River basin in northern Quebec, Canada, which means that the watershed is protected from mining claims and industrial development (<https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/nunavik-welcomes-new-protected-status-of-river-watershed/>). (279/300)

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

The beneficiaries of implementing Indigenous knowledges, laws, values, and practices will be the Earth's biodiversity and future generations. Additionally, the policy and decision makers of the states will learn how Indigenous Peoples have been contributing to keep the water bodies and sources alive through their institutions, knowledge systems, science, and practices since time immemorial and maintaining the ecology and ecosystems. (60/75)

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

Indigenous Peoples' right to peace and prosperity according to our terms promises to restore the balance of harmony with the natural world, which has been disrupted by settler colonialism and unregulated capitalism. Human rights are interrelated, interdependent, indivisible, and interconnected and cannot be separated from our right to water. Health and wellbeing will be restored by the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights, which will improve the quality of life. Including and ensuring the equitable and ethical utilization of Indigenous knowledge brings about justice. (83/140)

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

The 2026 UN Water Conference focuses only on freshwater. Under Indigenous worldviews, all forms of water must be protected, including oceans, glaciers, subterranean water, and water in the air (i.e. clouds). We must consider water in all its forms and stop siloing its protection and care. Water knows no boundaries and unifies us all. Western science has scientific indicators for healthy water. Indigenous knowledges have *cultural and spiritual indicators for healthy water*, which need to be recognized. The creation of an International Indigenous Observatory on Water and Peace (World Water Forum, Brazil, 2018) needs to be supported and resourced. The implementation of the UNDRIP will be a pathway to achieving SDG6. Clean water will support healthy communities, balance and harmony with nature. Outputs include films for community education, contributions to conferences, improved water education, improved water policies. The outcome is clean and healthy water for all. (147/150)

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

Humanity needs to revisit its relationship with Mother Earth. There needs to be transformational education and a shifting of values from the individual to the collective, and to balance and harmony from chaos. The implicit need for sustainable water policies guided by Indigenous Peoples is more critical now than ever. The actions proposed in this Priority Action scheme are immediate and ongoing at the same time. For the rights of Indigenous Peoples to be recognized within spaces where decisions impacting water rights are made, Indigenous Peoples must be included and the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent must be implemented. Indigenous Peoples' regional water gatherings need to be supported to identify emergent issues that are culturally specific and their solutions. The regions could be according to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples. Proper engagement between Indigenous organizations/nations and their regional Indigenous representation need to be supported. This will include virtual and in-person meetings. Regional and global meetings of Indigenous Peoples about water need to be supported and resourced. (189/250)

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

Indigenous Peoples at local, national, regional, and global levels of water decision-making are consistently under-represented. There is a need for the guidance of Elders and knowledge keepers. Indigenous Peoples must be financed in order to participate meaningfully in all levels of water decision-making (at the local, regional, national, and international levels). Such financing should come from nation-states, large regional/international foundations and philanthropists as Indigenous Peoples face a disproportionately high cost of travel from remote areas. This financing is needed because the presence of Indigenous Peoples at the tables where decisions about water are made is imperative for the development of innovative and sustainable solutions to today's water crises. (109/150)

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

Indigenous-led solutions to the obstacles preventing the achievement of SDG6 are replicable in each region and need to respect the cultural protocols, governance, and geographical location of the place of origin. Indigenous languages define culture and therefore guide cultural practices with water. Indigenous cultural youth exchanges are important to uplift the importance of our languages and cultures. While Indigenous solutions to the water crises of today can be replicated, replications must be culturally specific and Indigenous knowledge must not be misappropriated. Indigenous Peoples around the world share a long history of cultural and linguistic dispossession. Indigenous Peoples share a common spirituality with their places of origin, especially water. (108/125)

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

Since the rise of the movement for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, states have supported the rights of Indigenous Peoples at various points in time (e.g. Mexico, Brazil, and the Netherlands). Women's nongovernment organizations (e.g. Women and Water Diplomacy Network) and environmental groups (e.g. Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature) have also provided support. Potential supporters of the rights of Indigenous Peoples for the 2026 UN Water Conference and beyond include Canada, Mexico, Norway, and the Netherlands. (81/120)

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

All Workstreams/Interactive Dialogues will benefit from the full participation of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous knowledges, sciences, laws and cultures hold solutions to some of today's most pressing water issues. It is time that the voices of Indigenous Peoples are included, respected, and enacted in global decision-making spaces about water. (49/50)

Priority Action: P3_Water Aid

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	WaterAid
Focal point	Sunny Singh
Date of submission	18 June 2026

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title

A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).

Just Water Partnership Principles:
Integrating justice-based principles into Water Compacts and Country Platforms

Guiding question(s) addressed

Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.

The proposal addresses four of the five guiding questions:

- **Successful policies/programs for underserved populations:** Compacts are an established mechanism for consolidating commitments and coordinating investments, while principles are an established method to steer policies and programming. This Priority Action combines the two, embedding equity and inclusion into the design and implementation of Water Compacts and Country Platforms to ensure that progress benefits all, not just a select few.
- **Local / regional government capacity for equitable services:** Principles are an established method (in human rights, SDGs, sector programming) for steering government and development partners' decision making without being over-prescriptive. This Priority Action would provide decision-makers at local, national and global levels with a common set of principles for integrating justice, equity and inclusion into planning and investment decisions.
- **Participation, accountability, and transparency in governance:** These priorities are embedded in the five principles of Just Water Partnerships (JWP), particularly through inclusive decision-making, stakeholder engagement and accountability mechanisms that strengthen water governance.
- **Innovative financing for equity and inclusion:** The failure of traditional water investment decision-making to consider social equality and inclusion was the motivation for the Global Commission on the Economics of Water to identify a need for JWPs to elevate outcomes for people and planet alongside economic returns. The principles that have since been developed to underpin JWPs aim to integrate equity and inclusion in water finance, making this Priority Action fully aligned.
- **Lessons/approaches for post-2030 human rights focus:** Mainstreaming JWP principles into Water Compacts and country platforms would help institutionalise

multistakeholder participation, accountability and human rights-based approaches to water investments, strengthening the post-2030 water agenda.

Description of the action

Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)

Member States commit to endorse and integrate Just Water Partnership principles into the development and operationalisation of Water Compacts and country platforms, beginning with a high-level announcement at the UNWC, where at least five countries commit to applying the principles in their national processes.

With Water Compacts and country platforms already being developed in many member states under Water Forward, this Priority Action embeds principles grounded in human rights into implementation of existing and the design of new Water Compacts and governance structures, thereby directly advancing the human rights to water and sanitation.

The action builds on established political momentum, making it practical and scalable both in the short and medium term:

- JWP Principles were developed in a consultative process involving over 100 institutions across 34 countries, with two-thirds coming from the Global South. Designed for integration in national multistakeholder coordination platforms (country platforms) and grounded in human rights, the principles were launched at COP30, with support from the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, the Ministry for Climate Change and Sustainability of Ghana, the Ministry of Cities for Brazil, the OECD, the Institute of Climate and Society, and the Development Bank of Brazil, showing broad high-level support.
- The World Bank's *Water Forward* initiative aims to reach 1 billion people with water security through the coalescence of development banks, governments, development partners, and private capital behind specific, country-led action plans (Water Compacts). Fourteen countries have already launched compacts connected to the *Water Forward* initiative, with many more expected.
- A commitment by 5 or more countries to integrate JWP principles into their efforts can set a new example for how water investments should be made and inspire others to follow.

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

The water sector continues to struggle with sustainable finance models. The traditional economic focus on return on investment often keeps water undervalued and overused and overlooks inclusion, resulting in persistent inequalities in access to services. A more balanced and equitable approach to water governance and investment decision-making is urgently needed to support the realisation of human rights and treat water as a common good. Originally proposed by the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, JWPs are

underpinned by a set of principles that apply a rights-based lens to water investment decisions and can be integrated into existing planning, financing, and governance processes.

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

Evidence from water governance and other sectors demonstrates that inclusive decision-making processes lead to more equitable, sustainable, and widely supported investment outcomes. While integrating JWP Principles into Water Compacts is a new approach, the underlying components – stakeholder participation, accountability, transparency, and inclusion – have consistently delivered positive results relevant to this Priority Action:

- A review of water governance highlights the success at [Ghana's Densu Dam](#). Through an inclusive participation framework bringing together local community leaders, domestic water users, agricultural groups, and government agencies, the project achieved a shared rationale for watershed conservation. This broad buy-in mitigated upstream-downstream user conflicts and supported sustainable access to the water resource.
- Evidence from [Eastern India](#) demonstrates that formalizing women's participation in Water Users' Associations significantly enhanced both gender equity and the quality of local water allocation decisions.

Additional evidence that inclusive consultation can lead to more equitable outcomes stems from Just Energy Transition Partnerships ([JETPs](#)), that helped inspire Just Water Partnerships:

- South Africa's **Presidential Climate Commission (PCC)** led an extensive, multi-year consultation process with vulnerable coal-dependent communities in Mpumalanga. This approach shaped the [South Africa Just Energy Transition Investment Plan \(JET IP\)](#). Rather than prioritising solar and wind farms, a substantial portion of the \$8.5 billion package was directed towards localized economic diversification, worker retraining, and social protection.
- Indonesia's **\$20 billion JETP** established a dedicated Just Transition Working Group encompassing academic, community, and government perspectives. Consultation revealed a high risk of sidelining local populations through large-scale renewable projects. To counter this, the partnership focused on economic transformation, including structures for grant funding for community-owned renewable energy and local supply chains.

Together, these examples demonstrate that structured participation and accountability mechanisms improve investment decisions and social outcomes, providing a strong evidence base for integrating JWP Principles into Water Compacts and Country Platforms.

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

Primary beneficiaries are populations currently underserved by water and sanitation investments, including people living in informal settlements, rural communities, women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, low-income households, and communities disproportionately affected by climate change. The action also benefits local governments, civil society organisations, and community-based groups by strengthening

their participation in water governance and investment decision-making processes, ensuring that investments respond more effectively to local priorities and needs.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

All too often, water investment decisions in the Global South are made at the national government level with development banks, corporate entities and some commercial investors with a singular focus on economic returns. This focus concentrates investment in areas of high market potential with less consideration of those residing in other areas, often leading to a negative spiral of underinvestment and degradation of services, resulting in lower availability, accessibility, affordability, and quality of water and sanitation services.

By adhering to the five Just Water Partnership Principles for investment decisions in water, greater stakeholder participation and accountability will help rebalance where investments are made across a country and help achieve investments in infrastructure that provide returns across not only economic lines, but also social ones such as maternal and child health and climate resilience for commonly excluded and vulnerable communities.

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

The Theory of Change underpinning JWPs is that more inclusive, transparent, and accountable decision-making leads to more equitable investment choices and, ultimately, improved outcomes. Evidence from water governance and other partnerships demonstrates that structured stakeholder participation improves investment prioritisation, strengthens accountability and coordination, and over time contributes to more equitable allocation of investments and improved outcomes for underserved populations.

Within two years of the UNWC:

- At least five countries integrate JWP principles into the development, implementation, and review of Water Compacts and Country Platforms.
- Participating countries establish or strengthen inclusive multi-stakeholder governance ensuring representation of local government, civil society, and marginalized communities.
- Water Compacts and Country Platforms increasingly incorporate JWP principles into investment planning.
- Development partners, development finance institutions, and investors apply the Principles to prioritise investments that deliver equitable and sustainable outcomes
- A community of practice emerges, generating lessons and evidence that can inform water governance and financing approaches.

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

This Priority Action will be implemented through existing national and international water governance processes, particularly Water Forward's Water Compacts and Country Platforms, avoiding the creation of parallel structures.

The first milestone will be securing public commitments at UNWC from at least five Member States to integrate the JWP principles into the design, implementation, or review of national Water Compacts and Country Platforms.

Following these commitments, participating governments, supported by development partners, civil society organisations, multilateral institutions, and financial institutions, will undertake a review of existing governance arrangements and identify opportunities to operationalise the principles. This may include strengthening stakeholder participation mechanisms, improving transparency and accountability arrangements, integrating equity considerations into investment prioritisation processes, and establishing monitoring mechanisms.

WaterAid, the International Water Management Institute and other stakeholders will support knowledge-sharing, technical assistance, peer learning, and documentation of emerging practices. Existing multi-stakeholder platforms and coordination mechanisms will be used wherever possible to minimise transaction costs and maximise country ownership.

Implementation will be country-led and adapted to national contexts. Progress will be tracked through reporting by participating countries and partners, focusing on adoption of the Principles, governance reforms undertaken, stakeholder participation, and lessons learned.

This approach enables immediate action while creating a pathway for wider uptake and institutionalisation across future Water Compacts and Country Platforms.

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

This Priority Action does not require the creation of new financing instruments. Instead, it seeks to strengthen governance and decision-making frameworks that guide existing and future water investments.

Implementation will primarily utilise existing resources allocated to Water Compacts, Country Platforms, sector coordination mechanisms, and related technical assistance programmes. Activities such as stakeholder engagement, governance reviews, capacity strengthening, and monitoring can be integrated into ongoing processes supported by governments, development partners, multilateral development banks, and civil society organisations.

The World Bank's Water Forward initiative and associated financing streams provide a significant opportunity to embed the JWP Principles within already planned investments. By improving participation, transparency, accountability, and consideration of equity outcomes, the Principles can help ensure that existing resources generate greater social value and more inclusive outcomes.

Over time, adoption of the Principles may also strengthen investor confidence by improving governance, reducing conflict risks, and enhancing the sustainability and legitimacy of water investments.

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

The JWP Principles are designed to be country-led and adaptable to different political, institutional, and financing contexts. Like human-rights principles, they provide a common reference point for decision-making while allowing flexibility in implementation. Because they

can be integrated into existing Water Compacts, Country Platforms, and sector coordination mechanisms, they can be applied across diverse contexts without requiring new institutions or financing mechanisms. As more countries adopt and implement the Principles, lessons and good practices can be shared through existing global and regional water networks, supporting wider uptake and continuous improvement.

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

The Just Water Partnership Principles were co-developed through an extensive global consultation process involving over 100 institutions across 34 countries, approximately two-thirds of which were from the Global South. The Principles were launched at COP30 with support from the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, the OECD, the Ministry for Climate Change and Sustainability of Ghana, the Ministry of Cities of Brazil, the Institute of Climate and Society, and the Development Bank of Brazil.

Governments, such as Brazil, Ghana, Madagascar and Nepal, and institutions are already exploring opportunities to apply the Principles within national water governance and investment processes. The rapid expansion of Water Forward and Water Compacts creates a significant opportunity to secure additional Member State endorsements and demonstrate practical implementation across diverse country contexts.

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

This priority action would be directly complementary to Interactive Dialogue (f) on Investments in Water finance, while also contributing to the Interactive Dialogue on Water for Planet and Water for Prosperity.

Priority Action: P4_SWA

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Name of the organisation (or consortium members).</i>
Focal point	<i>Name of the person submitting.</i>
Date of submission	<i>DD Month 2026.</i>

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
From Commitments to Action: Scaling SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM)
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
2, 3, 4 and 5
Description of the action <i>Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)</i>
The proposed Priority Action is to scale SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM) as the sector's accountability backbone: an existing, operational platform through which governments and stakeholders register specific, time-bound commitments on water, sanitation and hygiene, and report publicly on progress before the 2028 UN Water Conference. It already tracks more than 560 commitments from over 170 partners across 60+ countries, spanning national water and sanitation policies, the Heads of State Initiatives, climate integration, gender and sector financing. Commitments made through the Water Action Agenda (WAA) are a natural and significant input, but the mechanism's value is independent of any single political process. The MAM enables governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to define commitments, monitor implementation, and participate in periodic review. It provides structured commitment registration, public reviews drawing on JMP and GLAAS data, multi-stakeholder review processes, monitoring of implementation progress, and opportunities for corrective action and policy dialogue. Unlike many commitment platforms, the MAM links commitments to evidence and periodic review, which has supported governments and partners identify implementation gaps and

strengthen alignment with national priorities. Under this Priority Action, new commitments, including those arising from Heads of State Initiatives or other 2026 Conference follow-up, would be recorded through the MAM. Commitment holders would receive support to formulate measurable, time-bound commitments, following the approach SWA adopted for 2023 Water Action Agenda commitments; many of those are already incorporated into the MAM for tracking and reporting. Progress would be reviewed through periodic reporting and multi-stakeholder engagement, with results made publicly available.

By building on an existing mechanism rather than creating a new platform, the action converts political commitments, whatever process they originate from, into a structured accountability system capable of tracking implementation and supporting corrective action where needed. It can be implemented immediately and scaled globally.

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

The water and sanitation sector has generated significant political commitment, but mechanisms to hold it to account have not kept pace. The Water Action Agenda illustrates the scale of the challenge: it has accumulated over 700 commitments from governments, partners, and civil society. Yet such platforms often lack a structured follow-up mechanism or a transparent process for assessing progress, leaving commitments at risk of remaining isolated pledges. Without accountability and review, it is difficult to know whether commitments are delivered or reaching underserved populations. Strengthening accountability is essential to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation and SDG 6.

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is already operational and has demonstrated its effectiveness across the SWA partnership. Since 2018, more than 560 commitments have been registered from over 170 partners across 60+ countries, about half submitted by national governments. Of 241 commitments with reported progress, 102 are rated Fully or Substantially Achieved, each with a documented public record, from legislation enacted to monitoring systems established. Achievement clusters where deliverables are specific and verifiable, such as policy reform and sector financing, showing the mechanism is strongest where it tracks the conditions service delivery depends on.

In Nepal, a 2019 civil society commitment to advocate for a Water and Sanitation Act has been tracked to its enactment in 2022, a supporting Regulation in 2024, and a new Service Regulation Division. In Mali, the MAM holds commitments across all four constituencies on the same issue, government, civil society, private sector and research, something no comparable instrument achieves. The Director of Water for People in Malawi put it directly: with the MAM, you can ask questions because there are commitments, and the Government also asks us what we are doing, it is mutual. In Mali, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy and Water credited MAM engagement with a government commitment to dedicate five percent of its national budget to water and sanitation. In Kenya, five tracked commitments since 2021 have supported the country's first National Sanitation Management Policy and new sanitation budget lines. In Nigeria, the MAM underpins a presidential

campaign that former Water Resources Minister Suleiman Hussein Adamu credits with supporting progress on SDG 6.

The mechanism draws on JMP and GLAAS data and has supported countries' Voluntary National Reviews, reducing duplication across reporting. Because the platform already exists and works, this proposal scales a proven approach rather than creating something new.

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

Primary beneficiaries include populations that remain underserved by water and sanitation services, particularly low-income communities, rural populations, women and girls, persons with disabilities, and communities affected by fragility, conflict and climate change. The action also targets governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders responsible for implementing water and sanitation commitments, including but not limited to those made under the Water Action Agenda, and for improving accountability for results.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

The proposed action advances the human rights to water and sanitation by tracking the conditions under which those rights become deliverable, not as abstractions but as specific, named commitments: the legislation that gives a right legal force, the financing that backs it, and the monitoring system that tracks whether it is met. Unlike mechanisms where only governments report on progress, the MAM is multi-constituency by design: civil society, closest to communities without access, holds the same formal standing as governments to make and be held to commitments. Mutual accountability means partners holding each other to what they have pledged, with all constituencies examining the record together, rather than governments reporting on themselves alone. Because commitments are grounded in each country's own sector plans, the mechanism strengthens national ownership while requiring that progress, or its absence, be made public.

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

By 2028, a significant share of new political commitments made at and around the 2026 Conference could be voluntarily registered and held to account through the MAM, with progress against each commitment tracked and publicly reported. Increased registration of new and existing commitments through the MAM, including from the Heads of State Initiatives and other processes. New commitments tracked individually against their own stated targets and timelines, so that delivery, partial delivery, or non-delivery becomes part of the public record. Enhanced transparency and public reporting on implementation progress. Stronger accountability among governments, development partners and stakeholders, including clearer visibility of commitments that stall or go unreported. Increased use of evidence from JMP and GLAAS to inform commitment monitoring. Improved identification of implementation challenges and corrective actions. Greater alignment between commitments, financing decisions and national priorities. Strengthened reporting on progress towards SDG 6 and the human rights to water and sanitation.

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

Implementation would build on the existing SWA Mutual Accountability Mechanism. SWA, participating governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders would collaborate to register and review commitments. Key activities would include: outreach to commitment holders, including those from the Water Action Agenda and other relevant processes; registration or alignment of commitments within the MAM; development of measurable indicators and reporting timelines; periodic progress reporting and review; multi-stakeholder dialogue and learning exchanges; and synthesis reporting in advance of the 2028 UN Water Conference. Implementation would begin following the 2026 Conference and continue through 2028. The action relies on existing governance structures, reporting processes and accountability mechanisms, making implementation feasible without creating new institutional arrangements.

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

Implementation would primarily utilise existing SWA accountability infrastructure and partner engagement mechanisms. Additional resources may support outreach, technical assistance, reporting processes, data analysis and synthesis reporting. Funding could be mobilised through existing SWA partner contributions, bilateral donor support, development partner programmes and voluntary contributions from participating organisations. Because the mechanism is already operational, resource requirements are modest compared with creating a new accountability platform.

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

The action is inherently scalable because it relies on an existing mechanism open to governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. The approach can be applied across countries, regions and sectors and can accommodate commitments related to water, sanitation, climate resilience, financing and governance. Because participation is voluntary and the infrastructure already exists, the action can be expanded rapidly without significant additional institutional investment.

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

The MAM is already supported through the SWA partnership and has been used by governments, development partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders. More than 560 commitments have been registered through the mechanism, demonstrating existing political and stakeholder engagement. Participating governments already use the mechanism to record and review commitments, demonstrating both political ownership and practical feasibility. The proposal is well positioned to secure additional support from governments and stakeholders engaged in the Water Action Agenda, UN-Water members, the Heads of State Initiative, development partners, civil society networks and other actors committed to strengthening accountability for SDG 6 implementation.

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

The action supports all Interactive Dialogues by providing a common accountability framework through which commitments on water access, financing, and governance can be monitored. It connects to the broader SDG follow-up architecture, supplying evidence countries can use in Voluntary National Reviews and the High-Level Political Forum, aligning with GLAAS cycles.

Priority Action: P5_SuSanA

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	<i>Sustainable Sanitation Alliance - SuSanA</i>
Focal point	<i>Prit Salian and Alexandra Dubois</i>
Date of submission	<i>18.06.2026</i>

Part 2 — Priority Action

Proposal title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Institutionalizing the 0.5% GDP Minimum Baseline for Universal Sanitation Access
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the Interactive Dialogue (a) guiding questions the proposal addresses. Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
This proposal addresses Guiding Questions (4), on innovative financing, budgeting and resource-allocation approaches, and (1), on policies, institutional and regulatory frameworks that extend services to underserved populations and 3) Building the capacity of local governments to deliver a human-rights-based approach (HRBA).
Description of the action <i>Describe the proposed action in clear and operational terms. Explain what is proposed, what activities would be undertaken, and how the action would contribute to advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. Focus on practical actions that can be initiated or scaled up within the short to medium term. (Maximum 300 words)</i>
This action establishes a structured mechanism for Member to create and protect dedicated sanitation budget lines of at least 0.5% of GDP (with flexibility up to 2% in high-need contexts) integrated into National Development Plans (NDPs). This ensures Ministries of Finance prioritize sanitation as a costed national commitment, rather than a discretionary add-on. Key activities include: 1) Legal Safeguards: Ring-fence sanitation budgets within NDPs and national treasuries to prevent fund diversion. 2) Annual Reviews: Conduct "Sanitation Budget Reviews" (based on the Ngor model) to track disbursement and absorption, ensuring funds are spent effectively. 3) Capacity Building: Strengthen local governments to deliver human-rights-based sanitation and promote resource-recovery systems as revenue-generating pathways. By securing the public finance that already provides 91% of sector spending — and protecting operations and maintenance (O&M), which can double total need to 1.1–1.4% of GDP, the action shifts countries from ad-hoc capital investment to reliable, inclusive, safely

managed services. Anchoring allocations in human rights ensures funding reaches those currently underserved, marginalized or left behind.

Problem

Describe the challenge, gap, or barrier that the proposed action seeks to address. Explain why action is needed and why this issue is relevant to Interactive Dialogue (a). (Maximum 100 words)

Sanitation is chronically underfunded; in LMICs, public spending averages just 0.25% of GDP (half the 0.5% target) and sanitation receives only about a third of WASH budgets, leaving a 46% gap between need and available funding. However, the core issue extends beyond allocation size: while declarations and budget lines are easily established, most countries struggle to translate them into protected, fully spent, and pro-poor expenditure. Without ring-fenced, well-absorbed and equitably targeted finance, countries cannot meet SDG 6.2 targets or address the persistent service gaps that leave marginalized populations without safely managed sanitation.

Evidence of Effectiveness (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, reforms, or initiatives demonstrating that the proposed approach has been successfully implemented. Include measurable results where available and cite sources, evaluations, reports, or publications. Submissions should be evidence-based and not solely conceptual. (Maximum 300 words)

Evidence confirms that dedicated public finance drives sanitation access—but commitments alone are not enough. In Africa, the eThekweni (2008) and Ngor (2015) Declarations set a 0.5% GDP target, yet by 2022, only Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe met it, with average allocations stagnating at 0.25% (AMCOW, 2024). This highlights a persistent implementation gap.

Where finance is sustained and ring-fenced, results are transformative. In South Asia, India's Swachh Bharat Mission directed protected public budgets, boosting rural sanitation access from under 40% (2014) to near-universal coverage in five years. In Latin America, Peru's sanitation access rose from 54% to 71% (1990–2010) through sustained investment, while Brazil's 2020 framework targets universal access by 2033 via a structured pipeline. Globally, the share of countries reporting sufficient sanitation funding doubled from 7% to 14% between 2018 and 2024 (GLAAS, 2025).

Yet progress has limits. Budget increases often secure basic access but fall short of safely managed services, as upstream systems (collection, conveyance, treatment) remain capital- and operations-intensive. Gains frequently depend on political will, regulation, or donor finance rather than budget lines alone, and inflation-adjusted WASH budgets remain flat.

The solution? Not another target, but the mechanics: ring-fencing funds, tracking expenditure, ensuring absorption, and targeting resources through a human-rights-based approach. This is how commitments become spent, equitable, and lasting services.

Target group

Identify the primary beneficiaries of the proposed action, with particular attention to underserved, marginalised, and vulnerable populations. (Maximum 75 words)

The primary beneficiaries are underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable populations in LMICs who lack basic or safely managed sanitation, particularly poor rural communities and informal urban settlements typically overlooked when budgets concentrate on better-served areas. The action targets contexts where the estimated \$105 billion annual cost of meeting

SDG 6.2 remains unmet, prioritizing those furthest behind, including women and girls, children, and persons with disabilities who are most strongly affected by poor sanitation.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the action advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the principles of availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability, and quality (AAAQ). Describe how the action contributes to reducing inequalities and reaching those furthest behind. (Maximum 140 words)

This action embeds human rights to water and sanitation across the AAAQ framework. Ring-fenced, equity-weighted budgets prioritize the unserved, while targeted subsidies ensure affordability. Sustained O&M financing guarantees quality and continuity. Acceptability is advanced through dignity, privacy, safety and menstrual health protections.

A mandatory pro-poor allocation and disaggregated data prevent urban bias, ensuring no one is left behind. Transparent budget reviews, published expenditure data, and local grievance mechanisms foster participation, transparency, and accountability, turning budget lines into practical tools for progressive realization using maximum available resources.

Expected results

Describe the measurable changes expected from implementation of the action. Where possible, include indicative targets, outputs, outcomes, or milestones that can reasonably be achieved within the short to medium term. (Maximum 150 words)

By 2030:

1. At least 30–50 Member States formally adopt and track a dedicated sanitation budget line (minimum 0.5% of GDP), measured through GLAAS cycles against a 2025 baseline.
2. A measurable narrowing of the 46% national WASH funding gap through consistent, inflation-adjusted annual increases.
3. Progress toward the higher expenditure levels required for universal access (\$131–141 billion annually).
4. Strengthened national mechanisms for the disbursement and absorption of sanitation budgets, applying a human-rights-based approach, with higher budget-execution rates.
5. Improved capacity of local governments to deliver HRBA water and sanitation services.
6. Improved policy and regulatory frameworks that embed the budget line within National Development Plans and HRBA delivery.

Implementation modalities

Describe how the action would be implemented, including key activities, implementation arrangements, responsible actors, timeframe, and any coordination mechanisms required. (Maximum 250 words)

Ministries of Finance, Ministries of Water/Sanitation and local governments lead implementation, supported by regional ministerial bodies — AMCOW (Africa), the Arab Ministerial Water Council, CODIA/IDB (Latin America) and ASEAN/SACOSAN (Asia) — and coordinated globally through Sanitation and Water for All (SWA). Technical support is provided by SuSanA members and partner organisations.

SuSanA's own deliverables are a standardised budget-tracking methodology, a peer-learning platform and a public sanitation-expenditure dashboard, all designed for government use.

- **Years 1-2:** embed costed sanitation needs in National Development Plans; legislate to ring-fence budget lines; establish GLAAS-based baselines.

- **Years 3-5:** strengthen disbursement and absorption mechanisms; build local-government capacity to deliver the HRBA; scale resource-recovery sanitation where viable; report annually against targets.

The SuSanA Secretariat (hosted by GIZ) will leverage the SuSanA Platform to bridge policy, research, and implementation, encouraging cross-regional knowledge exchange. This ensures lessons from early adopters in Africa, Asia, and Latin America can be adapted and scaled globally.

Financing modalities

Provide indicative resource requirements and describe potential financing mechanisms, funding sources, or investment arrangements that could support implementation. (Maximum 150 words)

The primary source is domestic public finance: dedicated budget lines of 0.5–2% of GDP, embedded in National Development Plans to ensure Ministries of Finance treat sanitation as a costed priority. Building on the public sector's 91% share of sector spending, the action crowds-in additional finance from multilateral and regional banks (AfDB, IDB, ADB, World Bank) and donor agencies, using national investment cases like those pioneered by the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund.

Resource-recovery sanitation offers a complementary revenue stream and a pathway for greater private participation (currently under 2%). However, its scalability in LMICs remains limited due to the capital- and operations-intensive nature of upstream systems. Thus, it is positioned as emerging rather than core.

Scalability and replication potential

Describe how the proposed action could be expanded, replicated, or adapted in other countries, regions, or contexts. (Maximum 125 words)

This model builds on the African Union's eThekweni/Ngor frameworks and the AIP investment program and is replicable wherever sanitation budget lines can be embedded in fiscal policy and tracked via GLAAS. Regional platforms, such as SACOSAN (South Asia), LatinoSan/CODIA (Latin America), the Arab Ministerial Water Council, and ASEAN, provide entry points, with SWA enabling cross-regional adoption. As only Africa currently sets a quantified target, the action supports other regions in defining context-appropriate baselines.

Member State / stakeholder support

Identify existing supporters, implementing partners, or champions. Where support has not yet been secured, describe the potential for Member State endorsement and stakeholder engagement. (Maximum 120 words)

Existing champions in Africa: Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe, have already met the 0.5% GDP target. In South Asia, India's Swachh Bharat Mission demonstrates how budget-led approaches drive access, while Peru and Brazil highlight sustained, structured investment in Latin America.

Regional backing is provided by the African Union and AMCOW, with potential anchors in the Arab Ministerial Water Council, CODIA/IDB, and SACOSAN. Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) serves as the global platform.

Key implementing partners include SuSanA, the World Bank, WaterAid, and UNICEF, with formal Member State endorsement pursued through ministerial channels.

Links to other workstreams / dialogues

Describe any complementarity with other Workstreams or Interactive Dialogues and how the action could contribute to broader Conference outcomes. (Maximum 50 words)

The action integrates Interactive Dialogue (a) workstreams 4 (Accountability), 5 (Financing) and 6 (decentralized capacity, resources and accountability for local delivery). It drives ID(f) Investments, links to ID(b) Prosperity and ID(c) Planet via pollution reduction and resource recovery, and accelerates ID(e) by institutionalizing SDG 6.2 commitments.

Priority Action: P6_ONGAWA

Workstream 1 — Promote human-rights-based approaches to water, sanitation, wastewater, and water quality across all contexts

Interactive Dialogue (a): Water for People

2026 United Nations Water Conference

Part 1 — Submission details

Submitting organisation	ONGAWA, Ingeniería para el Desarrollo Humano
Focal point	Mar Rivero
Date of submission	18 january 2026

Part 2 — Priority Action

Priority Action title <i>A short, clear name (maximum 15 words).</i>
Strengthening inclusive water governance in rural Senegal through evidence and civil society engagement
Guiding question(s) addressed <i>Indicate which of the guiding questions above the initiative addresses (state the number(s)). Multiple questions may be selected where relevant.</i>
Question 3 (main theme): participation, accountability, transparency and civic engagement in water and sanitation governance. Question 1 (sub-theme): progress in policies, institutional and regulatory frameworks to extend safe services to underserved populations.
Problem <i>Describe the systemic challenge that the initiative seeks to address and explain why a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response is required. Explain why this issue is important for advancing the human rights to water and sanitation. (Maximum 150 words)</i>
The rural water sector in Senegal shows significant progress in terms of aggregate coverage figures but also reveals profound disparities and challenges that prevent the realisation of the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation for large sections of the population. One of the causes is that the implementation of sector reform is taking longer than anticipated, leading to significant imbalances: processes and structures intended to be temporary are becoming entrenched without resolving the underlying shortcomings. Community management, which is central in much of the country, suffers from a lack of resources and capacity. Official indicators overlook essential aspects of HRWS — i.e. distance to the water source, waiting times, service continuity... — whilst supply cuts due to non-payment persist in the absence of social tariffs to protect vulnerable households, and accountability remains very weak. Public participation in governance is weak, partly due to the lack of verified data to substantiate their demands.
Description

Describe the initiative, its overall vision, and the shared objective it seeks to achieve. Explain why the initiative is catalytic, transformational, and capable of mobilising stakeholders around a common goal. (Maximum 250 words)

The initiative stems from the discontent felt by rural communities regarding the consequences of water sector reform. The Platform of Senegalese Civil Society Organisations for the Water and Sanitation Sector (POSCEAS) is spearheading an initiative to make governance in the rural sector more inclusive by incorporating the demands of civil society.

It is based on an **academic study** that provides an in-depth analysis of the situation of HRWS across rural Senegal and identifies the main challenges. Furthermore, it includes an analysis of the regulatory and institutional framework from a HRWS perspective, as well as of the reform process, which assigns a leading role to the private sector. The fieldwork was carried out thanks to the involvement of POSCEAS's member organisations. Furthermore, a Steering Committee comprising POSCEAS, pS-Eau and ONGAWA designed and subsequently validated the study.

Building on this evidence, a social dialogue process has brought together with other civil society organisations (Water Justice Network Senegal) to jointly review the findings and agree on a shared set of priority recommendations for the Government of Senegal.

The next phase of the initiative focuses on engagement with sector authorities based on the recommendations already agreed by civil society organisations, followed by monitoring of commitments and measures adopted.

The initiative will conclude with the **systematisation** of the process and their sharing with international networks and CSOs, in order to facilitate learning and replication in other contexts.

Guidelines set out by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on HRWR have been incorporated into the process.

Transformational impact and expected results

Describe how the initiative will drive systemic change at scale. Outline measurable outcomes, expected benefits, and accountability mechanisms. Explain how the initiative moves beyond dialogue and commitments towards concrete action and results. (Maximum 250 words)

The results of the process already achieved in Senegal provide measurable evidence: **fieldwork** has been carried out by university researchers specialising in HRWS, supported by Senegalese civil society organisations in 8 regions of the country, including more than 47 interviews with institutional, technical and community stakeholders, and visits to more than a dozen rural communities. The report [is available here](#).

A second major result has been the creation of a shared evidence base and a consensus-building process among three civil society networks — POSCEAS, pS-Eau Réseau Sénégal and the Water Justice Network Senegal. Through this process, participating organisations have jointly validated the findings and agreed on a common set of priority recommendations for public authorities.

The initiative therefore moves beyond research and consultation. Its next phase consists of structured engagement with sector authorities based on the recommendations already agreed

by civil society organisations, creating a pathway from evidence and participation to institutional action and accountability. This process will also support the monitoring of commitments and measures adopted.

The expected impact is the strengthening of rights-based governance in the rural water and sanitation sector through improved participation, greater accountability and the incorporation of HRWS principles into policy implementation and monitoring processes.

Another expected outcome will be the systematisation of the process, proposing a **model and a documented, transferable methodology**, thereby promoting its replicability.

Human rights and inclusion focus

Explain how the initiative advances the human rights to water and sanitation, including the AAAQ principles, and benefits people in vulnerable situations. (Maximum 150 words)

The **academic field study** is designed to highlight the gaps that official coverage statistics do not reveal, and to facilitate an evidence-based dialogue between rights-holders and duty-bearers, thereby strengthening community participation in social oversight and the governance of water and sanitation.

The **principles and categories** of the human rights to water and sanitation (accessibility, affordability, quality, participation, etc.) have been explicitly taken into account, with specific attention paid to **territorial inequalities** between rural regions and to the systematic **exclusion of women** from decision-making forums in the sector, despite their being the primary domestic water managers.

The initiative also strengthens the ability of rights-holders to engage with duty-bearers through evidence-based advocacy.

Alignment with SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework

Explain how the initiative contributes to one or more SDG 6 accelerators: financing and investment, innovation and technology, capacity development, and data and information systems. (Maximum 150 words)

The model is primarily anchored in the Accelerator linked to **Data and Information**: the study generates rigorous, disaggregated evidence to provide organisations with tools to underpin their demands to the government for better services that comply with the human rights to water and sanitation.

It is also anchored in the **Capacity Development** Accelerator, as it empowers local civil society organisations to analyse evidence, articulate demands and monitor institutional commitments, which may continue beyond this initiative.

Furthermore, the recommendations put forward by civil society to the government can provide fair guidance for future public investment and institutional reforms, contributing to the **Financial and Investment** Accelerator.

Overall, the entire process, focused on right-holders and duty-bearers but involving different stakeholders, can be understood as a social innovative model contributing to the **Innovative** Accelerator.

Evidence Base and Strategic Rationale (Mandatory)

Provide evidence from existing or past projects, programmes, policies, partnerships, or initiatives demonstrating why the proposed approach is likely to succeed. Include measurable results, lessons learned, evaluations, and references. (Maximum 300 words)

Human rights stipulate that, regardless of the management model chosen to manage water and sanitation services, the principles and substance of these rights must be guaranteed. The aim is to identify how reform of the sector affects the guarantee of the HRWS.

The study thus reveals that:

- Access indicators do not take into account fundamental factors (distance to water sources, waiting times or service continuity, etc.)
- Water quality represents one of the most pressing challenges, with service providers failing to meet their obligations.
- Affordability is a barrier to effective access.
- Sanitation and hygiene continue to be sidelined in the sector's priorities, linked to gender gaps.
- Significant contradictions between regulatory design and practical implementation. Sector reform has been implemented without sufficient community participation, generating significant resistance in many localities.

With broad participation, these conclusions have been validated and recommendations for the Government of Senegal have been agreed upon with the aim of improving rural governance.

The report was subsequently cross-checked and reviewed, ensuring ownership by Senegalese civil society, complementing academic research and leading to the 2026 study on the human rights situation regarding water and sanitation in rural areas of Senegal.

This ongoing initiative has produced verifiable results that have sustained the commitment of three civil society organisations; on this basis, the recommendations will be submitted to the government, the measures adopted will be monitored, and the entire process will be systematised to facilitate its replication.

Beyond the research findings themselves, the process has demonstrated the ability of evidence to bring together diverse civil society actors around a shared advocacy agenda. The study findings have been validated by participating organisations and translated into a common set of recommendations, creating the conditions for constructive engagement with authorities and for the monitoring of future commitments and measures adopted.

Builds on existing efforts

Describe how the initiative strengthens, complements, or scales existing commitments, platforms, and initiatives. (Maximum 150 words)

The initiative is not starting from scratch: it builds on the networking efforts of Senegalese civil society organisations within the POSCEAS and Water Justice Network Senegal platforms, and on the dialogue that has taken place to incorporate the guidance of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation into the initiative.

It also builds on the participation of Senegalese organisations in broader international networks such as the Water Justice Network, People's Water Forum, End Water Poverty and SWA, creating opportunities for exchange, dissemination and replication.

Rather than creating a new platform, the initiative strengthens existing relationships, generates new evidence to support ongoing advocacy efforts and creates a common agenda for coordinated engagement with public authorities.

Partners, governance and stakeholder engagement

Describe the stakeholders involved and explain governance arrangements, leadership structures, and accountability mechanisms. (Maximum 150 words)

The study has involved stakeholders with distinct roles: independent researchers affiliated with the university have ensured methodological rigour; civil society organisations — POSCEAS, pS-Eau Réseau Sénégal and the Water Justice Network of Senegal — have ensured ownership, social legitimacy and consensus on the recommendations; and the international human rights framework, including dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, provides normative and institutional support.

A Steering Committee composed of POSCEAS, pS-Eau Senegal and ONGAWA has guided the full process and validated key outputs.

Participating organisations will also play a key role in presenting the recommendations to public authorities and in monitoring commitments and measures adopted.

The initiative places rights-holders at the centre of the process while promoting constructive dialogue with duty-bearers.

Existing Member State / stakeholder support

Identify Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that currently support, participate in, or have endorsed the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

ONGAWA acts as a facilitator and driving force throughout the entire process. The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) is supporting the ongoing process by funding an ONGAWA long term programme in Senegal.

The member organisations of POSCEAS have played an essential role in reaching out to rural communities in the eight regions analysed and in facilitating contacts with the relevant institutions. pS-Eau Réseau Sénégal and the Water Justice Network Senegal have also contributed to validating findings and agreeing on common recommendations.

The initiative is taking place in a context of growing political attention to water governance in Senegal, including its role as co-host of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference.

Potential Member State / stakeholder support

Identify potential Member States, organisations, or stakeholders that could support, champion, finance, or participate in the initiative. (Maximum 100 words)

The results of the process will be shared through the national networks involved, as part of an accountability exercise. Furthermore, they will be disseminated through the international networks in which the lead organisations are involved, including the Water Justice Network, Peoples Water Forum, End Water Poverty and SWA, with the aim of raising awareness of the results and encouraging replication in other contexts.

Senegal is a priority partner country for Spanish development cooperation (AECID), which identifies water as a strategic sector within bilateral cooperation frameworks. AECID may therefore contribute to promoting dissemination and replication of the initiative.

Existing financing / resource mobilisation

Describe any existing funding, investments, technical assistance, partnerships, or resource-mobilisation mechanisms that currently support the initiative. (Maximum 130 words)

The project is funded by Spanish cooperation (AECID) as part of a cooperation programme implemented by ONGAWA in Senegal, which ensures the project's budgetary continuity until its completion. The presence of the lead organisations in Senegal ensures that the study's results are monitored. Approximately €25,000 has been contributed.

The main costs are related to the technical support provided by the university to carry out the study and the costs associated with the logistics of coordinating stakeholders throughout the country.

It is important to emphasize the importance of allocating resources to rightsholders coordination processes, since such processes rarely have resources set aside for this purpose and it is essential for this type of initiative.

Potential financing / resource mobilisation and financing strategy

Describe how the initiative will mobilise the financial resources, investments, technical assistance, innovation, partnerships, and political support required for implementation and scale-up. Identify potential funding sources, financing mechanisms, investment opportunities, and strategic partnerships over the medium to long term, including how it could leverage existing programmes, financing facilities, donor commitments, public budgets, private-sector engagement, or blended finance. (Maximum 300 words)

Partnerships between civil society organisations significantly reduce the costs of implementing the process. The involvement of national universities is particularly helpful during the research phase, providing local research capacity, as well as strengthening sustainability by ensuring that the information gathered in the study is continuously updated and analysed.

However, whilst the current process has received external funding, duty-bearers should facilitate and fund similar processes to achieve more democratic governance.

The involvement of established civil society networks and local academic institutions also strengthens the sustainability and scalability of the model beyond the current funding period.

Implementation horizon

The medium- to longer-term timeframe for delivery beyond the 2026 Conference. (Maximum 70 words)

The initiative follows a three-year cycle. The first year focused on evidence generation and consensus-building among civil society organisations. The following stages focus on engagement with public authorities, monitoring commitments and measures adopted, and documenting lessons learned to facilitate replication and long-term impact beyond the 2026 Conference.