

# Minutes

## Steering Committee Meeting

### 20 – 21 March 2023

## Sanitation and Water for All Steering Committee meeting – 20 & 21 March 2023

### Minutes

#### Participants

- Patrick Moriarty, Steering Committee Chair
- Catarina de Albuquerque, SWA CEO

#### Governments

##### *Eastern and Southern Africa*

- Dhoba Lovemore, Zimbabwe
- Makhosini Khoza, Eswatini
- Abiy Girma Woledeselessie, Ethiopia

##### *East Asia and the Pacific*

- H.E. Mr. Oak Rabun, Cambodia

##### *Middle East and North Africa*

- Majeda Alawneh, Palestine

##### *Latin America and Caribbean*

- Alba Heredia Sena, Dominican Republic

##### *South Asia*

- Meena Shrestha, Nepal

##### *West and Central Africa*

- Djouuro Bocoum, Mali
- Bragori Helene Epse Yocolly, Côte d'Ivoire

##### *Industrialized Countries*

- Alexandra Carvalho, Portugal
- Diana Carlos, Portugal

#### Civil Society Organizations

- Barbara Schreiner, Water Integrity Network
- Seetharam M.R., VILD foundation
- Nathalie Seguin, FANMex

#### Private Sector

- Alex Knezovich, Toilet Board Coalition (TBC)
- Nicholas Igwe, Zenith Water Projects

#### External Support Agencies

- Aidan Cronin, UNICEF WASH
- Jorge Alvarez Sala, UNICEF WASH
- Joke Baak, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Rekiya Adamu, UNICEF (FSO)
- Paul Deverill, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

#### Research and Learning

- Russel Chidya, Mzuzu University
- Sarah Dickin, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

#### Utilities and Regulators

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#### Observers

- Bruce Gordon, WHO
- Federico Properzi, UN-Water

#### Secretariat

- Angie Saleh, Governance and Partnerships
- Alexandra Reis, Communications
- Christophe Pasquier, Operations and Resource Mobilization
- Marissa Streyle, Policy and Strategy
- Muyatwa Sitali, Country Engagement
- Kevin Roussel, Country Engagement
- Virginia Roaf, Senior Advisor
- Mariana Dias Simpson, Mutual Accountability Mechanism

#### SC Members and Observers who did not attend:

- Sareen Malik, ANEW
- Oscar Izquierdo Sandí, Costa Rica
- Dominic O'Neil, Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF)
- Comfort Kanshio, AMCOW (Observer)

#### Guests

- Arnaud de Vanssay, European Commission
- Eric Momanyi, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
- Greg Davies, Toilet Board Coalition
- Henry Northover, Consultant
- Jeff Goldberg, USAID
- Lesley Pories, GWP
- Lisa Schechtman, USAID
- Stefania Giodini, Netherlands Red Cross

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## Summary of Decisions

### **Decision 1: Agenda**

The Steering Committee (SC) approves the agenda for the meeting.

### **Decision 2: Governance Document Review**

The Steering Committee asks the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee to propose the necessary changes to the Governance Document to take account of the Audit's recommendations, once the MOU and Hosting Agreement with UNICEF have been finalized.

### **Decision 3: Cycle of High-Level Meetings**

The Steering Committee requests the Secretariat to continue convening Sector Ministers' Meetings every three years. The Steering Committee also requests the Secretariat to actively explore strategic opportunities, including in partnership with SWA partners, to convene global and/or regional Ministerial Meetings on good governance and finance and thematic high-level roundtables, during the years in between Sector Ministers' Meetings.

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**Minutes** (Note: decisions were discussed and agreed during the executive session, but are displayed in the minutes according to the relevant session for ease of reference)

#### Day One

##### **Session 1: Introductions and Overview**

Patrick Moriarty (PM) and Catarina de Albuquerque (CdA) welcomed the Steering Committee (SC) members to the first in-person SC meeting since Vietnam in December 2019.

PM then initiated a round of introductions for everyone in the room. He also welcomed the guest observers whose presence enriches the discussions.

PM presented an overview of the agenda of the meeting for the two days and asked the SC members for their approval or comments. He also noted how during in-person meetings the SC sits in a workshop mode to encourage more interactions, and that this is reflected in the agenda. CdA added a note about the SWA Mutual Accountability event, that will be held on the evening of Wednesday 22 March, as well as the possibility of meeting H.E. Laura Chinchilla, former President of Costa Rica and SWA Global Leader.

PM then proceeded to give an update on the activities of the Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) during the months of January and February. He mentioned the main items that were discussed in each of the monthly meetings which included preparations for the in-person SC meeting and the Ministerial Meeting on Governance and Finance convened with the World Bank. It also included the response to the UNICEF audit and issues relating to Human Resources as well as resource mobilisation.

CdA updated the SC on the status of implementation of SC decisions and actions. These included the decision on Ministerial Meetings on Governance and Finance – in which context she introduced the process behind the regional meeting on Southern and Eastern Africa, hosted by SWA and the World Bank, and planned for Thursday 23 March. She mentioned that the High-Level Political Dialogue Working Group (HLPD WG) has been closely involved in various aspects of the preparation and that so far there are 17 ministers confirmed.

A point was raised regarding the decision on 2023 SC meetings and whether there is a decision on whether the December meeting can be in person. CdA recalled that this is something to be decided at the June SC meeting where an update on the budget will be presented and the SC can make a more informed decision.

#### **Decision 1: Agenda**

The Steering Committee approves the agenda for the meeting.

##### **Session Two: Programme and Strategy Sub-Committee (PSSC) Updates**

PM started the session by introducing the two Sub-Committees working under the SC, which in turn have Working Groups (WGs) under each of them. He mentioned how challenging it is to have enough members for both Sub-Committees due to everyone's busy schedules, and he encouraged SC members to join and commit to at least one Sub-Committee. He also raised the need to have a vice chair for each of the sub-committees.

Nicholas Igwe (NI) presented an update from each of the three WGs.

- The HLPDWG has been focusing this year on the March 2023 Conference, and the Ministerial Meetings on Finance and Good Governance. They have been actively engaging with the Secretariat and the partners through the Conference Task Team trying to make sure synergies across the partnership are created and partners are supported throughout the process.
- The Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Working Group (MSCWG) has been working on hiring a consultant to support the development of the regional workplans to be completed in December 2024, with interim reports to the SC in June 2023, December 2023, and June 2024.
- The Systems and Finance Working Group (SFWG). The priority areas for the SFWG in the first quarter has been producing the "Principles of Sustainable WASH Finance" as well as engagement at UN 2023 Water Conference.

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A discussion followed with suggestions on how to reenergize Sub-Committees and engage SC members more. A sign-up sheet for all Sub-Committees and WGs passed around for SC members to indicate their preferences. SC members were reminded about the Governance Website where all the information on WGs and Sub-Committees is available for SC members to view.

#### Action 1: Sub-Committee and Working Group Membership

- a. The Secretariat to share a sign-up sheet with SC members to indicate their preferences in joining Sub-Committees or Working Groups.
- b. The Secretariat to reintroduce the Governance Website to the SC during the June SC meeting.

#### Session Three: Donor Coordination under SWA Auspices

PM presented the joint initiative between SWA and the Gates Foundation.

Eric Momanyi (EM) from the BMGF explained the important role that donors play and that they are faced with important questions regarding how to prioritize. Eric also stressed that it has become important to provide a platform where questions around aspirations for the sector and whether they are in line with what is being done are answered.

Henry Northover (HN) started by presenting some data including a comparison between global trends for ODA and WASH ODA, showing the relative decline of WASH ODA. He also showed the main changes in the biggest donors for WASH. He presented a trend analysis by sub-sector and donor types. This showed that spending on sanitation has been relatively stagnant, spending on water was increasing, and spending on governance was decreasing. He also mentioned that the donor orphan countries remain left out.

HN mentioned that when interviewees were asked about the main reason for the decline in WASH ODA, two explanations were generally offered: 1) the need to support strengthened country systems and sector governance, and 2) exogenous shocks including current global issues.

HN then moderated a discussion with SC members around two questions:

- A. From the analysis and data, what issues could a donor platform address?
- B. What is not captured by the data that needs to be addressed?

The main ideas that came out included the need to capture climate ODA and check if any parts of that was going to WASH. Some accounted the decline in spending on hygiene to the conflicting interest on who is the implementer of hygiene. Others also pointed out the need to look at government spending in addition to ODA.

Henry then presented **part two** which focused on the outcomes of interviews with donors.

There are four themes that they agreed should be the focus for the proposed donor coordination platform.

1. Strengthen **effective leadership** in WASH
2. Support for strengthening **national WASH systems**
3. Oversight and support for **multi-sector collaboration**
4. Learning from programming or partnership **failures**

HN also presented some practical logistical issues that need to be decided. He mentioned that SWA will support such a platform and that there is a suggestion to have the first face to face meeting in Stockholm but start preparing for it online after the All Systems Connect Symposium in May.

Following the presentation there was a moderated discussion. The main issues that came up included:

- Donors are different and have different processes, for some of them more formality would be useful to make such a platform work and be taken seriously within their agencies. Also, involving more superior levels within the organizational hierarchy.

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- The need for government officials at country level to talk to the donor representatives in their countries and try to prioritize WASH at that level too.
- The need for leadership on hygiene.
- The need to consider targeted financing for sanitation.

To close, Henry explained that there will be a final longer report with all data and a synthesis report that is shorter.

#### **Session Four: Governance and Finance Sub-Committee (GFSC) Updates**

Barbara Schreiner (BS) gave an introduction to the GFSC, its mandate, WGs, and members. She then presented the two main topics of the session: the management response to the UNICEF audit, and the Governance Document review.

On the **audit management response**, Barbara explained first that this was an internal audit conducted by UNICEF on procedures and policies, and not a financial audit. She explained the key remarks that the audit presented and the measures that SWA was taking as a response. Those included:

- 1- **Governance Structures and their effectiveness** – SWA will work with the GFSC to assess current mechanisms and the need for any additional ones. Then, the Sub-Committee will present a proposal to the SC.
- 2- **Regulatory Framework and ensuring reporting mechanisms are reflected in the Governance Document** – this is dependent on the hosting agreement and MoU with UNICEF and will be done once they are available.
- 3- **Staff Management including staffing capacity and CEO position management** – this will also be reflected once the hosting agreement and MoU with UNICEF are available
- 4- **Related Party Transactions including documenting/accounting for in-kind support from partners** – this will be brought to the Programme and Strategy Sub-Committee, and their recommendation will be considered by the SC in December.
- 5- **Results Framework and capturing SWA's value proposition** - SWA will commission a study on the partnership's added value and value proposition and present to the relevant governance bodies for discussion.
- 6- **Ethics and Culture including monitoring and prevention of abuse, safeguarding conflicts of interest, and ensuring diversity** - the relevant governance bodies will review (and revise if necessary) SWA's code of conduct to ensure it fully adheres to UNICEF policies and that monitoring actions are established and known by all within SWA.

During the discussion, SC members commended the Secretariat and the GFSC on all the work that went into this process. They agreed that this is important for increased trust in the partnership especially by donors.

CdA mentioned that the results of the audit of all hosted partnerships have been published by UNICEF already, with only results for UNICEF itself, as host of all the funds, still missing. She also thanked the GFSC for the work and support during this process.

For the **review of the Governance Document**, BS mentioned that the recommendation of the Secretariat and the GFSC is that the changes to the Governance Document are presented in one package to the Steering Committee, **after the Hosting Agreement and MOU have been agreed**. She mentioned that the management response to the audit committed the Steering Committee to consider such changes, within 6 months of receiving the finalized Hosting Agreement and MOU from UNICEF.

#### **Decision 2: Governance Document Review**

The Steering Committee asks the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee to propose the necessary changes to the Governance Document to take account of the Audit's recommendations, once the MOU and Hosting Agreement with UNICEF have been finalized.



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## **Session Five: Reaching Up**

### **Part One – Heads of State (HoS) Engagement**

Muyatwa Sitali (MS) explained how reaching up has been one of SWA's main strategies to promote political prioritization for water, sanitation, and hygiene. He added that in terms of lessons learned the SWA Secretariat had hired a consultant to look at lessons learned and that the main lessons included:

- 1- Issues that HoS look for don't necessarily align with water, sanitation, and hygiene as priorities.
- 2- The interlocutors SWA has are often the focal points, who are not necessarily political actors who talk to the president on day-to-day basis.
- 3- This work is generally a long-term goal, but short-term planning is needed to accomplish it.

MS then explained that the approach for 2023 is to work on HoS engagement through priority countries – where opportunity is present or if the country has reached out to SWA deliberately asking for support. He explained that there are seven priority countries under this stream of work this year – Ghana, Honduras, Liberia, Benin, Uganda, Indonesia, and Zimbabwe. He also explained what the process to finalize a Presidential Compact would entail.

The following section of the session was conducted in a World Café format where SC members were divided into two groups: one focused on “Franchising”, the other on “Experiences”. During the reporting back, the following issues were raised by the groups:

#### **1- Franchising Group**

- Engaging at the right level is a key factor to success.
- The possibility of a training for focal points was raised and the Secretariat mentioned that there is already a proposal developed and shared with some donors for potential funding.

#### **2- Experiences Group**

- The group discussed the cases of Liberia, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe and the lessons from each.
- Using the SMM as an opportunity for initiating compacts by linking it to government priorities identified in their MAM commitments.

### **Part Two – Engaging the Global Leadership Council (GLC)**

CdA explained that when SWA was created there was always the idea of having political leaders who can talk on SWA's behalf. She added that in 2022/2023 the GLC has lost several its members due to personal circumstances. This includes Mr. Kevin Rudd, Mr. Alan Joje, and Mr. Kumi Naidoo.

Catarina explained that in 2023, one of SWA's priorities is, therefore, to expand the GLC – identify strong candidates to have a complete and more balanced GLC with members who have variable expertise from different walks of life and from other sectors. She added that there is also a need for SWA to connect with GLC members' worlds, by finding moments in their engagements to position messages on water, sanitation, and hygiene. The Secretariat will therefore work with the GLC search committee to complete the structure.

CdA then started a discussion with the SC members, who agreed that the GLC is useful as long as the right people are there, especially former HoS. They also stressed the need to mobilize the whole partnership and link up with other partners who are working with former HoS such as President Kikwete at GWP for instance.

### **Action 2: GLC Membership Nominations**

SC members to think about suggested names for potential GLC members and send those names to the Secretariat.

*At the end of the session, PM closed the day, and invited the SC members to reconvene over dinner.*





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#### *Day Two*

#### ***Session Six: How can SWA contribute to strengthening accountability at the global level?***

PM welcomed back SC members and introduced the first session of the day on: SWA's role in mutual accountability at the global level. This agenda item is especially pertinent in light of the sector having the first Conference on water in 46 years, where the Water Action Agenda and commitments contributing to it will be a big part of the Conference.

Mariana Dias Simpson (MDS) presented the main challenges facing mutual accountability identified by the Global MAM report:

1. Mutual accountability hinges on inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms, and this is a condition that has not yet been realized in all partner countries.
2. The need to improve engagement and accountability among global partners.

MDS explained that this second challenge is what the SC will focus on.

The SC was then divided into three discussion groups, each led by one of the global partners who could share their experience and answer questions from the rest of the group.

#### *Group One recommendations:*

- 1- Increase the quality, significance, and relevance of commitments made under the MAM to have a stronger linkage to country sector processes such as JSRs.
- 2- Examine commitments' relevance to the SDG 6 targets and identify those that are not necessarily moving the needle.

#### *Group Two recommendations:*

- 1- Create ESA pages on the website similar to the country pages and corresponding to each country they work in.
- 2- Foster more intentional collaboration in country between donors.

#### *Group Three recommendations:*

- 1- Foster peer accountability not just amongst SWA partners but also amongst others working in each country.
- 2- Hold global level organizations accountable at regional level – as a potentially useful link between global and national accountability for these organizations.

PM then closed the session by emphasizing that it is important to see the MAM as a piece of the whole and a tool to hold our government commitments and multi-stakeholder processes together.

#### ***Session Seven: Three years of the SWA strategy: Looking back***

CdA started the session by explaining that the Strategy was approved by the SC in December 2019, entered into force in January 2020 and will have a midterm review in 2025. She mentioned that SWA is currently in the 4th year of implementing the Strategy, so it is important to assess the wins and the challenges. **She stressed that SWA is not the Secretariat, but its partners.**

CdA then explained that in the SWA strategy, three avenues for achieving water and sanitation everywhere were identified. She added that the main source of information to assess performance is the Results Framework, the feedback forms, and the information received from partners.

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After presenting the main wins and challenges per objective, CdA started a discussion with the SC members, asking them to suggest new approaches/activities needed to reach each of the Strategic Objectives.

For **Objective One**, the main ideas discussed included the fact that leadership visits from SWA to countries can help a lot with prioritization. Another point raised was the importance of stepping up to political leadership with a suggestion for the next SMM to be about how to get the highest-level political leadership on board. It was agreed that the only path to success is to better engage the whole partnership.

For **Objective Two**, the main comments focused on ways to bring partners together at all levels. There was a suggestion to make the MAM commitments better connected to JSR processes at country level. The importance of fostering trust amongst partners to enhance accountability was also stressed.

As for **Objective Three**, an important point raised was the need for the SFWG to align with objective three and reinforce it at national and regional levels through creating synergies with the MSCWG. The importance of convening and coordinating some intersectoral discussions on financing with health and other sectors was also highlighted. The SC members agreed that Agenda 2030 will not be implemented until all actors from across constituencies are involved.

At the end of the session, PM reemphasised systems strengthening as one of the key issues the partnership needs to work on more.

#### ***Session Eight: Are we living up to the ambition of the SWA Strategy?***

CdA started the session by reflecting on the current strategy and whether it fully reflects the power of the partnership that needs to be unleashed.

She explained that the purpose of creating this partnership was to create alignment, and have one place where the many actors devoted to the cause of water and sanitation could come together with common purpose. She stressed the need to work together with all partners to make SWA a truly transformative partnership.

The SC was then divided into three discussion groups to discuss how to accomplish this. The following is a summary of what each group discussed.

*Group One* agreed that it is important to transfer ownership from the Secretariat to the partners since the Secretariat's main role is to equip and empower partners. They stressed the importance of contributing to agenda setting and messaging.

*Group Two* focused on the importance of widening and deepening the participation of partners in all governance bodies. They stressed that better coordination between the WGs for example, could add significantly to their effectiveness and to aligning stakeholders to the SWA priorities. They also outlined the need to focus more on National level coordination which is essential for creating stronger impacts. This includes creating a mechanism for national level interaction between the focal points, and partners, across different constituencies.

*Group Three* mentioned the importance of explaining SWA objectives to those who are not too involved in the partnership. They stressed the importance of communications for the visibility of SWA's work. They agreed that peer to peer experience sharing is also key.

#### ***Session Nine: Cycle of High-Level Meetings (HLMs)***

CdA started the session by explaining the history of SWA's HLMs. She mentioned that SWA is famous for its HLMs, and that the idea behind such meetings in the start was to convene Finance Ministers, but then their feedback was that there is a need for sector ministers to be present at those meetings too, therefore SWA also started convening opportunistic SMMs.

She then gave a summary of the evolution of HLMs to date, stressing the importance of adapting according to the needs and priorities as well as external circumstances. She mentioned that currently,



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one of SWA's ultimate targets is persuading HoS/HoG to prioritize water and sanitation and that there is a need to evolve HLMs accordingly.

CdA then recognized the presence of H.E. Mr. Lamine Seydou Traoré, Minister of Mines, Energy and Water for Mali. She pointed out that his opinion on high-level ministerial meetings and how our partnership can help ministers to achieve political and financial prioritization is very important to the current discussion. H.E. Minister Traoré stressed that realizing universal access to water, sanitation, and hygiene is a priority for Mali, and that the main challenge is to have a financially viable sector, and that SWA's focus on systems can contribute to resolving this challenge.

CdA then explained that the feedback the Secretariat has received from many partners is that there is a need to reach out, reach up, discuss about finance but also systems, and to move to a more regional approach. She explained that SWA has started doing this by choosing priority focus areas and integrating them into HLMs, such as climate, and humanitarian settings.

CdA then started to explain the proposed vision for the future with three types of HLMs that includes:

- Global SMMs every three years - which will continue to be our key global convening
- More opportunistic ministerial meetings on **Finance and Good Governance** which can be either (sub)regional or global meetings
- Ad-hoc Thematic High-Level Round Tables where SWA invites both governments and stakeholders to discuss particular thematic topics that could in some cases be more suitable for a sub-set of partners – e.g. the humanitarian focus.

CdA added that the objective is to make sure as a body, the HLMs contribute to accelerating access to SDG 6, while helping partners reach up to HoS. Therefore, the next SMM will hopefully already feature HoS compacts.

She elaborated on the proposal for future HLMs to include Meetings on Finance and Good Governance during 2023 – 2024, Thematic roundtables during 2023-2024, an SMM that features HoS compacts in 2025, followed by another round of Meetings on Good Governance and Finance during 2026 – 2027 followed by an SMM in 2028. This would all be culminated by a HoS/HoG summit on WASH in 2030.

PM moderated a discussion where SC members agreed that regional level meetings are essential to include in the HLMs cycle for Ministerial Meetings and high-level round tables. There was also a suggestion to have the HoS/HoG summit earlier than 2030.

PM then closed the session and announced the start of the Executive Session, thanking all guests and observers for their contributions and once again, reminding SC members of the rules and quorum required for decision making during the Executive Session.

### Decision 3: Cycle of High-Level Meetings

The Steering Committee requests the Secretariat to continue convening Sector Ministers Meetings every three years. The Steering Committee also requests the Secretariat to actively explore strategic opportunities, including in partnership with SWA partners, to convene global and/or regional Ministerial Meetings on good governance and finance and thematic high-level roundtables, during the years in between Sector Ministers Meetings.

### Session Ten – Decisions (Executive Session)

PM then went through the proposed decisions. There was agreement on all decisions and on decision three regarding the cycle of HLMs there was a discussion to add regional focus to the meetings. This was reflected in the decision and agreed by all SC members. It was also agreed that this cycle of meetings is a work in progress which mainly aims at providing flexibility to adapt and evolve.

The Secretariat was then excused from the meeting for the SC to discuss the Secretariat and CEO evaluation for 2022. No minutes were taken during this discussion.

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The Secretariat was asked to come back to the room after the discussion, and PM reported that the only reflection the SC has is that the Secretariat needs to expand mainly to support country level and SC level work. However, there is an awareness of the limited resources, so the SC asks the Secretariat to think about and consider a plan to grow the number of priority countries and increase support at regional level. He added that we need a growth strategy since the Secretariat is the oil in the machine that allows the constituencies to work.

CdA then thanked the SC for the discussion and support. She stressed that it has been very energizing to spend those two days with the SC in person to give the Secretariat more guidance to move forward. She added that she feels very lucky to work with a fantastic group of people at the Secretariat. She also thanked the SC for the idea of expanding the Secretariat. She mentioned that this is one of the topics always discussed with donors as it requires more funding for the Secretariat to be better resourced and accomplish more.

CdA also thanked UNICEF for the support it provides SWA as host.

PM then thanked the SC for all the time they put in for this meeting stressing that this is how we have achieved successes in the past and will achieve more in the future.