

DELIVERING FOR 2030

GLOBAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT



**SANITATION
AND WATER
FOR ALL**



**MUTUAL
ACCOUNTABILITY
MECHANISM**

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MESSAGE FROM SWA'S CEO

The world is facing profound challenges. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside ongoing conflicts, have contributed to an unprecedented decline in the Human Development Index, rolling back progress by a staggering nine years.¹ The 2023 Joint Monitoring Programme's report sounded increasingly urgent alarms, stating the world is way off-track to achieve SDG6: achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a six-fold increase in current rates of progress for safely managed drinking water, a fivefold increase for safely managed sanitation and a threefold increase for basic hygiene services.² The JMP has also highlighted stark inequalities between and within countries, and has called for urgent action on governance, finance, capacity development, innovation, and data to confront the crisis. Climate-related catastrophes are compounding the situation even further, with water being one of the highest global risks the world is facing.³

It is, no doubt, a sobering picture. But in the face of these adversities, our sector remains determined to intensify its efforts to achieve water and sanitation for all, always and everywhere. Urgent global, regional and national climate discussions now feature water far more prominently – edging



“Accountability enables transparent discussions, which lead to stronger partnerships, and more sustainable results.”

Ms. CATARINA DE ALBUQUERQUE
SWA's Chief Executive Officer

closer to the central role water must certainly take, if we are to build a more resilient world. Increasing numbers of Heads of State and Government are also now looking to the future, seeing the need to prioritize water in their countries, supported by the Heads of State Initiatives.

Accountability is crucial to effectively deliver on the promises made through the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as other regional and global commitments. Accountability encourages dialogue. It elevates political will. And it offers a clear picture of what is really changing and where progress is lagging for individuals and communities. To put it simply: accountability enables transparent discussions, which lead to stronger partnerships, and more sustainable results.

The SWA global partnership has placed emphasis on commitments and accountability since its inception in 2010. When we launched the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in 2018, it was a deliberate effort to support collaboration, and to provide a platform for commitments defined through government-led, multi-stakeholder processes. Mutual accountability allows governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, international agencies, and others to articulate their roles in supporting commonly defined goals.

Embracing accountability as a principle of good governance supports decision-makers to understand whether policies are achieving the desired impact. And it empowers stakeholders to question, to challenge, and to offer support to each other, with a view towards maintaining the collective focus on achieving SDG6. Our Mutual Accountability Mechanism was built to drive this mutually beneficial collaboration and engagement. It is supporting political prioritization, stronger multi-stakeholder processes, increased sector financing, inequality reduction, climate action, and policy development in countries and across the world.

Our vision was, and still is, ambitious – to see water and sanitation as a top priority in national and global political agendas, with concrete strategies and engagement of diverse stakeholders to turn that political will into universal access to water and sanitation. The 2023 UN Water Conference and its Water Action Agenda was a seminal moment to reinforce this vision. Indeed, the discussions at the Conference reiterated the centrality of accountability in order to construct a better world, grounded in respect for human rights and sustainable development.

With only six years remaining until 2030, building trust, transparency, and accountability is critical. The SWA partnership will champion these principles at every opportunity: they are the engine that will drive the urgent acceleration required to achieve SDG6, and, finally, realize the human rights to water and sanitation.

I invite you to join this movement to enhance accountability across our sector and beyond. Together, we can foster the cooperation necessary to deliver essential services to communities around the world.

MESSAGES FROM SWA'S LEADERS

“Upholding human rights, including women's rights, is at the heart of securing effective accountability. Without transparency, there can be no trust, and without trust, there can be no investments. It is encouraging to see SWA fostering this kind of dialogue in the water and sanitation sector through its Mutual Accountability Mechanism. The world needs accountability to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda.”

HER EXCELLENCY Dr. JOYCE BANDA
former President of Malawi and SWA Global Leader



“Planning and investing in the delivery of climate-resilient water and sanitation is indispensable for inclusive and sustainable development. Sustainability and resilience hinge on good governance and strong systems underpinned by robust accountability processes. For the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, a system which prioritizes accountability is especially important, as it will translate into meaningful improvement in people's lives.”

HIS EXCELLENCY Mr. JIGMI THINLEY
former Prime Minister of Bhutan and SWA Global Leader



“Investing in water, sanitation and hygiene systems strengthens communities and protects children's health, rights, and well-being. Globally, 436 million children face extreme water vulnerability, and inadequate sanitation and hygiene systems. From 2020 to 2024, UNICEF supported 51 countries in integrating water, sanitation and hygiene into their national climate policies. Now is the time to make sure that those strong policies lead to meaningful actions to provide all children with access to quality services.”

Ms. CATHERINE RUSSELL
Executive Director of UNICEF and SWA Global Leader



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is SWA's second Global Accountability Report. It assesses the implementation of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism from 2021 to 2024 and identifies areas where further efforts are needed, in order to realize its full potential in promoting the accountability necessary to achieve SDG6 and realize the human rights to water and sanitation.

Aimed at SWA partners and other relevant actors in the 2030 Agenda, the report emphasizes the importance of accountability in fostering transparent discussions, identifying challenges, and coordinating actions to overcome obstacles.

SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism is the only global accountability process dedicated to all stakeholders working together towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals' water and sanitation targets. Since the mechanism was launched in 2018, 498 global and national commitments have been tabled by stakeholders from 61 countries across the globe. Among the 295 progress reports submitted by partners, 46 per cent are fully or nearly fully achieved.

Many of these commitments contribute to break down siloes and bring sector actors together to increase political prioritization of water and sanitation issues. Their impact includes, among other important outcomes, better sector coordination around government priorities, budget increases, more participation, and the establishment of local accountability processes. The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is supporting governance and finance efforts, leading to more efficient and sustainable results in the journey towards delivering universal access to water and sanitation.

The mechanism also offers a way for global partners – including bilateral donors, development banks, UN agencies, INGOs, international private sector entities, and research institutions – to align their work with sector priorities and goals set at the national level. This coordination and alignment are vital for partners who are working to improve access to water and sanitation in their countries and around the world.

This Global Accountability Report provides a comprehensive overview of SWA partner engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism since the first report in 2021. Throughout the publication, practical examples of partners putting accountability into action are outlined, highlighting successful examples of where efforts have led to significant improvements in water and sanitation services.

A first analytical section explores how the Mutual Accountability Mechanism is being used in practice

by partners and its impact. It starts with a thematic analysis, exploring in depth some of the specific areas that partners have prioritized for collective work. These include climate action, sector finance, gender, and the reduction of inequalities. The section illustrates how the SWA's mechanism can be applied to focus attention and programming on varied priority areas, and to provide stakeholders with a route to working together to address critical issues. This section goes on to outline how the Mutual Accountability Mechanism can help establish processes, initiatives and frameworks to enhance sector coordination and high-level engagement to mobilize political will, including with Heads of States and Governments. Finally, the section considers four SWA partner country case studies, looking at how they have used the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to strengthen their national water, sanitation and hygiene sectors.

The second section provides data snapshots, presenting the mechanism's numbers and progress rates reported by partners. It includes geographical spread and key focus areas of commitments that have been made. The section offers both a clear picture of the progress achieved, as well as indications for areas that may require further attention from the partnership in the next few years.

The report goes on to consider future ambitions of the SWA partnership with regard to increasing the effectiveness of the mechanism to create political will, strengthen multi-stakeholder and accountability processes nationally, regionally and globally, towards the full realization of the human rights to water and sanitation. The report calls for stronger connections with high-level political processes and sustained commitment from all stakeholders to embrace mutual accountability as the pathway to stronger partnerships and more sustainable outcomes in the journey towards the delivery of sanitation and water all.

The report concludes by reinforcing how accountability is indispensable for achieving SDG6. Having a solid platform in place that addresses both water and sanitation, in the form of the SWA Mutual Accountability Mechanism, is an asset for the sector in terms of coordinating efforts, fostering transparency, and driving collective action towards realizing this human right.

BACKGROUND

Promoting a culture of mutual accountability

Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is the UNICEF-hosted multi-stakeholder global partnership with a mission to achieve SDG6 – clean water and sanitation for all. The partnership uses innovative ways to increase political support for water and sanitation through the mobilization of partners in governments, utilities, regulators, donor agencies, financial institutions, UN agencies, civil society organizations, research institutions, and the private sector.

Accountability is central to SWA's work because it can transform high-level political ambitions into action by encouraging the definition of concrete commitments. These commitments provide a strong, reliable foundation for the sector and offer an opportunity to hold governments and other stakeholders accountable.

As a cornerstone of the human rights framework, States are accountable for the full realization of all human rights – including the human rights to water and sanitation. Beyond this legal obligation, accountability through multi-stakeholder dialogue helps establish

systems which are collaborative, participatory, transparent, non-discriminatory and, ultimately, more sustainable.

Through the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, SWA emphasizes a practical concept of accountability. It follows a localized strategy by encouraging all sector actors to contribute to and complement the government's vision for achieving full access to water, sanitation and hygiene sector that is centred around national plans. The mechanism helps stakeholders to define commitments that contribute to the achievement of the objectives set out in existing national plans and to hold each other accountable. This participatory approach fosters cooperation and trust, which in turn leads to more effective interventions.

THE EVOLUTION OF SWA'S APPROACH TO ACCOUNTABILITY

2010 The need for a process to institutionalize and foster accountability in the water and sanitation sector was identified at the inception of the SWA partnership in 2010. Linked with SWA's High-level Meetings, a process was put in place to encourage governments to present national commitments.

2015 The partnership began the process of developing a more solid accountability tool that would build on this learning and reflect the shift from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals, as the latter placed a much greater emphasis on inter-connected actions between all stakeholders – and therefore on mutual accountability.

2018 SWA launched the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, designed to provide a shared platform for all constituencies to commit to a shared vision for the sector – where each actor has an acknowledged role to play, and all actors can hold others to account for their actions and inactions. The mechanism has concrete commitments as basis for mutual accountability and collaborative action.

2021 The first Global Accountability Report is published. By July 2021, 346 commitments had been tabled by over 140 partners across all constituencies. Progress was reported on 88 commitments.

2024 Partners, and governments in particular, have steadily increased their engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. By the publication of this second Global Accountability Report, over 170 partners had tabled nearly 500 increasingly SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) commitments. Significant progress has been reported on over half of due commitments, demonstrating concrete impacts facilitated by SWA's mechanism and delivered by partners.

How the Mutual Accountability Mechanism works

SWA approaches mutual accountability as a positive, disciplined way to achieve goals quicker. The process requires a strong focus on multi-stakeholder engagement, such that mutual accountability serves to catalyse collective action towards SDG6.

Inspired by the human rights framework and existing accountability mechanisms in other sectors, SWA's

Mutual Accountability Mechanism provides a platform for all partners to commit to specific, measurable, achievable, realistic/ resourced and time-bound (SMART) commitments which set out their contributions to the achievement of the water- and sanitation-related targets of the SDGs.



Principles for designing high-quality, ambitious commitments with lasting impact

1. POLITICAL BACKING

- **High-level endorsement:** Does the commitment have backing from senior political leaders or influential stakeholders?
- **Policy integration:** Is the commitment based on national plans or frameworks to ensure longevity beyond leadership changes?
- **Cross-sector support:** Does the commitment have broad support from relevant ministries and sectors (e.g., finance, environment, health)?

2. FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED

- **Funding secured:** Are sufficient financial resources allocated to support the commitment?
- **Capacity:** Are human and technical resources adequate for effective implementation?
- **Sustainability:** Is there a long-term funding strategy beyond initial implementation?

3. AMBITIOUS AND TRANSFORMATIVE

- **Beyond business-as-usual:** Does it aim for transformative change?
- **Collaborative efforts:** Are multi-stakeholder actors (e.g., private sector, civil society) involved?
- **High-level targets:** Are the targets set ambitious enough to significantly advance progress toward SDG6?
- **Long-term impact:** Will it lead to significant, lasting change?

4. GROUNDED IN NATIONAL PLANS

- **Alignment with priorities:** Is it aligned with national plans or strategies?
- **Endurance through leadership changes:** Is the commitment institutionalized in a way that it will endure political transitions or changes in government?
- **Stakeholder ownership:** Are local and national stakeholders involved to ensure relevance and actionability?

5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- **Monitoring and accountability:** Are there opportunities to track progress and hold stakeholders accountable?
- **Inclusivity:** Does the commitment ensure engagement from underrepresented groups or sectors, including vulnerable and marginalized communities?

6. SMART GOALS

- **Specific:** Is the commitment clear and focused on a specific outcome?
- **Measurable:** Are there indicators to track progress and measure success?
- **Achievable:** Is the commitment realistically achievable within the available resources and timeline?
- **Relevant:** Does it align with national priorities and global goals (e.g., SDG6)?
- **Time-bound:** Is there a clear deadline for completion?



Examples of Mutual Accountability Mechanism commitments

MALI

Increase access to drinking water

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS:

1. Increase the national rate of access to basic drinking water services by 2% per year – from 70.9% in 2021 to 85% by 2026; 2. Guarantee access to drinking water for 90% of schools and public health centres; 3. Approve legislation for the regulation of drinking water services in rural areas.

Submission year: 2022 | Target year: 2026
(Progress not yet reported)

CIVIL SOCIETY:

Advocate for the access to water, sanitation and hygiene to become a constitutional right.

Submission year: 2021 | Target year: 2022
(Commitment fully achieved)

EXTERNAL SUPPORT AGENCIES:

Align the interventions of technical and financial partners with the government's priorities based on the roadmap resulting from the multi-stakeholder consultation framework.

Submission year: 2021 | Target year: 2022
(Commitment fully achieved)

PRIVATE SECTOR:

Contribute to the reduction of disparities in access to drinking water through investments in rural areas.

Submission year: 2021 | Target year: 2024
(Nearly fully achieved)

RESEARCH & LEARNING:

Conduct research into the quantity and quality of water resources available and produce scientific information relating it to climate change and social demand.

Submission year: 2021 | Target year: 2024
(Nearly fully achieved)

SIERRA LEONE

Improve services to end open defecation

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS (Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation):

1. Lobby the Ministry of Finance to increase government budgetary allocation for WASH services from 3% of the GDP to 10% and scale up domestic resource mobilization for WASH services (**Limited progress**); 2. Reduce open defecation from 17% to 11% by 2024 and implement sanitation at scale to ensure no one is left behind (**Some progress**).

Submission year: 2021 | Target year: 2024

CIVIL SOCIETY:

1. Support the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation to improve WASH in health care facilities (Medicos del Mundo); 2. Continue to manage the faecal sludge treatment plant in the western urban area of Freetown (GOAL); 3. Advocate for clean drinking water in the slum communities of Freetown (West Africa Women and Girls Empowerment); 4. Support the Government in providing access to reliable and safe drinking water in hard-to-reach communities in our operational districts (Concern Worldwide).

Submission year: 2023 | Target year: 2025
(Progress not yet reported)

5. As Sierra Leonean CSOs, we commit to monitor progress against commitments, and take into account the political will demonstrated by the Government and support the implementation of commitments where appropriate (WASH-Net Sierra Leone)

Submission year: 2022 | Target year: 2024
(Some progress)

EXTERNAL SUPPORT AGENCIES (UNICEF Sierra Leone):

1. Support government efforts to eliminate open defecation and improve access to basic sanitation, especially developing national ODF elimination road map and implementing sanitation at scale, leaving no one behind by 2022 (**Nearly fully achieved**); 2. Support government efforts in monitoring and reviewing its performance towards achieving SDG goals, including evidence generation to support implementation by 2022 (**Limited progress**); 3. Support government efforts to organize a Joint Sector Review, including WASH-BAT analysis, resulting in National Action Plan for WASH by 2025 (**Not yet reported**); 4. Support government efforts to organize a private sector forum for increased investment in WASH, including determining sanitation business models by 2025 (**Not yet reported**).

Submission year: 2022 | Target year: 2024

THE MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM IN PRACTICE

2.1 THEMATIC PERSPECTIVES: CREATING SECTOR FOCUS

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism has proven effective in raising the profile of several crucial thematic areas globally and in many SWA partner countries. Elevating these thematic areas enhances their visibility and encourages action among sector actors, focusing attention on specific priority areas. Below, the report

explores how in the last triennial the mechanism has been used as a platform to prioritise climate action, inequalities, sector finance and gender equality. The stories illustrate how the mechanism can be used to focus action on specific thematic areas, selected for prioritization at country level.

OVERVIEW: COMMITMENT KEY ACTION AREAS

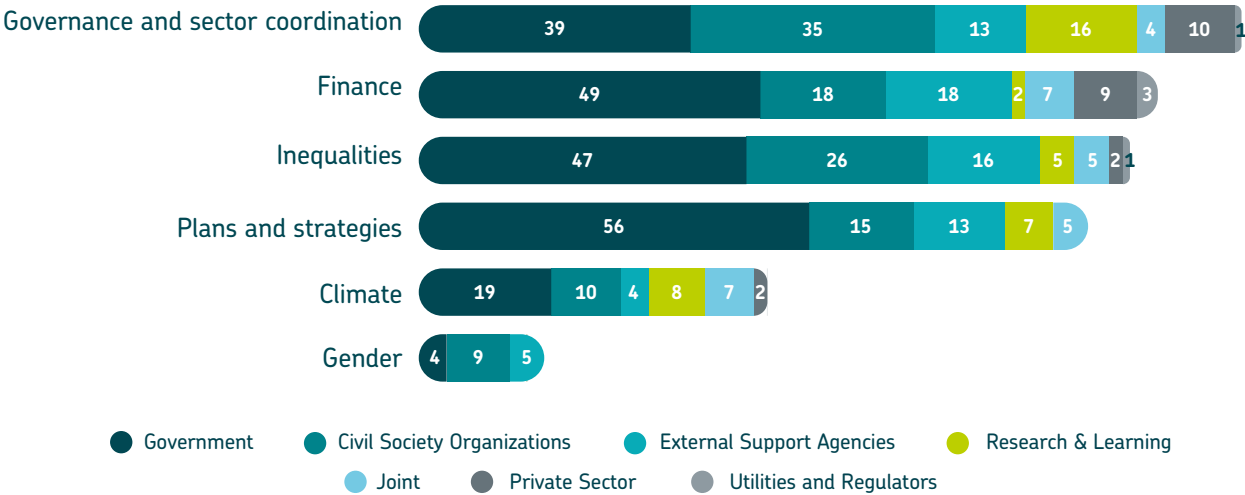
SWA does not prescribe what areas should be addressed by commitments. Nevertheless, analysis shows that, since the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was launched in 2019, action areas of tabled commitments are often aligned with SWA's strategic objectives of building political will to eliminate inequalities, championing multi-stakeholder approaches, and strengthening system performance to attract new investments.

• **Governance and sector coordination** have been prioritized since 2019, with a total of 118 commitments. Pledges include, for example, the creation of coordinating bodies, improved multi-stakeholder coordination, as well as boosting research on multi-stakeholder approaches.

• **Finance** commitments add up to 106 in total. Pledges include budget increases, advocacy, the creation of separate budget lines per sub-sector and the diversification of sources to attract new investments, e.g., from private sector participation and climate financing.

• **The elimination of inequalities** in its various forms is mentioned in 102 commitments aimed at, for instance, closing the gap between urban and rural areas, the inclusion of vulnerable communities in access and participation, and promoting gender equality.

• **The development of adequate national plans and strategies** is conducive to an enabling environment to achieve all of the above. There are currently 96 commitments with this aim.



Eliminating inequalities to leave no one behind

Eliminating inequalities is essential for achieving the universal access to services that SDG6 requires and realizing the human rights to water and sanitation. The 2030 Agenda commits member states to 'leave no one behind' and the Mutual Accountability Mechanism is being used by national and global partners to collectively deliver on commitments to ensure that efforts to reduce inequalities go beyond principled words. SWA's mechanism is also a tool to foster inclusive participation in decision-making and the delivery of more equitable interventions. Having diverse multi-stakeholder inputs incorporated into policies and legislation have far-reaching and long-lasting influence.

Governments are using the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to commit to targeting investments to increase access to services for vulnerable and marginalized communities. In Latin America, a region marked by stark disparities, the governments of Honduras and Brazil, for example, have committed to developing targeted policies and increasing funds to address inequalities – particularly for rural and indigenous communities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Government tabled a commitment to improve access to sanitation and drinking water for vulnerable populations by implementing a programme which includes a focus on affordability – a dimension of the human rights to water and sanitation.

There are 106 commitments prioritizing the reduction of inequalities. Nearly all of them were submitted around the time the mechanism was launched, in 2019, with partners having reported progress on 55 of them in the second triennial of the mechanism's implementation. Out of these,

14 were reported to be fully achieved, including USAID's and IRC's initiatives in a number of countries.

In Benin, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda, governments and civil society organizations have committed to creating clear indicators and benchmarks for tracking progress and disparities in access to water and sanitation services, aiming to leave no one behind.

Providing accurate and disaggregated data on water and sanitation access sheds light on inequalities, identifying vulnerable groups to inform targeted interventions and the prioritization of resources where they are most needed to bridge the gap.

The consequences of a lack of access to water and sanitation are often felt most acutely by communities living in rural areas around the world. Since the mechanism was launched, partners from all constituencies in 30 countries have committed to prioritizing investments and targeted programmes to improve access to services in these more remote areas. Other commitments supporting rural communities include pledges to reduce or eliminate open defecation and improve sanitation services in these areas – including from the governments of Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Lesotho, and Viet Nam, and from UNICEF country offices in Chad and Namibia. More recently, progress has been reported in about a third of these commitments – with commitments having been fully achieved by the private sector in Nigeria and the civil society constituencies in Malawi.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

In order to ensure disparities are identified so they can be addressed, the 2030 Agenda states that SDG indicator should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, and geographic location.

In **UGANDA**, the civil society network UWASNET delivered, in 2022, the commitment tabled in 2021 to "undertake a national survey to compile data

depicting inequalities in the access to water and sanitation" in order to inform actions to address root causes.

In **NIGERIA**, the private sector partner Zenith Water Projects also reported in 2022 to have fulfilled their 2019 commitment to collect data on the availability of rural sanitation and sanitation needs in the most vulnerable communities. With a thorough mapping, more targeted interventions can be designed to reach those who have been left behind, and ensure their access to safely managed sanitation and water facilities.

Strengthening sector financing and systems

“Finance ministers are uniquely positioned to transform the water and sanitation sector and make it more resilient. We can invest more, but we can also invest better.”

Mr. ILAN GOLDFAJN,
President of the Inter-American Development Bank

“The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is helping us pull together actors for better optimization of services.”

Hon. Mr. SOSTEN GWENGWE,
(Former) Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Malawi

The gap between the financial needs for achieving SDG6 and the available funding remains a significant challenge. Reflecting this, SWA partners made 50 new finance-related commitments between 2021 and 2024, reaching a total of 106 commitments from all regions and constituencies. In the period between 2021 and 2024, progress was also reported on about half of all finance-related commitments.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism continues to help partners focus on collaborative efforts to increase financial support for the sector in several ways. In 2023, the Secretary General at the Ministry of Energy and Water in Mali, shared that SWA’s commitments process has led to increased political will to improve sector budgets from various ministries, as well as the president. He explained that “Engaging with Mutual

GLOBAL

COMMITMENT: UNICEF, together with partners, will support the sector-wide shift towards the implementation of climate-resilient WASH programmes, based on understanding the risks, developing strong climate rationale, designing services and promoting behaviours to adapt to those risks and reducing the carbon footprint of the whole WASH sector.

LEAD BODY: UNICEF (ESA)

SUBMISSION: 2022 | **TARGET YEAR:** 2025

PROGRESS:

50%

Accountability Mechanism processes has resulted in significant budget increases in Mali and a commitment from the Government to dedicate five per cent of its national budget to water and sanitation.”

Over a quarter of finance-related commitments involve pledges for budget increases – most of them with progress yet to be reported. Commitments also reflect governments’ ambitions to pursue innovative financing and diversify funding sources, including through private sector involvement (e.g., in Brazil, Ethiopia and Pakistan), targeted investments to address inequalities (e.g., in Argentina and Ghana), and efforts to access climate finance. The latter is a rapidly expanding focus area for partners: pledges focused on climate financing appeared for the first time in 2022 and, by June 2024, nine countries had made commitments to work on the required procedures to achieve this objective. For example, in Malawi and Nepal, climate financing strategies have been created, and proposals for the Green Climate Fund are being developed.

Notably, very few commitments specify the sub-sector (water, sanitation or hygiene) that requires budgetary enhancements. This could suggest an opportunity for a deeper consideration of sector priorities, in order to enhance commitments beyond broad pledges, to secure more targeted allocations. Importantly, 17 commitments focus on strengthening governance and sector

coordination in relation to financial flows (for example in Indonesia and Tanzania). Water.org’s global commitment to enhance global policy and regulatory environments is an example of how the mechanism can be used by global partners in this area.

There are currently no commitments focused on ensuring that sector budgets are fully and efficiently spent. Meanwhile, budget execution rates in the water sector are considerably lower than those of other sectors: on average, only 72 per cent of budgets allocated to the sector are spent due to low execution capacity.⁴ A positive evaluation of spending performance, however, can be pivotal in making the sector more attractive to potential funders, including the private sector.

Tabling commitments focused on budget advocacy has been a popular way for civil society organizations to call for increased sector finance and transparency. Commitments include advocating for separate budget lines for sanitation and hygiene and pressing for more participation in sector budgeting. In Bangladesh and Nepal, for example, civil society partners have committed to work towards increasing community participation and inclusion in budget processes.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

In **BRAZIL**, the Ministry of Cities made a commitment in 2024 to support the development of concession projects and Public-Private Partnerships. The commitment aligns with the recently approved ‘Sanitation Legal Framework’ which aims to facilitate private investments in sanitation in the country to ensure that **“99% of the population has access to potable water and 90% has access to sewage treatment and collection by 2033.”**

In 2023, the Government of **ETHIOPIA** reported to have made progress implementing their commitment to increase and diversify financing modalities for water supply. The Ministry of Water and Energy has managed to attract more resources through focusing on environmentally friendly technologies, climate adaptation programmes and improving the capacity of private institutions. **Despite the success, the increased budget is needed simply to maintain current access, given population growth and inflation; to actually expand access to services, further resources will be needed.**

Securing a climate-resilient sector

“As we navigate the challenges of climate change, the role of accountability in turning global frameworks into tangible actions on the ground cannot be overstated. The leadership and work of our Race to Resilience partner, Sanitation and Water for All, exemplifies this need by ensuring that commitments made at the global level are tracked and implemented effectively within communities, ensuring no one is left behind.”

H.E. Mr. RAZAN AL MUBARAK
UN Climate Change High-level Champion for COP28,
United Arab Emirates

Climate-resilient water and sanitation services equip communities to be more resilient to extreme weather events which otherwise might be devastating. At the same time, there are potential opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as recovering energy from sanitation.

SWA’s Mutual Accountability Mechanism has been used as a highly effective tool for climate action. It has helped align climate and sector strategies, supported adaptation and mitigation efforts, and strengthened countries’ abilities to accessing climate financing. At SWA’s 2022 Sector Ministers’ Meeting and recent Conferences of the Parties (COPs), several countries reported to have made significant strides towards integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). These processes are mutually supporting: political

MALAWI

COMMITMENT: Increase alignment to sector strategies e.g., the rolling of the Climate Resilient WASH Sector Finance Strategy, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Water Policy, continuously.

LEAD BODY: Ministry of Water and Sanitation

SUBMISSION: 2022 | **TARGET YEAR:** 2024 | **PROGRESS:****75%**

commitments made at COP summits can be reflected in new pledges made under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism; and climate commitments made under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism can facilitate collaborative efforts across sectors and stakeholders – as they have done in several countries, including Chad, Malawi, Honduras, and Nepal.

At the time of the 2021 Global Accountability Report, only two partners (the Governments of Ethiopia and Malawi) had tabled climate-related commitments under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. By 2024, this number had grown to 32 partners across all constituencies.

In only three years, SWA has seen a significant rise in climate commitments, from five to 50. Today, 1 out of every 10 commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism focuses on climate-related targets. This shift reflects SWA’s growing emphasis on climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation as key elements in expanding access to sustainable, low-carbon water and sanitation services.

Partners are reporting significant progress on climate Mutual Accountability Mechanism commitments, including:

- Applied research and capacity building (Amref Health Africa, University of Technology Sydney, Water Witness International, and academic institutions in Mali and Pakistan)
- Strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration (governments of Burkina Faso, Liberia, Malawi, and Nepal)
- The development of climate financing strategies and readiness proposals to accelerate access to climate finance (governments with support of partners in Cambodia, Malawi, Nepal, and Uganda)
- The promotion of a sector-wide shift to climate-resilient water and sanitation services (UNICEF and the governments of Sierra Leone and Uganda)

The dialogue that emerges from these mutual accountability processes also presents opportunities for SWA global and national partners to broaden their collaboration. Commitments demonstrate how global and regional partners can align their strategies with demands coming from national governments.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

In **UGANDA**, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration have been strengthened by commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in 2022. Collaborative efforts have led to the creation of a dedicated national ‘WASH and Climate Task Force’ which has been instrumental in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of response frameworks and related action plans. As a result, water and sanitation are now prominently covered in Uganda’s Health National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and a dedicated NAP for the sector is under development.

In 2022, the Government of **CAMBODIA** submitted two commitments to strengthen its focus on climate. With support of UNICEF and SIWI, these efforts have led to the development of a strong ‘climate rationale’ to inform the sector. Based on the rationale, actions are underway to build capacity of government officials at national and sub-national levels for the incorporation of climate resilience into service development plans, as well as improving access to climate finance.

By aligning with the recommendations set by the Green Climate Fund to develop a climate-resilient projects, Cambodia and Uganda have been successful in embedding climate-related risks and vulnerabilities into water, sanitation and hygiene sector policymaking and programming.

Contributing to gender equality

SWA's work on gender draws attention to the disproportionate burden women and girls face due to inadequate water and sanitation services. In 7 out of 10 households without on-premises water supply, it is women and girls who bear the responsibility of fetching water.⁵ Their unpaid labour fills the gaps when access is poor, distant or unaffordable. Moreover, policy design is more effective when they benefit from women's meaningful participation and leadership. Accountability towards the needs of women and girls pushes governments to embed gender equality in public policy and programming to achieve universal access. SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism presents a clear route for applying a gendered approach to increasing access to services, also in alignment with SDG5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Despite all of this, gender-focused commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism remain significantly under-represented. Of nearly 500 commitments, only 18 prioritize or mention gender-related goals – out of these, 10 were tabled in the last three years. Tellingly, almost all these commitments originate from civil society partners advocating for gender equality. As of October 2024, only four governments (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guinea and Honduras) have explicitly included gender considerations in their commitments.

Existing gender-related commitments can be grouped around the following broad topics: improving access to services for women and girls (tabled at the global level by FANSA, FCDO, and UNICEF, and at the national level by the Government of Cambodia, and by Honduras and Bangladesh's civil society networks); increasing participation of women and girls in decision-making and policy design (tabled by civil society organizations from Bangladesh and Paraguay, and globally by White Ribbon Alliance); promoting women-led actions through purpose-designed initiatives (tabled by the Asian Development Bank, Global Water Challenge and SIMAVI); and increasing resources for menstrual health and hygiene (tabled by Bangladesh's civil society network and FANSA).

The realization of SDG6 hinges on the consideration and inclusion of women's and girls' needs and voices. The integration of gender considerations into commitments provides a pathway to achieving this objective. This approach may encompass, among other actions, the creation of opportunities for women to actively participate

in decision-making and targeted subsidies to ensure that services remain affordable for women, who often bear the responsibility for daily tasks and expenses, such as water and sanitation. Such measures would constitute valuable contributions towards the achievement of gender equality.



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

In 2022, **SIMAVI** and partners delivered their commitment from 2019 to create a 'Water Justice Fund' to strengthen household- and community-level climate resilience. By focusing on gender justice, the fund supports and creates more opportunities for feminist leadership in climate adaptation. This is achieved through locally led climate adaptation measures and the strengthening of movements to advance learning for sector leadership.

In **PARAGUAY**, the civil society organization **CEAMSO** committed in 2019 to advocate for gender equity in the National Drinking Water Plan and in community water management. In 2022, CEAMSO reported to have developed knowledge products and methodologies proposing strategies to be implemented by community organizations to this end. However, despite these advocacy efforts, the actual incorporation of gender in the sector's national plan by the Government is yet to be realized.



Supporting a focus on sanitation

The human right to sanitation guarantees physical and affordable access to sanitation in all aspects of life, ensuring it is safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, while providing privacy and dignity. Despite this, only 25 per cent of countries are on track to meet their 2030 sanitation targets, according to the 2022 GLAAS report. This lag is partly because when water and sanitation are considered together, the importance of sanitation is often downgraded. From a financial perspective, it is also because it is seldom possible to recover the costs of delivering sanitation services solely from tariffs or household contributions.

Many SWA partners are using the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to help address this imbalance. Around one quarter of the 500 commitments under the mechanism have a specific focus on sanitation since the launch of the Mechanism. Partners from 51 countries, from all regions and SWA constituencies, have made sanitation-related commitments. Ten global partners have also made global sanitation commitments, including Unilever, Container Based Organization, UNICEF, and WHO, since 2022.

Governments are leading the charge, with two-thirds of the sanitation commitments coming from 44 national governments. However, the lower number of commitments from other SWA constituencies suggests that sector stakeholders are not fully aligning their priorities with governments' focus on sanitation.

The two most prominent areas for sanitation commitments are ending open defecation and addressing the financial imbalance compared to water.

Ending open defecation is the focus of 46 commitments in 32 African and Asian countries. For example, Liberia and Indonesia committed in 2022 to eliminate open defecation nationwide. In 2023, Sierra Leone reported only limited progress was made on their commitment to reduce open defecation rates from 17 per cent to 11 per cent. UNICEF has also committed to support governments in Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan to end open defecation, exemplifying how global partners can support multi-stakeholder in-country processes.

The 15 sanitation commitments related to finance highlight budget increases (Burundi, Ghana, Madagascar, Peru); targeted rural investments (Tanzania, UNICEF-Chad, Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency), and the development of financial strategies (Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, UNICEF-Sudan). In Bangladesh, the civil society constituency has pledged to advocate for the Ministry of Finance to approve separate budget lines for water, sanitation, and hygiene, to support tracking sector financing to reach SDG 6.1 and 6.2 targets. Zenith Water Projects in Nigeria reported, in 2022, to have developed cost-effective financial models for rural sanitation schemes, mobilizing private investors. And in Malawi, the Ministry of Water and Sanitation delivered, in 2022, the commitment to develop a financing mechanism and strategy to leave no one behind with multi-stakeholder support generated through the mechanism and the ODF Taskforce.

25%

OF COUNTRIES ARE ON TRACK TO MEET THEIR 2030 SANITATION TARGETS

51

COUNTRIES THAT ARE PARTNERS, HAVE MADE SANITATION-RELATED COMMITMENTS

1/4

OF THE 500 COMMITMENTS UNDER THE MECHANISM HAVE A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON SANITATION

10

GLOBAL PARTNERS HAVE ALSO MADE GLOBAL SANITATION COMMITMENTS

2.2 SECTOR COORDINATION: POLITICAL WILL AND COLLABORATION

Advocacy and engagement with decision-makers at the very highest levels is crucial for elevating political attention to water and sanitation issues. Multi-stakeholder dialogues, facilitated through the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, provide a platform for capturing the interest of these high-level leaders and establishing a clear space for aligning on shared

objectives, such as implementing presidential compacts and similar initiatives. This section highlights the significance of Heads of State initiatives and multi-stakeholder approaches, emphasizing the role of global and regional partners in fostering mutual accountability and driving progress in the water and sanitation sector.

The Heads of State Initiatives

“The President’s Executive Order demonstrates the country’s unwavering political leadership and commitment to ensure that every Nigerian has access to safe water and sanitation, driving progress towards a healthier and more prosperous future for all. Nigeria is also proud to be mentor country for the Heads of State Initiative. This underscores the importance of our partnership with SWA and sets a powerful example of accountability and dedication to sustainable development.”

Rt. Hon. BELLO MUHAMMAD GORONYO,
Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation, Nigeria

The Heads of State Initiatives are a movement supported by SWA, UNICEF, IRC, and the Governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to inspire and support presidents and prime ministers who commit to ensuring access to water, sanitation and hygiene for all, and make it a priority of their mandate. Eleven countries have already signed up to join this movement. In June 2024, this led to a presidential compact in South Sudan, signed by the President, H.E. Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit. Two months later in August 2024, the President of the Republic of Ghana, H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, signed a presidential compact on Water Sanitation and Hygiene.

Heads of State Initiatives will achieve greater effectiveness by defining clear, measurable, achievable, resourced, and time-bound commitments – something the Mutual Accountability Mechanism can facilitate. There are also significant opportunities to use the mechanism to generate structured, coordinated inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder support towards a Heads of State Initiative.

Both governments and non-governmental stakeholders can benefit from translating initiatives into commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. For governments, the mechanism offers an engagement which culminates in tangible contributions from partners with institutions committing to complementary actions that support the national vision outlined by the Head of State or Government. For non-governmental stakeholders, creating commitments which, according to their roles and responsibilities, support the Head of State initiative, will strengthen coordination and accountability, making implementation more efficient and effective.

Furthermore, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism itself can be used to reach up to Heads of State. In Burkina Faso and Uganda, commitments and multi-stakeholder collaboration for their implementation are being leveraged in a joint effort to gain the attention of their presidents and unlock resources. In both countries, the process helped line ministries to demonstrate to their respective presidents that there is a multi-stakeholder and intersectoral coalition working in to deliver on water and sanitation targets. In this way, sector ministries are also demonstrating they are in the position to execute larger programmes and budgets – in the case of Burkina Faso, to end open defecation, and in the case of Uganda, to prepare the sector for the impacts of climate change.

SOUTH SUDAN’S Presidential Compact

In June 2024, South Sudan became the first country to sign a presidential compact on water and sanitation as part of the Head of State Initiatives. The President of South Sudan, H.E. Mr. Salva Kiir Mayardit, declared: “Safe water and a clean-living environment are critical for a country to grow and prosper. Therefore, the Government must provide an enabling environment for the water, sanitation and hygiene sector to develop,

manage and review policies, strategies, and guidelines, including passing the Water Bill into an Act.” The compact contains five commitments which have been registered under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. One of those commitments pledges to adopt SWA’s mechanism to promote the country’s One-WASH Agenda, as part of the National Development Strategy. SWA will continue to support the presidential office and key partners in South Sudan to ensure the Mutual Accountability Mechanism strategically contributes to the implementation of this presidential compact – a major milestone to ensure the rights of all people to water, sanitation and hygiene.

GHANA’S Presidential Compact

As part of the Government’s commitment to improving public health, increasing climate resilience and ensuring that hard-to-reach communities have access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, the President of the Republic of Ghana, H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, signed a presidential compact in August 2024

allocating an estimated US\$1.7 billion annually to water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives until 2030. These funds will ensure that water and sanitation services reach schools and healthcare facilities, as well as remote communities.

“This compact represents not the start, but the continuation and amplification of our efforts; a decisive step to ensure that every citizen, irrespective of their location or circumstance, enjoys sustainable access to these vital services”, said President Akufo-Addo.

The compact subscribes to the principle of mutual accountability to achieve sanitation and water for all and commits to adopting the SWA framework to deepen good governance and sector accountability.



Supporting multi-stakeholder approaches and stronger sector coordination

“UNICEF is supporting governments to implement water and sanitation programmes in over 100 countries in both development and humanitarian country contexts. Between 2020 and 2024, UNICEF supported 51 countries to include WASH into their national climate policies. Strengthening accountability and transparency through processes like the Mutual Accountability Mechanism is critical to translate these policies into actions. As we come closer to 2030, working together with SWA and partners is imperative to bring forward national level commitments through the Heads of States Initiatives.”

Ms. CECILIA SCHARP,
Director of WASH, UNICEF

As much as 30 to 50 per cent of water and sanitation projects fail after two to five years. This is not due to technical constraints, but because of governance problems.⁶ In response, partners from all constituencies and regions have submitted a total of 120 commitments with the objective of enhancing sector governance and coordination since 2019 (40 only in the last triennial) – representing nearly a quarter of all commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. Progress has been reported on 57 commitments, showing various degrees of implementation.

Since its inception, SWA's mechanism has been used as an instrument to foster coordination, collaboration, and mutual accountability among stakeholders to accelerate progress towards universal access to safe water and sanitation. This aligns with SWA's strategic objective to champion multi-stakeholder approaches.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism effectively serves as a structured framework that allows diverse stakeholders to synchronize their efforts under government leadership, commit to their implementation and hold each other accountable for progress. By setting common goals, priorities, and timelines, the mechanism facilitates more effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in the sector. The Director of Water for People in Malawi, describes how, “...with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, you are able to focus, get things done and hold the Government and other stakeholders to account. You can ask questions because there are commitments. In turn, the Government also asks us what we are doing. It is mutual.”

Examples of commitments tabled by partners to improve multi-stakeholder working and sector coordination:

- **Creation or strengthening of sector coordinating bodies.** Since 2019, a total of 21 national governments presented 39 commitments to, for example, engage multiple government ministries, civil society organizations and development partners to enhance coordination and

collaboration in sector planning, programming and monitoring. Significant progress on 16 of these have been reported. For instance, in 2024, the Government of Angola is creating a ‘National Water Forum’ as per their UNICEF-led commitment tabled in 2019.

- **Advocacy for more inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms.** Examples include the Bhutan Toilet Organization's achievements. In 2022 they reported to have made some progress on their commitment to “forge a partnership with the Ministry of Health to reach out to the most vulnerable populations.” And regional organization Amref Health Africa has reported full implementation of their 2022 commitment to “convene national climate change and WASH coordination forums in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi.”
- **Boosting research on multi-stakeholder approaches.** These commitments aim to enhance the involvement of research and learning organizations in multi-stakeholder platforms, boost capacity-building efforts, and carry out research in areas concerning sector governance to reinforce coordination platforms. The University of Technology Sydney has reported they have fully implemented their 2022 commitment to work with institutions in the Asia and Pacific region to strengthen research into multi-stakeholder processes, by undertaking research in partnership with in-country research institutions in Indonesia, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Vanuatu.
- **Supporting multi-stakeholder processes.** Four external support agencies have submitted 13 commitments to strengthen governance and multi-stakeholder processes. In 2022, USAID reported to have fulfilled their 2020 commitment to “increase coordination in priority countries, (...) aligning objectives through mechanisms such as SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism or Joint Sector Review processes.” Moreover, UNICEF has made important commitments to supporting multi-stakeholder processes through their country offices in Angola, Chad, Malawi, Rwanda and Togo.

GLOBAL

COMMITMENT: Build capacity in finance and assist a multi-stakeholder consultation in Central African Republic, Malawi, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda to identify the most pressing barriers and develop response strategies for climate-resilient integrated regional water management (IRWM) policies.

LEAD BODY: Global Water Partnership

SUBMISSION: 2023 | **TARGET YEAR:** 2024

PROGRESS:

100%



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

MALAWI's water and sanitation sector has historically promoted multi-stakeholder engagement. The adoption of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in 2018 helped these efforts evolve into a well-established multi-stakeholder partnership – with government leadership, shared ownership, clearly articulated long-term goals, mutual commitment, and accountability. In the past six years, the Government of Malawi has made significant progress in its commitments to address sector inequalities, finance needs, and climate action, in collaboration with development partners and civil society. For example, in 2024, the Government of Malawi informed the partnership that it had revised the National Water Policy and is in the final stages of reviewing the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy. Among other points, the revised policy will clarify clear roles of various actors in the sector and address emerging issues, including outbreaks of infectious diseases. With support from SWA and other partners, Malawi is also in the process of developing a presidential compact, as one of the strategies to accelerate attainment of the SDG6.

In 2022, the research and learning constituency in **INDONESIA** made a commitment to deliver the country's first ever Symposium on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene. The symposium took place in March 2023, and featured presentations from 40 academic institutions from Indonesia and abroad. For one of the co-organizers of the Center for Regulation Policy and Governance (CPRG), “...this represented a significant milestone in the academic and multi-disciplinary exploration of WASH in Indonesia.” The concept for the symposium was developed with support from SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism catalytic fund, which brought together government institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector in the country in a collaborative research project.

Developing joint commitments

A spontaneous wave of joint (**government-led and multi-stakeholder**) commitments began emerging in 2022. As of mid-2024, 30 joint commitments had been made by governments in collaboration with various constituencies in Burundi, Cambodia, Kenya, Liberia, Nepal, Peru, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Joint commitments are typically initiated by the line ministries working together with other ministries, development partners, and civil society organizations. This trend shows that, as the Mutual Accountability Mechanism evolves, partners are finding opportunities to collaborate earlier on. Under government leadership, they are choosing to embed principles of mutual accountability and commit to more ambitious goals when defining commitments, rather than considering goals and progress solely during reporting and monitoring stages.



CATALYTIC GRANTS TO SUPPORT MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ACTION

In 2022, SWA provided small grants (US\$15,000 per country) to strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms through the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. These grants supported partnerships between civil society organizations and research institutions in Indonesia, Nepal, Kenya, Niger, Paraguay, Senegal, and the Republic of Congo.

Despite the modest sums, the grants had a significant impact by fostering collaboration with line ministries, engaging new sector actors, and boosting advocacy and capacity within platforms. Stakeholders agreed that multi-stakeholder engagement has helped to drive sector progress.

The grants also enabled national research institutions to explore factors critical to effective multi-stakeholder engagement. Coordinated by the partner University

of Sydney, the research⁷ provided **actionable recommendations** for SWA and the wider sector that included:

- **Formalizing multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms**
- **Increasing funding targeted at strengthening government-led multi-stakeholder partnerships**
- **Increasing diverse, free, and meaningful stakeholder participation**
- **Increasing opportunities for cross-country exchange and learning**

The high demand for these grants highlights the need for further investment in multi-stakeholder approaches. SWA encourages global and national partners to explore this avenue and support multi-stakeholder platforms whenever possible.

The role of global partners

“The Mutual Accountability Mechanism helps not just as an instrument, but as a force, to bring partners together, show success, be accountable, learn and make progress.”

Mr. HENK OVINK
first Envoy for International Water Affairs for the Netherlands

The achievement of the SDGs is largely dependent on working in partnership, between diverse stakeholders at national level, but also together with international organizations, donors, financing bodies and multilateral agencies – referred to by SWA as ‘global partners’.

Realizing this ambition requires that these global stakeholders consider the unique opportunities that increased accountability offers them: more transparency, trust, coordination, collaboration and efficiency. To date, global partners have tabled 104 global commitments (53 between 2021 and 2024), which reflect their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of water and sanitation services. Progress has been reported in about half of them, with 25 commitments having been ‘fully achieved’ – which is a higher progress rate than national-level commitments.

By engaging with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, global partners gain visibility for their work to expand access to water and sanitation, while it also enables them to be accountable to those they are supporting. With mutual accountability, interventions are more likely to be effective, sustainable, and respectful of local agency and autonomy.

There is consensus that localization is key to reshaping and modernizing aid.⁸ The Mutual Accountability Mechanism presents an opportunity for development partners to engage in meaningful dialogue with local communities, governments and non-governmental stakeholders and fund local-led initiatives, recognizing and addressing historical power imbalances. Mutual accountability is instrumental to ensuring that interventions are aligned with local priorities and needs, and that they do not perpetuate, for example, colonial legacies or other unequal power dynamics.

NIGERIA

COMMITMENT: Intensify engagement with governments and institutions at all levels to integrate and prioritize WASH into climate change adaptation strategies and policies to promote citizens health and economic recovery for the attainment of SDGs.

LEAD BODY: Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN)

SUBMISSION: 2022 | TARGET YEAR: 2030 PROGRESS: 75%

SWA global partners have a pivotal role to play in promoting engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. It is through their collaborative work with local stakeholders, their advocacy for transparency and data-driven decision-making that they can help to promote more equitable alliances across the partnership, the sector and overall international development initiatives. In addition to making commitments at the global level, global partners are strongly encouraged to engage with and commit to national processes in the country where they operate, whenever possible. Below are examples of global partners already supporting local accountability processes:

- **UNICEF** has always been a key player in promoting accountability and engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. Since the mechanism was launched in 2019, it has made 31 commitments and reported important progress at the global and national levels, through country offices in 11 countries, and is an active partner in government-led joint commitments made in at least 4 countries. Between 2021 and 2023 alone, UNICEF committed to supporting governments and local organizations to prioritize the elimination of open defecation in Sierra Leone; multi-stakeholder and mutual accountability processes in Angola, Burundi and Malawi; and strengthening capacities and climate action in Cambodia and Uganda – just a few examples of how the organization is using the mechanism to strengthen accountability within national sectors.
- **Water for People** has used Mutual Accountability Mechanism processes in Malawi to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and, alongside the Government, promote opportunities for stakeholders to hold each other accountable. In alignment with their global objectives, since the mechanism was launched, the international non-governmental organization is collaborating with the government and the national civil society network WESNET in the implementation of commitments focused on climate, finance, rural water supply and the country’s shift from basic to safely managed sanitation. Water for People is also supporting the development of Malawi’s presidential compact on water and sanitation.
- **Action Against Hunger** and **WaterAid** are members of Mali’s national ‘SWA Steering Committee’. Working with the national civil society network CN-CIEPA, these INGOs have been actively involved in making and monitoring commitments through the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, with notable successes, in the country since 2019. By working closely with various national and international stakeholders, they have achieved their commitments to advocate for the prioritization of water and sanitation in the country’s Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development. Additionally, they advocate for the Government to provide

annual updates on implementation of SDG6-related commitments, thereby supporting better implementation while monitoring their impact.

- The **Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)** has delivered on their commitment to support systems strengthening for sustainable and climate-resilient delivery of services in more than 40 countries, in turn, supporting the implementation of climate commitments tabled by national governments. For example, SIWI has supported the development of national climate and water and sanitation policies since 2022 in countries including Chad, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

THE ‘WATER ACTION AGENDA’

At the UN 2023 Water Conference in March 2023, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was highlighted as a key tool for delivering the conference’s ‘Water Action Agenda’. In response, SWA has put its mechanism at the disposal of all sector actors, SWA partner or not, to contribute to the tracking and follow-up to the UN 2023 Water Conference and the Water Action Agenda commitments related to water, sanitation and hygiene. So far, partners such as the Asian Development Bank, FCD0, Global Water Partnership and the World Health Organization have agreed to reframe their Water Action Agenda commitments following the SMART criteria and table 18 commitments under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to facilitate their monitoring.

As the United Kingdom’s Minister for Overseas Territories, Commonwealth, Energy, Climate and Environment suggested at the Conference’s concluding plenary, United Nations’ Member States “...should build on what is already there and working well. For example, Sanitation and Water for All’s unique accountability platform that enables stakeholders to come together to frame, present and track commitments.” SWA plans to continue supporting the delivery of an ambitious and effective Water Action Agenda as the sector gears up to prepare the next UN Water Conference in 2026.

The role of regional civil society networks

Regional civil society networks are playing a significant role in driving accountability and engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism at the global, regional and national levels. The leadership and expertise of these networks are being used in several ways to strengthen multi-stakeholder efforts and provide visibility to SWA's mechanism in regional accountability processes.

The **Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA)** made commitments when the Mutual Accountability Mechanism was launched to strengthen the civil society advocacy agenda and increase civic participation in regional accountability processes. Their commitments focus on generating evidence to advocate for financing inequalities and tracking government commitments under the SACOSAN Conference, to accelerate progress in sanitation and hygiene in South Asia. To achieve this, FANSA reported in 2022 to have conducted over 100 focus group discussions with eight marginalized communities, resulting in a comprehensive policy brief that addresses their specific needs. The brief has been shared with ministers, national experts, and service providers nationally, as well as in SWA high-level ministerial meetings. FANSA is also empowering marginalized communities directly, working with them to build their capacity so they can advocate for themselves on regional and global platforms. It is also using the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to strengthen its presence and

support accountability processes through its national chapters in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Some of these efforts have been supported under SWA's civil society catalytic funding programme.

FANSA has described how they are "...significantly impacting the sector by strengthening evidence-based advocacy and involving marginalized communities...Leveraging the global commitments process of SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism, we are driving action in South Asia to ensure equitable and inclusive access to water and sanitation services, focusing on leaving no one behind."

"Through the collective efforts and commitment from ANEW national members towards the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, we have been able to inform the tracking of regional commitment processes, such as Ngor and eThekweni, while also establishing the WASH Gender Cluster within the African Union Commission. The regular updates from commitments will further our regional advocacy efforts at these forums."

Ms. SAREEN MALIK
Coordinator of the African Civil Society on Water and Sanitation

In Africa, the **African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW)** has demonstrated effective leadership by collaborating with the African Council of Ministers on Water (AMCOW) and the African Union through a memorandum of understanding. This collaboration aims to strengthen the regional accountability ecosystem. ANEW members from 11 countries have tabled over 40 commitments, and some of these organizations are using the Mutual Accountability Mechanism as a way to strengthen efforts towards regional commitments, such as Ngor and Africa Vision. The commitments have a focus on financing inequalities, systems strengthening and advocating for linkages with gender, health and climate policies. ANEW's leadership regularly meets with its members to elevate their efforts on the Mutual Accountability Mechanism at the regional level.

2.3 EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Ultimately, the most valuable insights into SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism are gained by considering how it is being employed by partners in-country. This section offers a glimpse of how the Mutual Accountability

Mechanism is being used in four SWA partner countries. It shows how mutual accountability processes can focus minds and foster collaboration, transparency, and accountability among diverse stakeholders.

BURKINA FASO

Supporting stability and coordination

In **BURKINA FASO**, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism has been used to enhance stability and coordination in the sector against a backdrop of political instability.

The establishment of a national 'SWA Commitments Committee' has played a crucial role in monitoring progress on commitments made under the mechanism, and ensuring the broadest possible multi-stakeholder engagement. It has enabled collaboration between government, civil society and the private sector, with a focus on eliminating open defecation, and improving water and sanitation services.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism 2022 commitment to eliminate open defecation (ODF) across the country illustrates how the mechanism has been used successfully in Burkina Faso. To achieve the goal, stakeholders at various levels of government have worked together to deliver two key activities. First, each province has developed (and is implementing) a local action plan, based on the national ODF strategy – in collaboration with civil society, the private sector, and research organizations. Second, the collaborative approach has attracted

attention, and is now being strengthened by high-level political support: **during 2024, Burkina Faso will launch a nationwide ODF campaign, under the patronage of the country's political leaders.**

The spirit of cooperation in Burkina Faso's sector has included a renewed sense of joint working across government itself: the line ministry for water and sanitation has signed a protocol with the health and education ministries to work together better and improve sector coordination.

"Since taking these commitments, we have been able to work with different stakeholders and ministries to concentrate and strengthen our efforts around water and sanitation."

BASSINA OUATTARA
Director of Studies, Partnership and Information
Ministry of Environment, Water and Sanitation
Burkina Faso



NEPAL

Building resilience, transparency and political will

NEPAL has used the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to strengthen its water, sanitation, and hygiene sector in several ways.

The Ministry of Water and Sanitation developed commitments in collaboration with external support agencies, INGOs, local civil society organizations, and municipal governments in 2022. The commitments identified clear sector priorities for stakeholders to rally around – leading to the increased political will needed for taking coordinated action to achieve them.

Commitments achieved included the development of a comprehensive Sector Development Plan for 2024–2043, which emphasizes inclusivity, coordination across all government tiers, and mutual accountability through the adoption of SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism. A robust monitoring framework, the NWASH-MIS, was also established, providing disaggregated data that aligns with global benchmarks, facilitating data-driven leadership and decision-making. The commitments have also allowed Nepal to focus on climate resilience. **The country has now incorporated water and sanitation goals into its National Adaptation Plans – with the**

high-level endorsement of the Prime Minister. SWA has provided additional technical support to build on this foundation, helping Nepal identify and access climate financing for the sector.

Stakeholders in Nepal value the Mutual Accountability Mechanism for aligning efforts and empowering constituencies, despite political shifts. This has helped ensure consistent prioritization of water and sanitation, even in the face of budget cuts and cabinet reshuffles.

“The Government alone won’t be able to combat the impacts of climate change. Further commitments and collaboration beyond borders...can bring potential solutions. SWA and the Mutual Accountability Mechanism are the perfect platform for that.”

HON. Mr. UMAKANT CHAUDHARY
(Former) Minister of Water Supply
Nepal



NIGERIA

Ending open defecation with presidential backing

In **NIGERIA**, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism has facilitated a presidential-led, multi-stakeholder approach to end open defecation.

The ‘Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet’ campaign has integrated the Mutual Accountability Mechanism into national processes since the mechanism was launched, using clear commitments to ensure that high-level decision-makers and sector actors are working together. The commitments foster improved dialogue and coordination among government agencies, civil society organizations, donors, and other stakeholders.

The commitment-making and reporting processes have supported the alignment of sector work, reducing duplication of efforts and helping to mobilize resources. Regular multi-stakeholder discussions on progress have ensured that work to deliver sector plans are well-coordinated and supported across the sector.

Civil society has also played a crucial role. This has included work by civil society network NEWSAN, which has replicated the Mutual Accountability Mechanism's processes at the state level, reinforcing local

accountability and advocacy. **The inclusive approach supported by the Mutual Accountability Mechanism's processes has also led to the development of advocacy messages and commitments from political parties to prioritize water and sanitation issues.**

The use of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in Nigeria shows the transformative potential of collaborative working towards clear, agreed objectives – and how high-level political support can be crucial in galvanizing sector-wide improvements.

“The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is supporting Nigeria’s achievements towards meeting the SDG6, in that all stakeholders contribute and support national priority actions.”

H.E. Eng. SULEIMAN HUSSEIN ADAMU
(Former) Minister of Water Resources
Nigeria

KENYA

Accelerating progress through collaboration

KENYA has used the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to lead a revival of multi-stakeholder processes in the country.

Five overarching commitments were defined and submitted under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in 2021, following a sector-wide consultation. The commitments were to: enhance sector coordination, improve monitoring, develop a finance strategy, address service inequalities, and strengthen the enabling environment for achieving SDG6. These commitments are supported by all SWA constituencies, forming a clear and trackable agenda to guide efforts across the Kenyan sector.

The mechanism's processes have supported the development of Kenya's first National Sanitation Management Policy. The policy was developed through collaboration, involving diverse stakeholders – from community representatives to high-level decision makers from government. **The new policy is designed to increase political prioritization for sanitation and specifically aims to reduce inequalities in service provision.**

Quarterly reviews on progress towards the commitments are led by the Government and co-chaired by the national civil society network KEWASNET. Such work to ensure these collaborative efforts are embedded and consistent in Kenya has led to other positive outcomes. These include the creation of separate budget lines for sanitation and the establishment of a sanitation management degree programme – illustrating the broad and growing impact of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in the Kenyan water and sanitation sector.

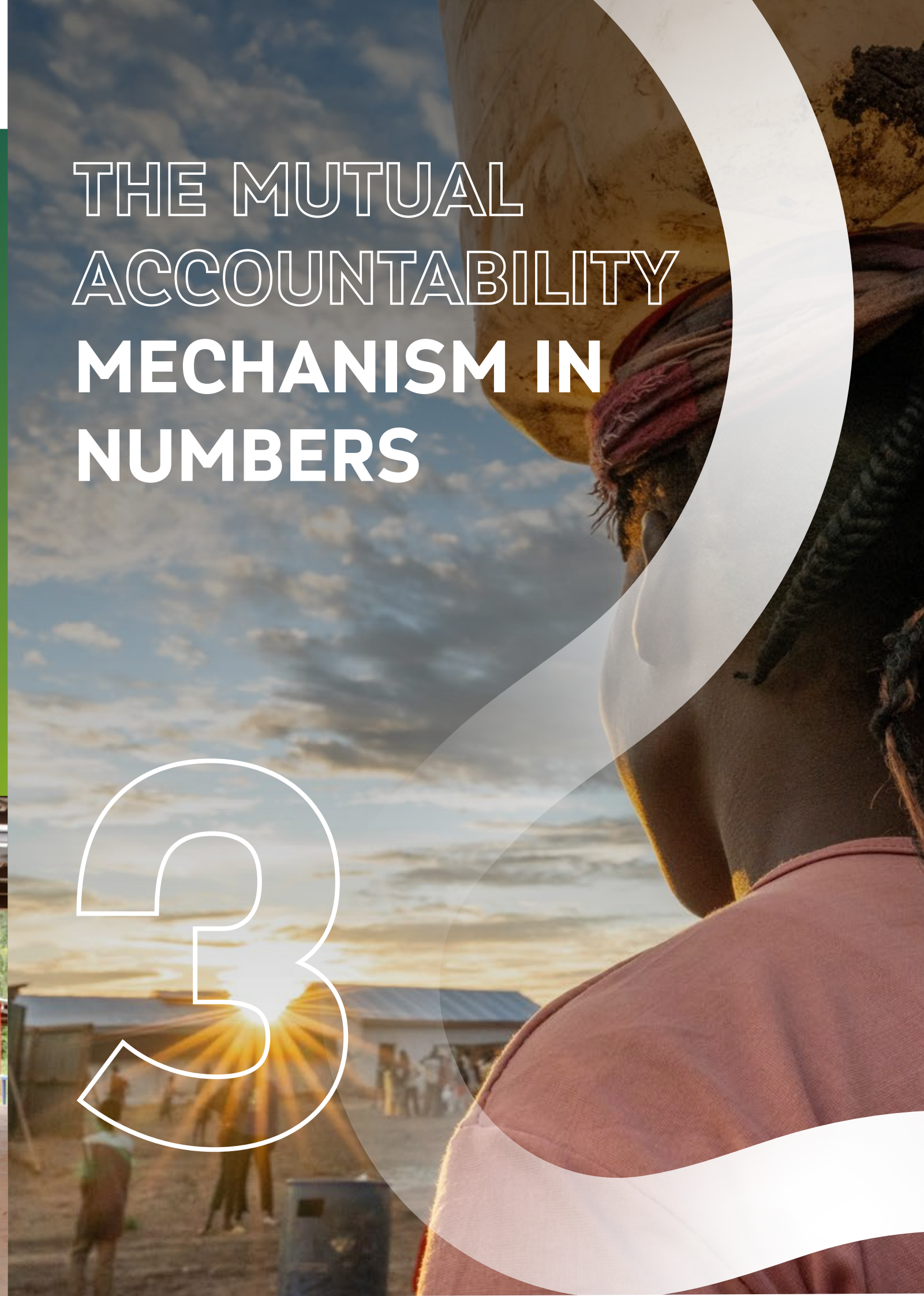
“With the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, both state and non-state actors have become good at monitoring and reporting their progress. It is two-way: we all monitor what we are doing.”

Eng. KIMANTHI KYENGO
Director, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation
Kenya



THE MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM IN NUMBERS

3



AT A GLANCE

Since 2019:

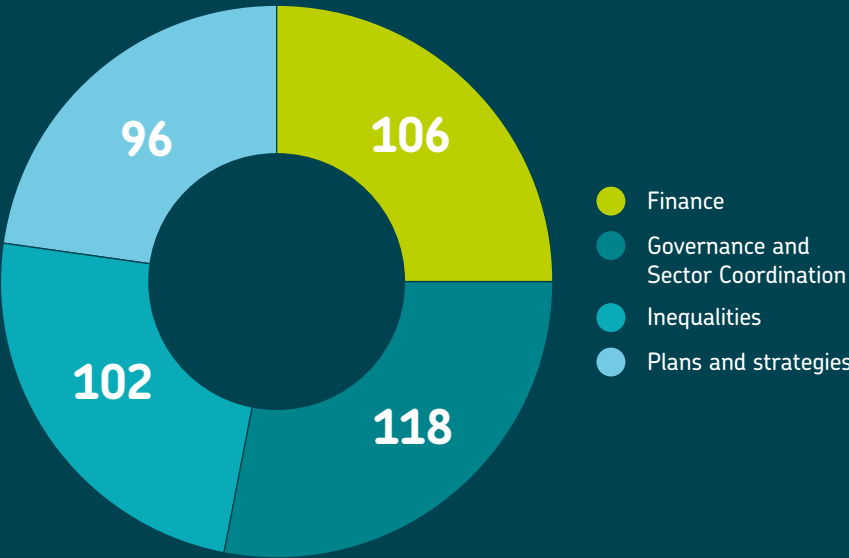
498 commitments across

61 UN Member States from

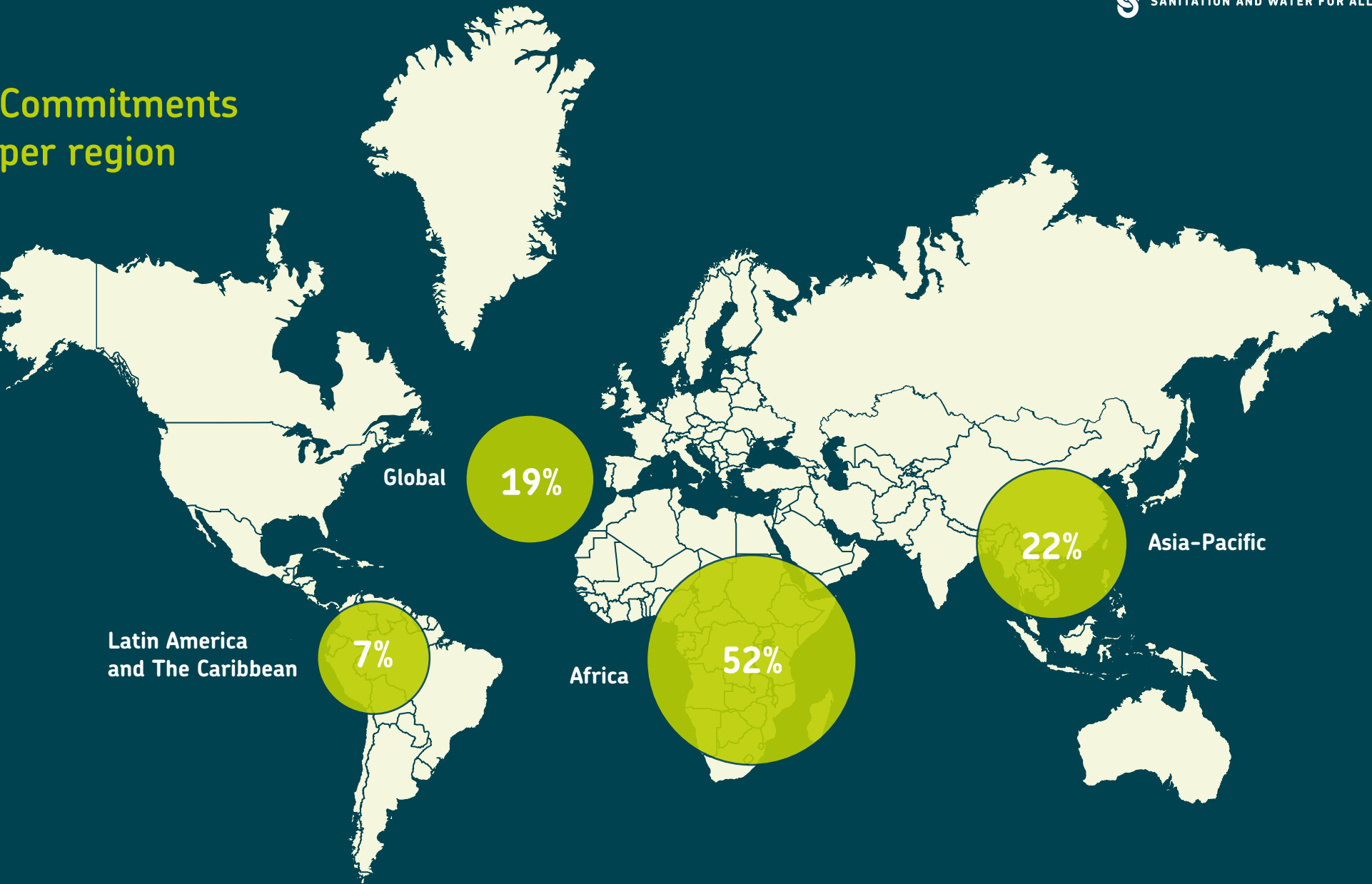
170+ organizations including

53 national governments

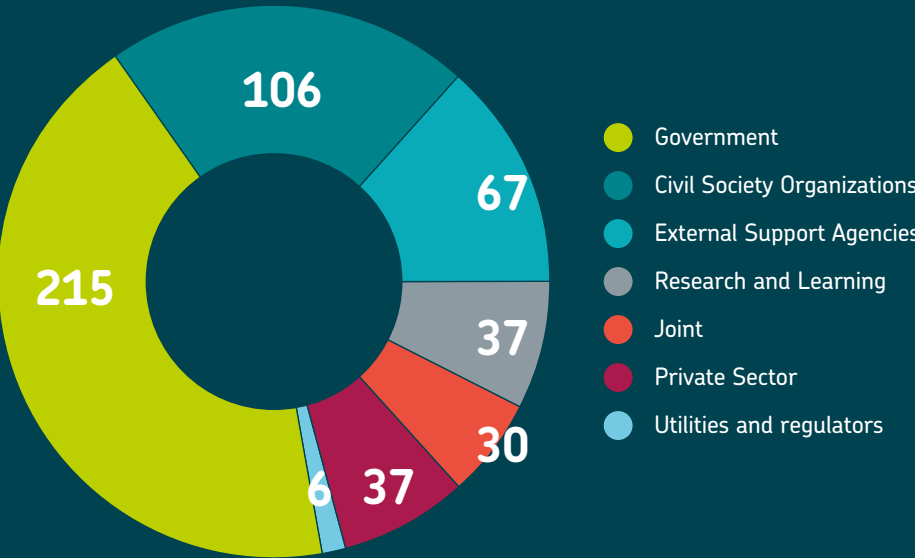
Top 4 commitments themes



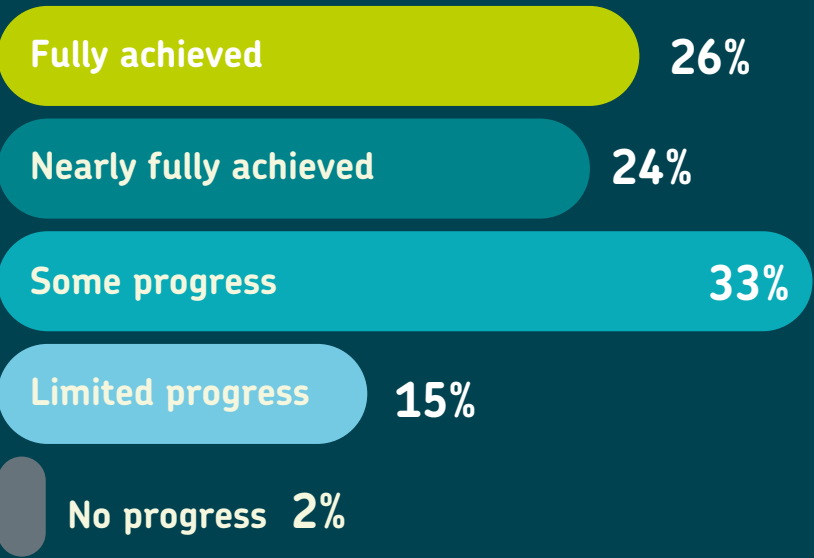
Commitments per region



Commitments by SWA partner constituency



295 progress reports submitted



3.1 COMMITMENTS TABLED TO DATE

SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism translates the concept of accountability into tangible actions, consistently involving the broadest possible range of sector actors. Since its launch, there has been a steady rise in the number of commitments made under the mechanism, as well as a significant surge in the number of progress reports submitted in the last three years – demonstrating ongoing partner engagement. The graphic below highlights these trends since 2019, with key markers in 2021 – when the first Global Accountability Report was published – and in 2024, when the current report was prepared.

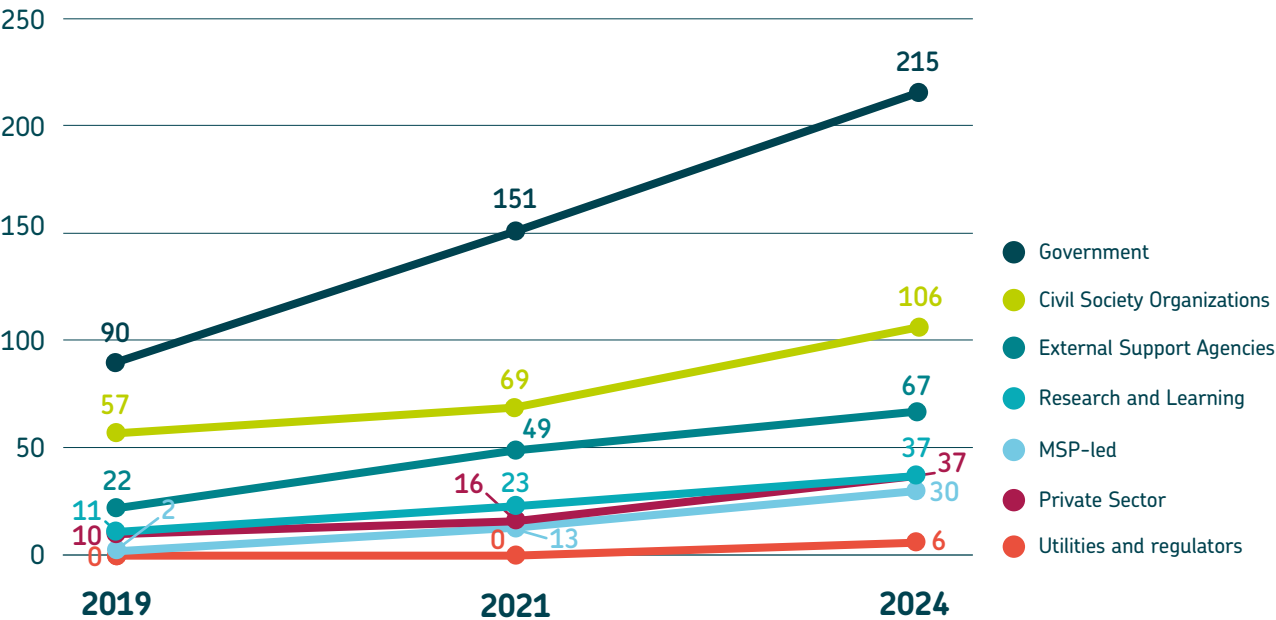
By September 2024, a total 498 commitments had been made by approximately 170 partners from 61 countries across all constituencies, including 215 commitments from 53 national governments. Of these, 185 commitments were made between 2021 and 2024. A total of 295 progress reports have been submitted, 229 of which were reported in the last three years. Nearly half of these reported commitments have been fully or nearly fully achieved.

The preparatory processes for SWA High-level Meetings approximately every 18 months and the publication

of Global Accountability Reports every three years have proven to be important milestones in the partnership's calendar. These activities are driving momentum and creating opportunities for 'accountability moments' among partners through the development and review of numerous commitments.

Over time, the quality of commitments has also improved compared to those first presented in 2019, when the mechanism was introduced. Today, more commitments are defined in a multi-stakeholder manner and meet the SMART criteria, enhancing participation and transparency for monitoring progress. This achievement indicates that the Mutual Accountability Mechanism has gained significant traction and that a growing number of SWA partners have become more receptive to principles and processes of accountability.

Number of commitments per constituency



Note on methodology: The quantitative analyses reflect commitments made since the establishment of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism in 2019.

CAMBODIA **COMMITMENT:** Accelerate access to climate finance for climate resilient WASH actions identified in Cambodia's 2020 Nationally Determined Contributions.

LEAD BODY: Ministry of Rural Development with the Ministry of Environment and UNICEF

SUBMISSION: 2022 | **TARGET YEAR:** 2024 | **PROGRESS:** 50%

Commitments around the world

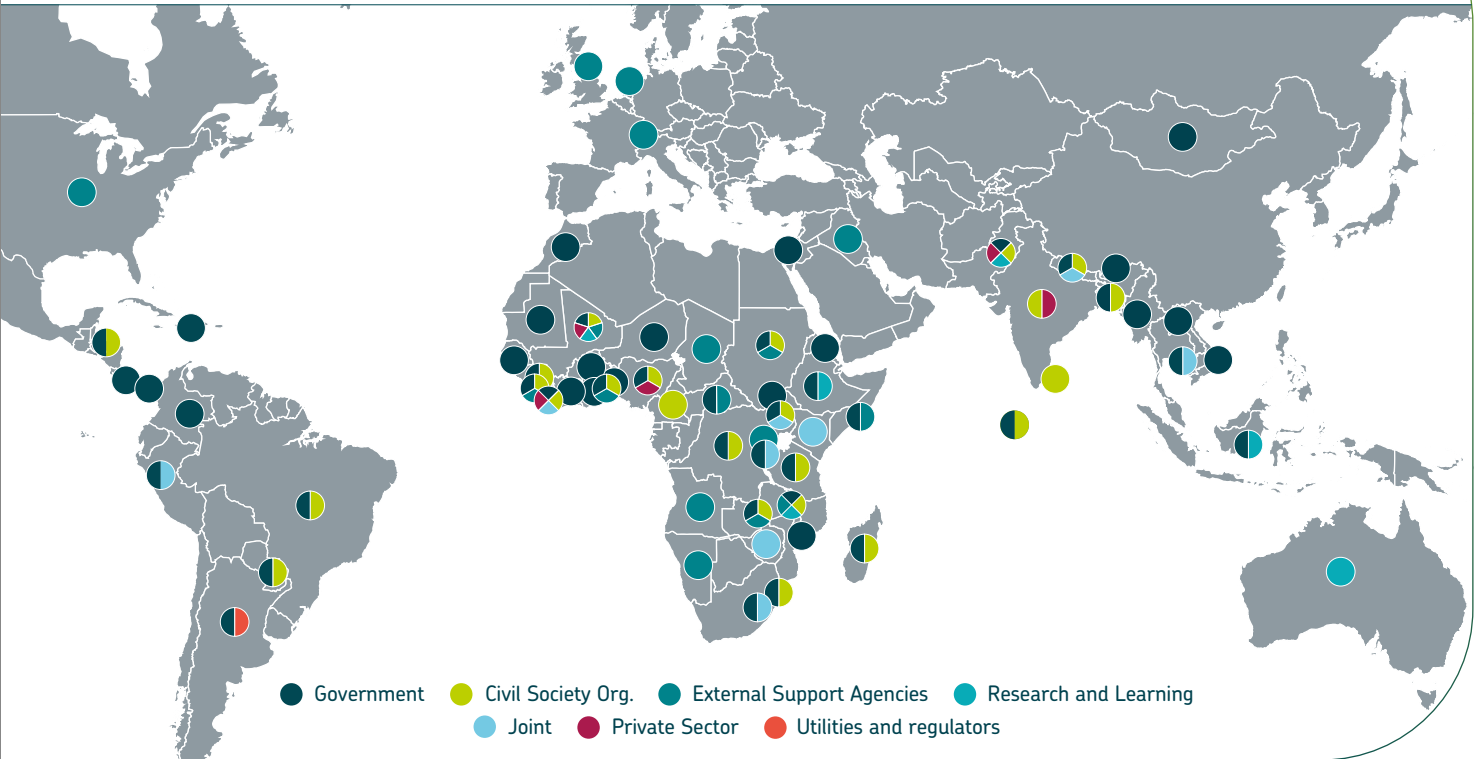
The map below offers a snapshot reflecting the level of engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism, with circles representing countries with commitments, and the colours indicating which constituencies have made commitments within each country. The levels of engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism reflect the history and evolution of the SWA partnership: the majority, and longest history of engagement, of SWA's government partners are in Africa, while in Asia Pacific and Latin America, government partners joined more recently and are fewer in number.

The map shows a clear and direct correlation between the presence of solid multi-stakeholder processes and more diverse engagement with Mutual Accountability Mechanism processes, with more stakeholders willing to make commitments, and hold each other accountable.

Despite its multi-stakeholder design, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism only has commitments tabled by three or more constituencies in 17 countries. While this is an improvement since 2021, it still represents less than a quarter of SWA partner countries. To grow these numbers, governments should make additional efforts to include private sector actors, utilities, regulators, and research organizations in multi-stakeholder platforms and the mechanism, so that these important sector actors are offered a way to actively support national priorities.

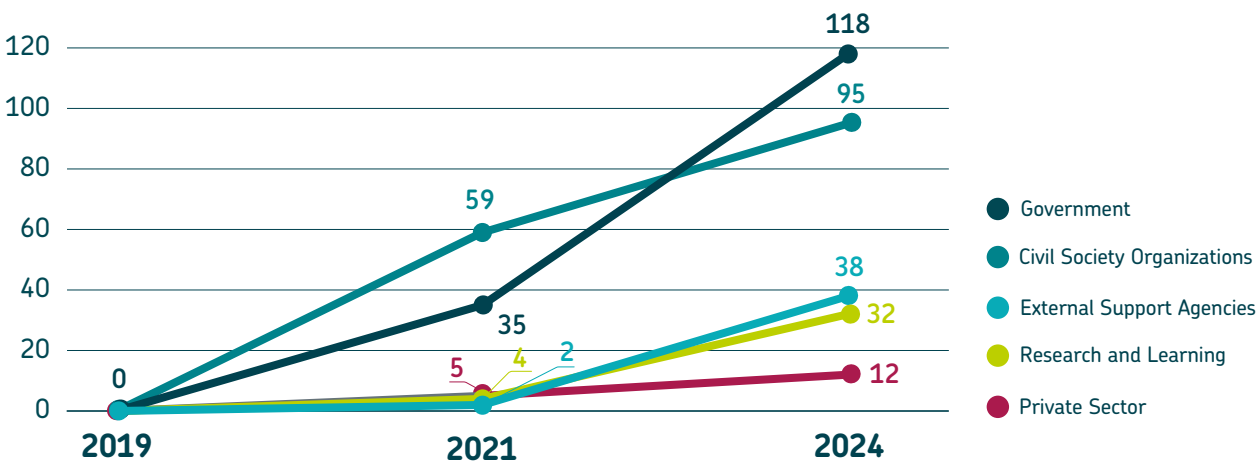


Commitments tabled by country and constituency



3.2 BEING ACCOUNTABLE: REVIEWING AND MONITORING COMMITMENTS

Reviewing and monitoring commitments



Monitoring progress is a vital element of mutual accountability. Mutual accountability involves holding all parties accountable to agreed-upon commitments, goals, or actions. To ensure that accountability is meaningful, it is essential to monitor and track progress regularly. This allows stakeholders to assess whether commitments are being met, identify any challenges or shortcomings, and make necessary adjustments to achieve the desired outcomes. Without monitoring, there is no way to measure whether accountability mechanisms are effective, or if progress is being made.

Currently, monitoring of commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism is conducted through the submission of progress reports. By this measure, monitoring among SWA partners has increased substantially in recent years.

As of October 2024, over 50 per cent of the commitments submitted to the Mutual Accountability Mechanism up until 2023 have been officially reported on. Compared to 2021 figures, the proportion of commitments with reported progress has nearly tripled.

SWA will continue to explore ways to enhance review and progress reporting processes for the Mutual Accountability Mechanism so that all commitments are periodically reviewed. These steps are as important as making commitments in the accountability cycle.

PAKISTAN

COMMITMENT: Reduce half of Pakistan's open defecation rates by constructing 700,000 toilets facilities each year, making Pakistan defecation free country by 2025.

LEAD BODY: Ministry of Climate Change

SUBMISSION: 2022 | **TARGET YEAR:** 2025

PROGRESS:

50%

In order to ensure mutual accountability practices are strengthened, governments and other sector actors need to continue to focus on building or strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms for water, sanitation, and hygiene.

As shown in the following graphic, joint commitments are more consistently reported on because they are usually in place in countries with strong multi-stakeholder partnerships which have embedded the Mutual Accountability Mechanism as part of existing processes.

It is important to note that 96 out of 192 commitments made in 2019, when the mechanism was first adopted, have not yet been reported on. SWA has not declared all of these initial commitments inactive because some partners (e.g., Peru, Panama, and Ethiopia) have recently reported progress on them for the first time, indicating that some of these commitments are still being observed and implemented, despite the challenges faced. Moving forward, the partnership's policy will be to contact partners whose commitments are overdue and unreported on, to determine if they remain relevant and should therefore be reported on, if they need to be updated due to changing priorities, or if they should be archived.

Progress reports submitted per constituency

Government 37%

External Support Agencies 45%

Private Sector 52%

Civil Society Organizations 58%

Joint 69%

Research and Learning 78%





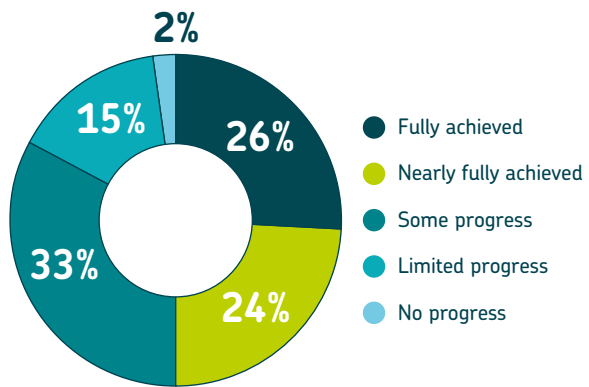
Progress reported

According to the progress informed by partners, 26 per cent of all reported commitments have been 'fully achieved', 24 per cent are 'nearly fully achieved', and 33 per cent have achieved 'some progress'. Partners are reporting success in, among other areas, the development of plans and strategies, intersectoral coordination, climate and education, the establishment of disaggregated monitoring systems and participatory accountability processes, and even budget increases. **The Mutual Accountability Mechanism is supporting governance and finance efforts, leading to more efficient and sustainable results. Ultimately, the implementation of these commitments is supporting progress towards SWA's vision and mission – and to the achievement of SDG6.**

It is important to note that 15 per cent of reported commitments only achieved 'limited progress', and 2 per cent achieved 'no progress'. Generally, partners who have reported limited or no progress cite inadequate institutional arrangements, delays in the implementation of national plans, and unavailability of funds as the main obstacles to implementing their commitments.

To date, external support agencies and research and learning constituencies have reported the highest level of progress on implementing their commitments.

Progress achieved and reported



SWA is also aware that some of the 200 commitments that have not been officially reported on, have in fact been partly or fully implemented by partners. SWA will work with partners to officially record the outcomes of unreported commitments, as described as described on page 39.

AMBITIONS
FOR THE NEXT
THREE YEARS



4 AMBITIONS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Through considering the experiences of engagement with the Mutual Accountability Mechanism over recent years, below are three key strategic ambitions that will guide the SWA partnership's accountability work over the next three years.

These ambitions and recommended actions for the Mutual Accountability Mechanism aim to build on the momentum that has been created. They also aim to address the challenges outlined in this report, to assist partners to unlock the full potential of the mechanism, and to strengthen principles of transparency and collaboration within their national sectors.

AMBITION 1: ACCOUNTABILITY IS A TOP POLITICAL PRIORITY

As SWA increases its engagement with high-level actors, including Heads of State and Governments, ministers, parliamentarians and other global leaders, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism can ground political promises in commitments for concrete action, for which governments and other institutions can be held to account.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Engage Heads of State and Governments.** Strengthen Heads of State Initiatives with measurable commitments tabled under the Mutual Accountability Mechanism to ensure continuous monitoring and multi-stakeholder support towards their implementation.
- **Engage ministers.** Ensure that sector and other ministers play a leadership role in defining, announcing and monitoring commitments tabled by their government and partners.

- **Increase visibility of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism.** Reach out to decision-makers outside of the sector. SWA processes can inspire cross-sectoral collaboration from key development partners in areas such as education, health, environment – and, strategically, ministries of finance.
- **Commit to ambitious action.** Ensure that commitments aim for transformative and lasting change and have high-level political and financial backing, so that their implementation significantly advances progress towards achieving SDG6.
- **Forge connections with other accountability processes.** Contributing to an accountability movement, use the mechanism to seek alignment and strengthen connections with other commitment-making processes at national, regional, and global levels, both within and beyond the water and sanitation sector. Examples include the Water Action Agenda, the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the Universal Periodic Review.



AMBITION 2: PARTNER ENGAGEMENT IS INCREASED

Strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches and increasing engagement with constituencies that are currently under-represented in discussions on water and sanitation services goes hand-in-hand with implementing the Mutual Accountability Mechanism. In fact, as the partnership has learned, mutual accountability hinges on strong multi-stakeholder platforms, with the right institutions and the right people with the appropriate mandate – a condition that has not yet been met in all partner countries. There is also scope for increased engagement of SWA's global partners, with explicit connections to national level priorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Create effective multi-stakeholder partnerships.** Support and advocate with governments and other key stakeholders to ensure that effective multi-stakeholder platforms are established, with members at the appropriate level of seniority and the mandate to discuss national plans and budgets, as well as the authority to commit to ambitious action.
- **Increase resources.** Prioritize multi-stakeholder processes through dedicating human and financial resources to allow the well-functioning of platforms. Global partners can play an important role in technically and financially supporting multi-stakeholder platforms. They can also facilitate
- **Strengthen review and reporting on global partners' commitments.** Review and report on existing commitments. Promote peer-review and exchange opportunities to strengthen transparency in global-level reporting.
- **Align global commitments with national priorities.** Global and regional partners with an in-country presence should support national processes. Country offices can develop national commitments to highlight how they can support relevant national priorities.

dialogue, ensuring that decisions being made at the global level are informed by national-level discussions.

- **Increase stakeholder diversity.** Engage under-represented stakeholders and constituencies from research and learning, private sector, utilities and regulators constituency, as well as representatives from vulnerable and marginalized communities, in multi-stakeholder platforms and accountability processes. In this government-led process, all partners have a role to play, and the 'mutual' aspect of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism can only be accomplished if all relevant actors are involved. Including representatives and experts from interconnected sectors such as food, climate, health, gender, human rights, and others, is equally important.

AMBITION 3: ACCOUNTABILITY IS CENTRAL TO REALIZING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER AND SANITATION

All SWA partners strive to realize the human rights to water and sanitation through their respective areas of work and responsibility. The dialogues fostered through a process of mutual accountability is an opportunity to identify where actions are needed to strengthen the enjoyment of these rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- **Focus on good governance and system strengthening.** Develop and implement commitments that improve coordination mechanisms and measures to assure the enabling environment for the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation.
- **Focus on sector financing.** Increase analysis and dialogue on national budgets to improve the quality of commitments, moving beyond vague requests for budget increases to more targeted proposals. Specify how resources will meet the needs of the most vulnerable.
- **Focus on eliminating inequalities.** Develop and implement commitments to address inequalities, for example, by identifying vulnerable groups, by developing targeted policies, budgets and information systems focused on leaving no one behind. Special effort is needed in many cases to address the specific circumstances of those living in emergency, humanitarian or otherwise fragile contexts.
- **Focus on gender.** Develop and implement specific commitments to address gender inequalities – for example by defining strategies for targeted funding and supporting opportunities for women’s meaningful participation in decision-making.
- **Prioritize climate resilience.** Support and implement commitments to low-carbon and climate-resilient water and sanitation services. Align climate-water-sanitation targets, including by transposing global climate agreements into national policy, such as COP processes and the Global Goal on Adaptation.



CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report highlights the significant progress that the Mutual Accountability Mechanism has helped to realize between 2021 and 2024 – advancing principles of transparency and accountability to further national and global water, sanitation, and hygiene objectives.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism has been instrumental in fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, with countries and constituencies making concrete, mutually supportive commitments to enhance services. Effective coordination between governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations has also clearly been strengthened, and has been crucial factor where progress has been made.

Further opportunities to harness the power of mutual accountability in the coming years include boosting engagement with underrepresented groups, integrating gendered perspectives to delivering services and focusing action – not just words – on vulnerable and marginalized populations. It is also clear that global partners have not yet fully harnessed the significant potential that would come from being held to account by national partners, and

from supporting accountability local processes. These shifts and more will be required, if we are to achieve the equitable outcomes we aspire to as a sector.

The Mutual Accountability Mechanism has proven effective in accelerating progress towards water- and sanitation-related SDG goals. As we head toward the final years of the SDG era, it is essential to capitalize on the momentum generated by the partnership. SWA must continue to foster a culture of mutual accountability, leveraging this mechanism to drive political will at the highest levels, enhance sector coordination, and ensure that commitments are ambitious, and are implemented.

The insights gained from this report will be used to guide future actions and policies of the SWA partnership, to ensure that accountability’s place at the heart of delivering universal access to safe and sustainable services is not just maintained, but strengthened.

We invite all partners to recommit to this effort so that we may achieve our mission of sanitation and water for all, always and everywhere.

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About SWA's 2024 Global Accountability Report

Every three years, the Sanitation and Water for All partnership produces a global report analyzing how partners are fostering a culture of mutual accountability to ensure universal and sustained access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

This is SWA's second Global Accountability Report. It assesses the implementation of the Mutual Accountability Mechanism from 2021 to 2024, highlighting the role of accountability in promoting transparent dialogue, identifying challenges, and coordinating efforts to overcome obstacles toward achieving the water and sanitation targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

More information is available at:

www.sanitationandwaterforall.org



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