

Sanitation and Water for All

Steering Committee Meeting

05 – 06 November 2024

Minutes

Participants¹

Chair and CEO

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

Governments

Eastern and Southern Africa

- Abiy Girma, Ethiopia
- Abera Endeshaw Abebe, Ethiopia*
- Lovemore Dhoba, Zimbabwe
- Makhosini Khoza, Eswatini
- Victor Nyamandi, Zimbabwe*

East Asia and the Pacific

- Chanthet Sokhaeva, Cambodia*
- Yim Chung, Cambodia

Middle East and North Africa

- Majeda Alawneh, Palestine

Latin America and the Caribbean

- Carlos Cueto, Dominican Republic

South Asia

-

West and Central Africa

- Djoouro Bocoum, Mali
- Elizabeth Ugoh, Nigeria
- Massa Antoine Traore, Mali*

Western European and Others Group

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Civil Society Organizations

- Ana Maria Acevedo Tovar, HOMAS
- Barbara Schreiner, Water Integrity Network
- Clair Grandadam, Water Integrity Network*
- Sareen Malik, ANEW
- Syed Shah Nasir, Integrated Regional Support Program
- Yalkiria Pineda Rivera, Redes del Agua*

Private Sector

- Alexandra Knezovich, Toilet Board Coalition
- Maria Fernanda Delfino, Toilet Board Coalition
- Nicholas Igwe, Zenith Water Projects

External Support Agencies

- Joke Baak, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Paul Deverill, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom

Research and Learning

- Daniel Ddiba, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
- Russel Chidya, Mzuzu University

Utilities and Regulators

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Ex Officio Members

- Cecilia Scharp, UNICEF (PG)
- Jorge Alvarez-Sala, UNICEF (PG)
- Rekiya Adamu-Atta, UNICEF (DFAM/FSO)

Observers

- Fiona Gore, WHO (also representing UN Water)

Secretariat and Secretariat support

- Alessia Calderalo
- Ana Homem de Melo
- Anjani Kapoor
- Balwant Godara
- Christine Luby

¹ Participants marked with an asterisk (*) indicate Steering Committee alternates who attended either in place of or alongside the main Steering Committee member.

Minutes: Steering Committee Meeting

05 – 06 November 2024

- Esha Wellakkage
- Filipa Raimundo
- Hope Mills
- Jose Gest
- Kevin Roussel
- Lucia Vidal
- Lucinda O'Hanlon
- Ludovica Bartoli
- Mariana Dias Simpson
- Muyatwa Sitali
- Siddhartha Das
- Soumaya Benbouchta
- Sylvia Osei-Nsenkyire
- Vanessa Gandarillas
- Virginia Roaf

Guest

- Ken Caplan, Consultant, Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework

SC Members and Observers who did not attend:

- A.C.M. Nafeel, Ministry of Water Supply, Sri Lanka, *South Asia*
- Diana Carlos, Secretariat-General of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Action, Portugal, *Western European and Others Group*
- Helene Bragori, Ministry of Sanitation and Health, Côte d'Ivoire, *West and Central Africa*
- Ivette Berrio Aqui, Ministry of Health, Panama, *Latin America and Caribbean*
- Mame Tacko Diallo, POSCEAS, Senegal
- Nestor Girukwishaka, Ministry of Hydraulics, Energy and Mines, Burundi
- Oscar Pintos, Asociación De Entes Reguladores De Agua Potable Y Saneamiento De Las Américas, *Utilities and Regulators*
- Rashid Mbaziira, AMCOW, *Observer*

Agenda

05 November 2024

Session 1: Introductions and Overview

Session 2: Update on 2024 Secretariat Budget and Workplan

Session 3: 2025 Draft Budget and Workplan

Session 4: Update on Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework

06 November 2024

Session 4 (cont.): Update on Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework

Session 5: 2025 Communications Strategy - Learning from the Past and Looking Forward

Session 6: Programme and Strategy Sub-Committee

Session 7: Governance and Finance Sub-Committee

Session 8: Decisions (Executive Session)

Summary of Decisions

Decision 1: Agenda

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

Decision 2: Budget and Workplan

The Steering Committee approves the 2025 budget and workplan and asks the Secretariat to start implementing it. The Steering Committee encourages the Secretariat to start reaching out, as soon as possible, to partners in order to obtain in kind and other contributions, in particular, to the potential host of the Sector Ministers' Meeting.

Decision 3: Risk Matrix I

The Steering Committee approves the revised Risk Matrix as recommended by the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee.

Decision 4: Risk Matrix II

The Steering Committee approves updating the Risk Matrix once a year, prior to the end-of-year Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee also requests the Secretariat to prepare a six-month report for the mid-year meeting of the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee, in order to identify new risks that have arisen, if any.

Decision 5: Governance Document

The Steering Committee approves the revision of provision 3.3.6 of the SWA Governance Document that reads "The Chairperson's term of office may be exceptionally extended by six months, if to avoid a situation where the key leadership's term limits (i.e. CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair) come to a close at the same time."

The amended 3.3.6 provision of the Governance Document shall read as follows:

"The Chairperson's term of office may be exceptionally extended by up to one year by decision of the Steering Committee."

Decision 6: Extension of Terms

Taking into account the UNICEF Hosting Arrangement, the ongoing UNICEF review and the 2025 SWA Work Plan, the Steering Committee approves the extension of the term of the current

Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and all Steering Committee members whose terms of office expire in 2025 for a period of one year.

Decision 7: 2025 Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee approves the following provisional dates and format for the 2025 Steering Committee meetings:

- 17-18 June 2025 Virtual Steering Committee meeting
- 29-30 October 2025 Virtual Steering Committee meeting

Decision 8: New Partners

I. Regarding applicants that provided an update of their pending status from the June 2024 Steering Committee Meeting

A. After undertaking due diligence and having received further information, the Steering Committee accepts the following pending CSO applicants from the June 2024 group:

- Keystone Foundation, India
- Rural Care Ministries, India
- Olohashile en sigle, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH), France
- Blumont, United States of America
- GOAL, Sierra Leone

B. After undertaking due diligence and having received further information, the Steering Committee rejects the following pending CSO applicant from the June 2024 group:

- Water Rollers Africa, South Africa

II. New applications received between May 2024 and September 2024

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee accepts the following applicants:

A. CSO constituency:

- Réseau Béninois du Parlement Mondial de la Jeunesse pour l'Eau, Benin
- Initiative Africaine pour le Développement Durable, Chad
- Women and Children Protection, Democratic Republic of Congo
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Switzerland

B. Private Sector constituency:

- Bawi Consultants, Malawi
- Refill Water Station Africa Ltd, Ghana
- UDUMA, France

C. Research and Learning constituency:

- Asian Institute of Technology- Global Water & Sanitation Center, Thailand

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee requests for additional information from the following applicants:

A. CSO constituency

- Capacitate Human Habitat & Tourism Development, Ethiopia
- Youth and Women Empowerment (YAWE) Foundation, Uganda

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee rejects the following applicants:

A. Private Sector constituency

- Kuzeyboru A.Ş, Turkey
- Mr. Kuldeep Gandhi, India
- Restaurant Le Meulien, France

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

Day One

Session 1: Introductions and Overview

Patrick Moriarty (PM) and Catarina de Albuquerque (CTA) welcomed the Steering Committee (SC) members.

PM presented an overview of the proposed agenda for the meeting. There were no objections.

PM presented a summary of activities discussed during the Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) meetings of the second half of 2024.

The EOC met in July and October 2024 to discuss human resources, team well-being, UNICEF Procedure on Hosted Funds and its impact on the Secretariat, governance, including implications of the new UNICEF Hosting Arrangement and potential revisions to the SWA Governance Document, resource mobilization and the 2025 SWA Sector Minister's Meeting.

Subsequently, CTA updated the SC on the status of pending SC decisions and actions:

- 1) Regarding the study on the feasibility of a CSO Pooled Fund undertaken by an independent consultant, the SC had recognized that the SWA Secretariat does not currently have the capacity to host such a fund and welcomed the offer of regional CSO networks to follow up on the proposals within the study. As per the SC's decision, the CSO Pooled Fund was to be presented and discussed in this SC meeting. Sareen Malik was given the floor and reported that the three regional networks (FANSA, ANEW, and Redes del Agua) have met, and a concept note is under preparation to shortlist potential organizations that can host and support fundraising efforts.
- 2) The SC had requested UNICEF, in their capacity as hosts of the SWA partnership's secretariat, to abolish the position of SWA Senior Advisor (P-5) Strategy and Policy as of 23 November 2024 and create a position of SWA Manager (P-3) Operations. Additionally, the Steering Committee had requested UNICEF to prepare the necessary administrative arrangements for the posts as mentioned above. Finally, the SC had asked the Secretariat

to share the current structure of the Secretariat with the SC. The Secretariat structure and organigram were presented and discussed in this SC meeting (more details below);

- 3) The SC had asked the Secretariat to work with external support agency SC representatives to communicate with GOAL Sierra Leone regarding their constituency status and report back to the SC. An update was provided during the executive session of this SC meeting (more details below).

Decision 1: Agenda

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

Session 2: Update on 2024 Secretariat Budget and Workplan

2024 Workplan update

CTA opened the session by recognizing the notable progress made over the year despite challenges posed by climate crises, economic instability, and the internal restructuring of the Secretariat. She stressed the critical role of collective action in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), noting that only five years remain to meet the 2030 targets.

CTA provided an update on the progress of the Heads of State Initiatives (HoSI), which aim to elevate water, sanitation, and hygiene on national agendas. Key achievements for 2024 were highlighted:

- In Indonesia, a Presidential Instruction directed six ministries to prioritize water and sanitation, with an additional USD 1 billion allocated to expedite universal access.
- South Sudan committed to eradicating open defecation and waterborne diseases through a Presidential Compact supported by local and international stakeholders.
- Ghana pledged USD 1.7 billion in annual funding for water and sanitation, integrating these efforts with climate goals.

Progress in Liberia, Chad, and Malawi toward formalizing compacts was also outlined, while civil society advocacy in Sierra Leone, Mexico, and Ghana further advanced political prioritization. Regional workshops were emphasized as platforms for capacity-building and sharing best practices to ensure the successful implementation of compacts.

The presentation moved to the Latin American and Caribbean Finance Ministers' Meeting (LAC FMM), with CTA emphasizing its role in advancing water and sanitation priorities in the LAC region. The meeting attracted 15 ministers, including nine finance ministers. The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration was highlighted as a key outcome that contributed to messaging for global forums such as the Bali World Water Forum.

SWA webinars, for the African and the LAC regions, were underscored as an effective tool for regional knowledge-sharing, focusing on reducing inequalities in service delivery and fostering public-private partnerships. Additionally, civil society's contributions were acknowledged, particularly in fiscal decentralization discussions and case studies demonstrating the impact of community-driven water and sanitation initiatives in underserved areas.

Turning to global advocacy, CTA detailed progress in elevating political prioritization of water and sanitation through high-profile initiatives:

- The G20 Ministers' Call to Action on water and sanitation was endorsed by the Development Working Group, amplifying global attention to water and sanitation.

- At the 10th World Water Forum, SWA's Global Leader H.E Laura Chinchilla highlighted how uniting political will with action can protect and expand access to water and sanitation amid today's complex challenges.
- The Global Leadership Council was strengthened with the inclusion of Bhutan's former Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Jigmi Y. Thinley.

CTA underscored the urgency of integrating water and sanitation into climate action. Contributions included:

- Building on COP28's success, SWA advanced the UAE's Framework for Global Climate Resilience by aligning water and sanitation policies with climate goals.
- Through the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), SWA's expertise has made significant contributions to the UAE-Belem work program. In March, SWA partnered with UNICEF, under a mandate from UN-Water, to prepare a crucial GGA submission that included initial indicators and methodologies. SWA has also co-led an initiative to gather and coordinate the perspectives of UN agencies on the sectoral targets addressed by the new global adaptation framework, such as health, food, and infrastructure. Additionally, the submission made in June to the Subsidiary Bodies Climate Conference (SB60) included robust indicators meant for consideration under the GGA. SWA's Climate Task Team has become the go-to platform for defining climate-resilient water and sanitation, which is essential for supporting the adoption of meaningful indicators for measuring progress towards the GGA. WHO, UNICEF and GLAAS are building from this work to establish climate resilience standards for water and sanitation that feed into global adaptation metrics.
- On climate mitigation, SWA has championed the role of urban sanitation in climate action, working within the Sanitation Resilient Coalition to make urban sanitation central to the 2024 UNFCCC agenda on "Cities: Buildings and Urban Systems." On climate financing, SWA's Climate Task Team has partnered with the Sanitation Resilient Coalition and contributed to a Green Climate Fund (GCF) Sanitation Annex for the GCF Water Security Guidelines, which will debut at COP29. SWA has also contributed case studies on community-led water justice and female-driven water entrepreneurship to the UNFCCC's Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.

CTA reviewed the Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM), reporting 501 commitments made across 65 countries since 2018. The upcoming Global Accountability Report will be launched on December 10. Around 65% of due commitments have reported progress. CTA emphasized the importance of integrating the MAM within HoSI compacts to align national strategies and improve coordination.

Updates on civil society catalytic grants were shared, showcasing their impact in countries like Mali, Uganda, Timor Leste, Honduras, and Madagascar. Regional networks, including Redes del Agua, FANSA, and ANEW, were recognized for their efforts in advocacy and capacity building.

CTA outlined country-level outreach initiatives, emphasizing partnerships with EU Delegations in Burundi, Senegal, Honduras, Peru, and São Tomé and Príncipe to foster policy dialogue and mobilize resources. The West Africa regional workshop, scheduled for December 2024, was noted for its intention to address political prioritization, financing, and climate integration.

Country Self Assessments (CSAs) were highlighted as a means to bring partners together and assess progress. Four countries have undertaken or are planning self-standing CSAs before the end of the year. The West Africa regional workshop is utilizing the CSA methodology as a

preparatory tool for the attending countries and the Secretariat anticipates that this approach will also be valuable for the 2025 Sector Minister's Meeting preparatory process.

On communications, CTA highlighted the successful promotion of key initiatives like the LAC FMM and the Bandung Spirit Summit, despite resource constraints.

Challenges faced in 2024 included limited resources affecting thematic areas such as gender, youth, and crisis, delays in technical assistance grants, and reduced capacity due to restructuring.

Lastly, CTA mentioned the Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework, which provided critical insights into strengths and areas for improvement and was presented in a dedicated session (more details below). She reported that an ongoing UNICEF review of SWA aims to examine governance, strategy, and financial sustainability to ensure long-term effectiveness.

In closing, CTA applauded the accomplishments of 2024, acknowledging the hurdles faced. She reiterated the importance of unity within the partnership to maximize collective impact and affirmed the Secretariat's commitment to resource mobilization, accountability, and strategic priorities for 2025.

During discussions, SC members congratulated the Secretariat for its strategic activities.

2024 Budget update

PM gave the floor to Muyatwa Sitali (MS) to present an update on the 2024 budget. As this SC meeting was held a month earlier than usual, the financial report included projections for certain commitments through the end of the year. The budget utilization rate from January to October 2024 stands at 70%, with a forecasted year-end burn rate of 91%. Most objectives are achieving performance levels above 90%, except for Objective 1. The shortfall in Objective 1 is attributed to the planned Asia-Pacific Finance Minister's Meeting, which did not take place, slightly impacting overall budget performance. A remaining balance of USD 500,000 will be carried forward into 2025.

For additional information, please consult the budget slides shown during the SC meeting, available here:

[2024 Financial Report slide.pdf](#)

Session 3: 2025 Draft Budget and Workplan

2025 Draft Workplan

PM gave the floor to CTA. CTA introduced the 2025 workplan, emphasizing its scope and alignment with key priorities, including communications, country and constituency engagement, the Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM), the results framework, and other critical initiatives. The presentation highlighted strategic measures aimed at optimizing the Secretariat's structure and delivering impactful outcomes.

Secretariat structure

To ensure the effective implementation of the 2025 workplan, several adjustments to the organizational structure were outlined. Support to the work on systems and finance and the MAM will be integrated with recruitment ongoing for a dedicated position to manage this combined portfolio. Additionally, WaterAid has graciously agreed to have Anjani Kapoor step in as interim team lead on Policy, Accountability, and Results, replacing Lucinda O'Hanlon as a recruitment process is launched for the position which will be housed by WaterAid. Our vision is to keep two people at WaterAid supporting the delivery of the SWA workplan, with an adjustment of their functions. To enhance operational efficiency, the functions of the two WaterAid-hosted positions

supporting SWA will be streamlined. Given resource constraints, fewer staff members will handle partner engagement, maintaining the same level of partnerships despite a reduced team. Filipa Raimundo, responsible for M&E and Knowledge Management, will support CTA in resource mobilization. To further stabilize the Secretariat, a new P3 Operations & Events position will be established and advertised promptly following approval of the 2025 budget.

Programmes

Programmatic highlights of the workplan include a major focus on the Sector Ministers' Meeting, planned for the fourth quarter of 2025. This milestone event will require extensive preparation from April to October, leveraging efforts across partners and countries through the HLPD Working Group to ensure a strategic and impactful agenda. Another central priority will be advancing the HoSI, with activities aimed at supporting countries that have launched Presidential Compacts and securing at least three additional compacts, with an emphasis on Latin America and Asia-Pacific. The HoSI strategy, currently under development, will be shared with the Steering Committee in the days following this meeting for approval.

In terms of thematic priorities, the plan includes a continued focus on climate action, particularly in support of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) under the UAE-Belem work programme. This initiative, extending through COP 30 in November 2025, will involve collaboration with partners to develop indicators for monitoring the GGA. Efforts to strengthen systems, finance, and accountability remain critical, with the integration of these areas forming a core priority. The Secretariat will maintain coordination of the MAM while exploring ways to enhance accountability processes and deepen partner engagement. Additionally, updates to the SWA SDG costing tool will incorporate climate considerations, hopefully with support from the Asian and Inter-American Development Banks. Although an Asia-Pacific Finance Ministers' Meeting is unlikely in 2025, discussions with the Asian Development Bank are underway to organize a regional gathering in 2026.

The fifteenth anniversary of SWA in 2025 presents an opportunity to reflect on the partnership's achievements and invigorate momentum toward 2030 goals. A range of commemorative activities is planned to highlight accomplishments and strengthen collective commitment, with further details to be discussed in a subsequent session on the Communications Strategy.

Sustained resource mobilization will underpin these activities and the broader workplan. CTA will undertake outreach efforts to engage potential donors and reinforce relationships with existing funding partners. Alongside these efforts, Secretariat staff will focus on developing proposals and following up on promising leads to ensure adequate financial support for SWA's ambitions.

Discussions

The discussions initiated by SC members centered on the need for greater clarity in the organigram and ways of working, especially around reporting lines and accountability structures between the Secretariat (UNICEF positions) and partner organizations, and the interaction between the core Secretariat staff and partner organizations. Some SC members raised concerns about staff welfare, emphasizing the importance of establishing a platform for staff to voice their concerns and ensuring clear communication channels, particularly safeguarding issues. Additionally, questions were posed about the proposed upgrading of certain positions within the organigram in the financial constraint situation.

CTA explained the rationale behind the current organigram and ways of working document, noting the necessity of engaging partners to deliver SWA's work plan, especially following last year's SC decision to abolish five UNICEF staff positions. Given SWA's financial constraints, hiring additional Secretariat staff is not feasible at the present moment. In response to a recommendation from the SC, the Secretariat engaged with partners to identify those willing and able to contribute to specific

functions. While acknowledging that each host organization follows its own staff regulations, CTA assured members that constant coordination is being maintained.

CTA highlighted the annual Secretariat retreat as a crucial measure to ensure coherence within the Secretariat and among team members who work for implementing partner organizations. CTA expressed confidence in the Secretariat's ability to fulfill the 2025 work plan. Regarding team welfare, CTA assured the SC members that there is continuous communication with support partners. CTA welcomed SC members' suggestions for improving the visual representation of the organigram and of the ways of working document and asked for suggestions while reiterating the necessity of adhering to UNICEF's legal framework.

2025 Draft Budget

PM gave the floor to MS to present on the 2025 Draft Budget.

MS began by outlining the funding outlook for 2025–2028, which encompasses both secured resources and anticipated inflows based on donor commitments and ongoing negotiations. For 2025, expected inflows are estimated at approximately USD 4.5 million, a decrease from the USD 5.2 million allocated for the 2024 budget. While some donor contracts extend beyond 2025, others are set to expire, necessitating proactive engagement to maintain funding stability.

MS provided a detailed breakdown of the 2025 budget, noting that the anticipated inflows of USD 4 million, combined with a carryover of USD 500,000 from 2024, will fund SWA's planned activities for the year. Since 2022, SWA has implemented a strategy of soliciting contributions from partners to support significant milestones and flagship programs. This approach will continue in 2025, with partner contributions expected to cover the estimated USD 719,000 cost of the Sector Ministers' Meeting. The event will be jointly funded by partners and the Secretariat.

The projected budget for 2025 stands at USD 5.2 million, comprising contributions from partners and the Secretariat. Planned expenditure for the Secretariat is estimated at USD 4.483 million, while total expenses are expected to amount to USD 4.513 million, leaving a projected balance of USD 29,539 at year-end.

For additional information, please consult the budget slide shown during the SC meeting, available here:

[2025 Budget slides.pdf](#)

Decision 2: Budget and Workplan

The Steering Committee approves the 2025 budget and workplan and asks the Secretariat to start implementing it. The Steering Committee encourages the Secretariat to start reaching out, as soon as possible, to partners in order to obtain in kind and other contributions, in particular, to the potential host for the Sector Ministers' Meeting.

Session 4: Update on Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework

PM gave the floor to Ken Caplan (KC), the consultant hired by SWA to conduct the Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework.

KC outlined the framework's three core objectives, as defined in SWA's Strategic Framework 2020–2030: building and sustaining political will to address inequalities in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); championing multi-stakeholder approaches to achieve universal access; and rallying stakeholders to strengthen systems and attract investments. He highlighted SWA's actions toward

these objectives, including providing national support through Country Profiles, broadening outreach beyond the WASH sector, launching the Heads of State Initiative (HoSI) to secure high-level political commitment, and facilitating over 400 commitments via the Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM).

KC explained the review process, which involved document analyses, 30 stakeholder interviews, and consultations within SWA sub-committees and the Secretariat. This process was aimed at identifying opportunities to strengthen SWA's partnership rather than evaluating specific achievements. He emphasized perceptions of SWA as a dynamic and credible platform, deriving legitimacy from its 450+ members and neutrality from balancing diverse constituencies' interests. While SWA's high-level political engagement is seen as highly impactful, KC noted the need for more tailored, substantive messaging to address specific national contexts. Although HoSI shows potential to galvanize new advocates, he pointed out reputational risks tied to unmet commitments.

Challenges regarding the high expectations of the SWA Secretariat, relative to its limited capacity, were discussed. KC stressed the importance of constituency groupings in driving action and suggested fostering a respectful yet constructive tone in advocacy. He also highlighted a lack of in-house financial expertise, suggesting that SWA facilitate dialogues on innovative financing and improve financial literacy across the sector. Furthermore, he emphasized SWA's unique role in connecting WASH with broader agendas, such as climate and sustainable development, and suggested adopting a multi-sectoral communication approach to enhance impact and maintain relevance.

Regarding national mobilization, KC acknowledged the MAM's role in fostering dialogue but noted its ambiguous mandate in the context of other national-level processes. He highlighted the need for linking commitments to strategic political engagement and for increased resources to address reputational risks associated with unmet commitments. KC also drew attention to key macro-political, economic, and social trends influencing SWA's work, such as global conflict, financing gaps, and the push for equity and inclusion. He suggested fostering inclusive partnerships to mitigate political polarization and enhancing financial expertise to address SDG6 funding gaps. Additionally, he called for a transformative approach to equity and inclusion, shifting the focus from infrastructure delivery to systemic change.

In conclusion, KC underscored SWA's vital role in shaping the post-SDG agenda, emphasizing the interconnections between WASH and other sectors. He highlighted the importance of evidence-based investment strategies and suggested leveraging SWA's political influence while balancing ambition with actionable goals at global and national levels.

Day Two

Introductory statement by CTA

CTA commenced the meeting by addressing unresolved questions from Day 1, which had been postponed due to time constraints. She highlighted the crucial role of the SC in guiding the Partnership, emphasizing its importance in managing risks and supporting the Secretariat during challenging times. CTA expressed pride in the Secretariat's resilience and accomplishments despite operating under significant constraints, including the loss of one-third of its staff and a period during the year when only half the team was in place.

Despite these challenges, the Secretariat successfully delivered key milestones. These included the LAC FMM, the development of three HoSI compacts, progress in communications with a reduced team, advancements in climate action, and robust support for partners. Additionally, for the first time, water and sanitation were prioritized in the G20 agenda, a significant achievement. The Secretariat also met its workplan objectives while maintaining operational efficiency by restructuring

internal functions. Concurrently, the team intensified its efforts in resource mobilization, a considerable challenge under the circumstances. CTA thanked all Secretariat members for their unwavering commitment and dedication.

Addressing financial matters, CTA clarified concerns about a budgetary gap related to staff position upgrades noted in the organizational chart and ways of working document. These upgrades were approved by the SC in 2019, conditional upon budget availability. Since then, budget limitations have prevented their implementation, although the organigram continues to reflect these positions as a commitment to the planned upgrades. She also explained discrepancies between the 2025 budget presented to the UNICEF FSO and the version shared with the SC. The budget submitted to UNICEF FSO, as per their instructions, excluded partner transfer costs, while the SC's version included them. She confirmed that UNICEF had been provided with the complete budget for reference.

On the topic of staff well-being and representation, CTA outlined existing mechanisms to support the Secretariat team. A staff representative was elected following UNICEF's invitation to all hosted funds, and team leads play a vital role in addressing staff concerns. Additionally, a formal and confidential complaint mechanism, managed by the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee, allows Secretariat colleagues and SWA partners to raise concerns. To date, no complaints have been reported. CTA also noted that each support partner organization is responsible for the welfare of its staff and consultants, with any issues being escalated to the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee Chair or CTA. To ensure staff satisfaction, the Secretariat works with an organizational advisor who engages confidentially with team members across different levels and teams.

Lastly, CTA addressed feedback on the SWA organigram and the depiction of the Secretariat's workflows, presented on Day 1. She acknowledged the difficulty in clearly illustrating the team's way of working on the document and welcomed suggestions from SC members to improve its clarity and presentation in the weeks following the meeting.

Session 4 (cont.): Update on Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework

PM gave the floor to CTA. CTA emphasized the assessment's importance as a key contribution to shaping the partnership's future direction. CTA explained that the Secretariat had reflected on the report during a retreat in July, where feedback was provided to Ken, inspiring several strategic insights regarding the partnership's trajectory.

CTA highlighted three primary strengths of the partnership, which are closely interconnected. First, Leading and Reaching Up was identified as a core strength. CTA explained that SWA's engagement with high-level decision-makers has expanded from focusing primarily on ministers to Heads of State and Government. This evolution reflects a broader, multi-sectoral approach extending beyond water and sanitation to encompass global advocacy. CTA noted that tools such as the HoSI, which launched three compacts this year, aim to translate political commitments into tangible outcomes. Similarly, CTA underscored the significance of High-Level Meetings (HLMs) as mechanisms to connect global decisions with national action. CTA further highlighted the MAM as a critical framework facilitating structured collaboration among partners before and after milestones such as HoSI launches and HLMs.

Second, CTA discussed Connecting and Building Partnerships, noting that SWA's impartial coordination role is widely appreciated, particularly in advocating for climate action. This leadership has enabled SWA to unite diverse stakeholders to make joint contributions to critical climate processes, especially within the UNFCCC framework. While identifying potential for exploring additional cross-cutting themes among partners, CTA also cautioned that coordination efforts

require careful consideration of resource demands, including time, energy, and finances. CTA emphasized the challenges of efficiently linking partners' efforts given the Secretariat's limited resources.

Third, CTA addressed Inspiring and Motivating Action, highlighting the value of SWA's ability to facilitate knowledge exchanges among its 500+ partners. Through Ministerial Dialogues, side events, and webinars, SWA offers a platform to share best practices and lessons learned. However, CTA acknowledged the challenges of catering to the diverse and evolving interests of partners and suggested further reflection on leveraging the platform to advance priority areas effectively.

Looking ahead, CTA outlined the Secretariat's intention to maintain a focused approach through 2025, prioritizing the HoSI; High-Level Meetings, including the Sector Ministers' Meeting (SMM); Global Advocacy efforts such as the G20 and the UN Water Conference 2026; Finance Advocacy, Mutual Accountability; and Climate Action. CTA emphasized that these areas would demand the majority of the Secretariat's resources and time.

CTA then discussed the need to streamline the partnership's governance structure to improve financial and human resource efficiency. CTA explained that discussions with other hosted funds revealed a trend toward reducing governance bodies to enhance effectiveness. Several proposals were presented, including establishing a smaller but representative Steering Committee, reducing governance layers, and introducing clearer mechanisms for partners to collaborate on specific, time-bound activities. CTA underscored the importance of creative thinking to improve operations and to share responsibilities more effectively between the Secretariat and partners. Acknowledging the challenges of partnership work, as highlighted by Ken, CTA emphasized the need to refine roles and responsibilities to enhance collaboration.

Finance was singled out as a distinct and critical focus area. CTA noted that engaging finance ministers has been central to SWA's mission since its inception, and while SWA has successfully convened finance ministers at High-Level Meetings, the Secretariat lacks the resources to exert significant influence in broader financial discussions. CTA emphasized the importance of aligning closely with partners engaged in financial advocacy to sustain impact in this domain.

Concluding the presentation, CTA invited Steering Committee members to share their reflections and suggestions. Members provided valuable insights on balancing the partnership's ambitions with available resources and enhancing collaboration for greater impact. CTA thanked the members for their contributions and reaffirmed the Secretariat's commitment to integrating their feedback into ongoing planning.

Session 5: 2025 Communications Strategy – Learning from the Past and Looking Forward

Hope Mills (HM) presented the Communications Strategy 2025, outlining plans to strengthen SWA's brand and advocacy as it approaches its 15th anniversary. The strategy focuses on advancing SWA's influence and impact during the final five years before the UN Sustainable Development Goals deadline. Key efforts include enhanced editorial content, social media, newsletters, media outreach, executive communications, and the launch of a new website in partnership with UNICEF. HM also noted the establishment of communication sub-teams in Q1 2025 to support storytelling and information-sharing across the Partnership.

HM highlighted the following key initiatives:

1. 15th Anniversary Activities: A dedicated anniversary brand will be developed, complemented by updated collateral, a simplified "About SWA" brochure, a strategically revised annual report, and a new content-driven website.

2. 15 Stories for 15 Years: A series of 15 long-form stories will showcase SWA's impact and progress toward SDG6, shared via newsletters, social media, and resource mobilization efforts.
3. Updated Handbook on Human Rights to Water and Sanitation: The handbook will be reissued to mark its 10th anniversary, with proposed additions on topics like climate action and new illustrations to enhance engagement.
4. Podcast Series: A proposed 15-episode podcast will explore themes such as human rights, climate change, gender equality, and economic growth, contingent on sponsorship funding.
5. High-Level Meetings and Events:
 - Sector Ministers' Meeting (SMM): Scheduled for Q4 2025, the meeting will feature location-based branding, interviews with key attendees, and follow-up content.
 - Heads of State Initiatives: Efforts will focus on storytelling around compacts, from inception to post-signing, and emphasizing political will in global conversations.
 - External Events: Strategies will maximize impact through pre- and post-event interviews and content.
6. Quarterly Thematic Strategies: Communications will prioritize framing narratives on climate, gender, and human rights, coordinating with colleagues to produce articles, media pitches, and campaigns.
7. Global Leadership Council Engagement: Council members will be activated through quarterly initiatives, such as speaking engagements, interviews, or op-eds, to amplify SWA's voice in global discussions.
8. Resource Mobilization: Collaboration with the CEO will target non-technical audiences aligned with SWA's values on climate, gender, and human rights to secure new support.

Session 6: Programme and Strategy Sub-Committee

PM handed over the floor to Nicholas Igwe (NI). NI provided an update on the progress of the Sub-Committee workplan for 2024. Key progress was achieved in organizing and guiding the Working Groups and Task Teams under the PSSC, as well as in supporting the Mid-Term Assessment of SWA's 2020-2030 Strategic Framework. However, no advancements were reported in supporting SWA outreach due to the establishment of a new communications team in August 2024 and the ongoing development of a communications strategy. Similarly, continuity of high-level meetings saw no progress, as discussions on linkages between these meetings did not occur in 2024, and the Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Work Group (MSCWG) has been inactive due to the absence of a Chair.

The PSSC's 2025 workplan prioritizes two key areas: ensuring the continuity of high-level meetings and providing robust support for the organization and guidance of its Work Groups and Task Teams. NI presented detailed 2025 workplans for these entities.

For the High-Level Political Dialogue (HLPD), the 2025 workplan focuses on following results:

- Engaging the CEO and other SWA representatives to elevate the profile of water and sanitation in global events and forums.
- Supporting the successful execution of the Sector Ministers' Meeting in 2025.
- Preparing for the Finance Ministers Meeting (FMM) for the Asia-Pacific region in 2026.
- Coordinating SWA's participation in UN Water Week 2026.

- Linking the HoSI to high-level events to amplify its impact.

For the Systems and Finance Work Group (SFWG), the 2025 workplan aims to achieve the following results:

- Enhance understanding of systems thinking as applied to financing in the water and sanitation sector.
- Increase water and sanitation's profile as a priority sector within each of the participating countries.
- Provide insights and evidence to ignite multi-stakeholder platforms at the country level with a focus on systems and finance.

Regarding the MSCWG, NI noted that this Work Group has lacked a Chair for several months, causing a halt in activities. To address this, NI is convening a meeting on November 13 to revive the group's efforts.

The Climate Task Team's 2025 workplan includes:

- Defining climate-resilient water and sanitation services for the sector.
- Support members in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)
- Taking forward the outcomes of COP 29 and actively engaging in COP 30 processes.
- Disseminating good practices across the sector.

Session 7: Governance and Finance Sub-Committee

Barbara Schreiner (BS) started by presenting the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee (GFSC) workplan for 2024. Significant strides were made in managing governance and reputational risks, ensuring adequate financial and performance oversight of the Secretariat, securing the Partnership's financial stability for four years, and overseeing the implementation of audits and reviews. However, progress on enhancing planning processes and governance structures was slower, with some actions pending follow-up related to hosting arrangements with UNICEF.

The 2025 work plan for the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee (GFSC) encompasses the following priorities: (i) responsible management of governance and reputational risks, (ii) robust financial and performance oversight of the Secretariat, (iii) improvement of processes and governance structures, (iv) oversight of audit and review implementation, (v) renewal of membership for the Grants Review Committee (GRC), and (vi) rotation of Work Group Chair and Co-Chair positions.

BS outlined discussions within the GFSC regarding the Risk Matrix. The committee proposed that the Steering Committee (SC) adopt a decision to review the Risk Matrix annually before the end-of-year SC meeting. Additionally, the Secretariat would be required to prepare a six-month report for the mid-year GFSC meeting to identify any new risks. This adjustment reflects concerns that the current practice of updating the Risk Matrix four times per year was disproportionate to the size of SWA and the Secretariat's capacity.

BS further noted that in light of an upcoming UNICEF review with potential implications for governance structures, the GFSC recommended postponing elections until governance-related decisions are finalized. To facilitate this, the GFSC proposed revising the Governance Document to allow for the extension of the Chair's term by up to one year. A related SC decision was suggested to extend the terms of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and all SC members for up to one year.

Regarding the GRC, BS provided an update on the progress of the 2024 work plan. Positive developments were reported in reviewing reports from 2023 CSO catalytic funding recipients and recommending CSOs for catalytic funding in 2024. However, challenges were noted in other areas, including reviewing reports from 2022 technical assistance grant recipients, and addressing technical assistance grants for Objective 3 in 2024. Delays in fund disbursement to recipients contributed to these challenges, although the Secretariat actively managed follow-up actions despite the GRC not convening to discuss these matters. No progress was reported on addressing unplanned catalytic funding opportunities for 2024, as no such opportunities arose.

BS also presented the proposed 2025 GRC work plan, which includes the following activities: (i) review of reports from 2024 technical assistance grant recipients for Objective 3, (ii) review of reports from CSO catalytic funding recipients from 2023 and 2024, (iii) recommendation of CSOs for catalytic funding in 2025, contingent on funding availability, (iv) recommendation of technical assistance grants for Objective 3 in 2025, also funding-dependent, and (v) addressing catalytic funding opportunities outside planned activities, subject to available resources.

Decision 3: Risk Matrix I

The Steering Committee approves the revised Risk Matrix as recommended by the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee.

Decision 4: Risk Matrix II

The Steering Committee approves updating the Risk Matrix once a year, prior to the end-of-year Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee also requests the Secretariat to prepare a six-month report for the mid-year meeting of the Governance and Finance Sub-Committee, in order to identify new risks that have arisen, if any.

Decision 5: Governance Document

The Steering Committee approves the revision of provision 3.3.6 of the SWA Governance Document that reads “The Chairperson’s term of office may be exceptionally extended by six months, if to avoid a situation where the key leadership’s term limits (i.e. CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair) come to a close at the same time.”

The amended 3.3.6 provision of the Governance Document shall read as follows:

“The Chairperson’s term of office may be exceptionally extended by up to one year by decision of the Steering Committee.”

Decision 6: Extension of Terms

Taking into account the UNICEF Hosting Arrangement, the ongoing UNICEF review and the 2025 SWA Work Plan, the Steering Committee approves the extension of the term of the current Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and all Steering Committee members whose terms of office expire in 2025 for a period of one year.

Session 8: Decisions (Executive Session)

PM announced the beginning of the Executive Session. He thanked the observers for their participation and confirmed *quorum* for decision-making. He then went through the proposed decisions.

There was a discussion regarding the wording of decisions 4, 5, 6 and 7, with new wording being agreed. There was the need to update decision 8 (New Partners) in order to include GOAL Sierra Leone, seeing as there had been a delay in reply by this organization, and thus they had not been included in the draft decision.

All decisions were adopted by consensus.

The CEO, Secretariat, and Steering Committee performance evaluation was not presented, due to low participation from SC members. SC members were urged to fill out the survey and the results will be shared in due time.

Decision 7: 2025 Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee approves the following provisional dates and format for the 2025 Steering Committee meetings:

- 17-18 June 2025 Virtual Steering Committee meeting
- 29-30 October 2025 Virtual Steering Committee meeting

Decision 8: New Partners

- I. Regarding applicants that provided an update of their pending status from the June 2024 Steering Committee Meeting

After undertaking due diligence and having received further information, the Steering Committee accepts the following pending CSO applicants from the June 2024 group:

- Keystone Foundation, India
- Rural Care Ministries, India
- Olohashile en sigle, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Association d'Aide à l'Education de l'Enfant Handicapé (AAEEH), France
- Blumont, United States of America
- GOAL, Sierra Leone

- A. After undertaking due diligence and having received further information, the Steering Committee rejects the following pending CSO applicant from the June 2024 group:

- Water Rollers Africa, South Africa

II. New applications received between May 2024 and September 2024

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee accepts the following applicants:

A. CSO constituency:

- Réseau Béninois du Parlement Mondial de la Jeunesse pour l'Eau, Benin
- Initiative Africaine pour le Développement Durable, Chad
- Women and Children Protection, Democratic Republic of Congo
- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Switzerland

B. Private Sector constituency:

- Bawi Consultants, Malawi

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- Refill Water Station Africa Ltd, Ghana
 - UDUMA, France
- C. Research and Learning constituency:
- Asian Institute of Technology- Global Water & Sanitation Center, Thailand

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee requests for additional information from the following applicants:

- A. CSO constituency
- Capacitate Human Habitat & Tourism Development, Ethiopia
 - Youth and Women Empowerment (Yawe) Foundation, Uganda

After reviewing the applications against the due diligence criteria, the Steering Committee rejects the following applicants:

- A. Private Sector constituency
- Kuzebyboru A.Ş, Turkey
 - Mr. Kuldeep Gandhi, India
 - Restaurant Le Meulien, France

Before ending the meeting, PM thanked the SC for all the time they put in for the meeting and the engaging discussions.