



High-Level Political Forum 2018

3rd meeting: Review of SDGs implementation: SDG 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

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We know that Member States are behind on implementation of SDG6; they are falling short on the commitment to protect, respect and fulfil the fundamental human right to water and sanitation, and have failed to implement a sustainable and equitable approach to managing the full water cycle.

It is not a problem of scarcity of water, it is a problem of the management model of water, and production and consumption patterns that creates water stress and loss of biodiversity. We need a political understanding of water linked to nature and people,

Member States continue to approach water as a technical issue, marginalising environmental, social and cultural considerations and prioritizing mega infrastructure with financing arrangements that are disadvantageous to public ownership and access. This approach often results in a legacy of debt, privatization of water management and a system that does not meet the needs of all women and girls in their diversity nor the most marginalized communities.

Women's participation in decision making at local, national and global levels is essential to adopt a new vision of water management urgently needed to achieve water related SDGs. Standards for institutionalising participation need to be set urgently to be on track by 2030.

Women and particularly women with disabilities are impacted most when accessing safe water and improved sanitation are not secure. To illustrate this I will only mention 3 impacts they face:

1. Increased risk of gender based violence when traveling to collect water and accessing sanitation.
2. Loss of work opportunities across the life course due to time burdens associated with their disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid work, translating into lost opportunities for education and paid work,
3. Impact on health, confidence and mobility of girls and women, due to stigma and the lack of adequate menstrual hygiene facilities and means to safely manage menstruation.

Comprehensive education and awareness rising on menstruation is needed within school curricula to reduce stigma and enable women and girls to safely manage menstruation without shame.

Women are invisible in data...

Data disaggregation is a fundamental aspect to ensure the identification of base lines of un-served communities. Today member states are reporting on SDG 6 through their VNRs, however data is incomplete, inadequate and not disaggregated enough to track progress for women and particularly vulnerable groups and communities. Lack of data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, location, ethnicity, and other factors constrains development by hiding who is being left behind. Investing in efforts to close gender data gaps is key for effective, efficient budgeting and policy making.

I want to close my intervention with a word that has not been mentioned enough: accountability. We will not reach our goals if countries do not set up accountability mechanisms and demonstrate political leadership. A study of 25 countries reveals that most have mentioned accountability mechanisms, but most have proved ineffective or limited to only some SDG indicators. For example, in Mexico, the Government claims water coverage for 94% of the population; however, when all three indicators to fulfil target 6.1 on safely managed water access are included, the percentage falls to 47%¹. Member states must develop official, institutionalized, regular and transparent accountability mechanisms at national and local level that allow meaningful consultation and participation of all stakeholders, ensuring a gender balance, if they are to achieve adequate and appropriate implementation of Agenda 2030.

¹ According to the Joint Monitoring Program WHO/UNICEF