

**A joint letter from private sector, civil society and academic organisations to the
United Nations' Open Working Group on Post-2015**

Dear Ambassadors Kamau and Kőrösi,

WASH in the Post-2015 agenda: Driving effective action on Sustainable Development

As organisations working to deliver progress on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), we applaud the Open Working Group (OWG) for including within their Zero Draftⁱ a dedicated focus area on Water and Sanitation and a target on delivering WASH for all.

Translating this vision into action – and this action into lasting progress – will require a global framework that is comprehensive, outcome-orientated and has clear means of implementation at a global and local level.

Well-defined targets, which offer clarity of purpose and measurability, are essential to galvanising the innovative delivery models, public-private partnerships and financing needed to achieve sustainable solutions at scale.

In this respect, we urge the OWG to further refine Focus area 6 (Water and Sanitation) so that it fully incorporates the composite target and indicators agreed following extensive consultations led by WHO and UNICEFⁱⁱ. We attach a copy of this document for you to read.

Developed in consultation with over 60 WASH sector experts and informed by learnings from the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) period, the proposal addresses the shortcomings of existing targets and, in doing so, tackles the unfinished business of the MDGs while also striving far beyond: to a future of universal access to WASH.

Target by 2030:

- **to eliminate open defecation**
- **to achieve universal access to basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for households, schools and health facilities**
- **to halve the proportion of the population without access at home to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services**
- **to progressively eliminate inequalities in access**

The target is underpinned by indicators which highlight the importance of access to drinking water, sanitation, handwashing with soap and menstrual hygiene management facilities across a range of settings. The indicators also focus on the sustainability and progressive improvement of solutions and call for disaggregated indicators to help promote equality of access.

Why WASH matters – the value of a comprehensive agenda.

Good WASH provision is a precondition for inclusive and sustainable development. The linkages between improvements in WASH and the achievement of poverty-related goals - nutrition, health, education and gender equality - are well-documented and provide evidence-based support for inclusion of a comprehensive set of WASH targets within the Post-2015 framework.

For instance, studies show that lack of access to sanitation and poor hygiene contributes to approximately 88% of the childhood deaths caused by diarrheal diseases.ⁱⁱⁱ Diarrhoea is also responsible

for children missing 272 million school days each year^{iv} and is a key factor in malnutrition and stunting. Women and girls suffer most from poor WASH provision – losing millions of hours globally each day to water collection and many dropping out of school at puberty due to inadequate hygiene facilities. From an economic perspective, the WHO found that inadequate water supply and sanitation amounts to global annual economic losses of \$260bn – while the UN estimates the cost of poor sanitation to individual countries (\$3bn in Nigeria, \$4.2bn in Pakistan and \$53.8bn in India) to be crippling.

Cost-effective WASH solutions for sustainable development.

We believe that solutions are within our reach. For example, the simple act of handwashing with soap has been shown to reduce the risk of diarrheal disease by up to 47%^v and pneumonia – another leading cause of child deaths – by around 23%^{vi}. An indicator to ensure the presence of soap and water (shown to be a robust proxy indicator for handwashing behaviour) at schools, in health centres and in the home – is likely to have a significant positive impact on incidences of disease and resultant school absenteeism and poor development. Similarly, an indicator on ending open defecation would help prioritise and scale up the solutions in this area whilst simultaneously directing additional resource towards sustainable water and waste management efforts.

The economic case for the financing and delivery of comprehensive WASH targets and indicators is very strong: every US\$1 spent on sanitation brings a US\$5.50 return by keeping people healthy and productive.^{vii} Handwashing with soap is known to be a particularly cost-effective intervention - reducing disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) related to diarrheal diseases by a significant margin.^{viii}

A framework for collaborative action.

In conclusion, a global goal framework which includes a dedicated goal on Water and Sanitation, incorporates the WHO/UNICEF targets and indicators and recognises the interlinkages between WASH and other development areas such as health, gender and nutrition, would provide the policy space and enabling environment for stakeholders to drive progress on universal access to WASH and, in doing so, enhance the health, welfare and economic productivity of populations.

We commend your on-going commitment to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene; underline the critical role of WASH in eradicating poverty; and stand ready to collaborate in helping achieve a future where no one is left behind.

Yours Sincerely,

The below listed organisations

ⁱ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4044140602workingdocument.pdf>

ⁱⁱ http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/post-2015-WASH-targets-factsheet-12pp.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Liu L, Johnson HL, Cousens S, Perin J, Scott S, Lawn JE, Rudan I, Campbell H, Cibulskis R, Li M, Mathers C, Black RE; Child Health Epidemiology Reference Group of WHO and UNICEF. Global, regional, and national causes of child mortality: an updated systematic analysis for 2010 with time trends since 2000. *Lancet*. 2012;379(9832):2151-61.

^{iv} Hutton, G. & Haller, L., 2004. Evaluation of the Costs and Benefits of Water and Sanitation Improvements at the Global Level

^v Curtis & Cairncross. 2003. Effect of washing hands with soap on diarrhea risk in the community: a systematic review. *Lancet Infectious Diseases*

^{vi} Rabie, T. & Curtis, V., 2006. Handwashing and risk of respiratory infections: a quantitative systematic review. *Tropical Medicine and International Health* 11(3):258-67.

^{vii} <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/DSG%20sanitation%20two-pager%20FINAL.pdf>

^{viii} <http://globalhandwashing.org/why/benefits>

American Standard



BRAC



Firmenich



Free the Children



Global Hygiene Council



Global Poverty Project



GSK



International Scientific Forum on Home Hygiene



IRC



Kimberly Clark



Lixil



The MDG Health Alliance



Raleigh International



Reckitt Benckiser



HEALTH • HYGIENE • HOME

Royal Society for Public Health



The Dow Chemical Company



Unilever



University of Leeds



Vitol Foundation



WASH Advocates



WASH United



WaterAid



World Toilet Organisation

