

Joined-up Action for Collective Outcomes

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Introduction

The escalation of humanitarian crises has dramatically peaked in the past years, reaching 301 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 28 countries. More than 50% of them, 168 million people, will need life-saving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance this year due to complex and protracted conflict and displacement, climate-related disasters and shocks, and large-scale public health emergencies¹. Meanwhile, the humanitarian WASH sector's funding gap remains immense as only 35% of the funding has been received². The evolving nature of crises requires 'joined-up' action for **collective outcomes** by humanitarian, development, and peace actors, in alignment with the **2030 Agenda**, to maximize gains that leave no one behind, reduce needs and vulnerabilities, and achieve sustainable development and sustained peace.

301
million

*People in need of
humanitarian
assistance*

168
million

*People in need of
life-saving water,
sanitation, and
hygiene*

35%
funding

*Percentage of
funding received
by WASH sector.*

The business-as-usual approach is not delivering the results needed and requires a new way of working. This "New Way of Working", as outlined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), is a multi-layered and coordinated process for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors that promotes an effective framework for collaboration, optimizing the principles of partnership and harnessing the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including local actors and authorities, and leads to concrete and measurable results. It can be achieved through joint context and risk analysis, complementary planning and programming, a recalibration of financing modalities and the empowerment of a local workforce on the ground.

Effective leadership and coordination of humanitarian actors play a central role in attaining collective outcomes. The United Nations' coordination architecture that guides humanitarian action and development cooperation is the entry point for strengthening existing country-level processes and lays the foundation for system-wide change. The **Global WASH Cluster (GWC)**, as the largest multi-stakeholder humanitarian WASH platform, with over 90 global members and 1,200 humanitarian partners in more than 30 countries is best positioned to drive a consistent and coherent approach for the articulation and agreement of collective outcomes for the WASH sector.

[1] GHO 2024 and GWC Monthly Newsletter 2023 - Eleventh Edition (campaign-archive.com)

[2] For the humanitarian WASH Sector, the funding gap is still immense. In 2023, 4.2 billion USD have been requested and only 35% of the funding has been received (1.48 billion USD) as of December 2023 (source: [FIS](https://www.fits.org)).

The GWC's advocacy campaign on 'collective outcomes' was launched at the UN Water Conference in 2023, providing the GWC with the opportunity to put forward key commitments to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 and the Water Action Decade. This was amplified at other global high-level events such as Aidex 2023 and COP28, and the European Humanitarian Forum 2024, expands this dialogue in areas such as private sector engagement and climate.

Coordination as mandated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

The UN coordination architecture that guides humanitarian action and development cooperation is the entry point for strengthening existing country-level processes and lays the foundation for system-wide change. With the commitment of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and partners to a Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN/Nexus) approach, cluster and sector leads are expected to proactively advance responses quickly beyond lifesaving provisions into a joined-up approach contributing to and coordinating with development and peace outcomes.

Advocacy Goals and Key Messages for Collective Outcomes

The 2020 IASC Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes describes the collective effort by humanitarian, development, and, where relevant and appropriate, peace actors to reduce people's humanitarian needs, risks, and vulnerabilities by working towards 'collective outcomes' priority areas. To achieve these objectives, the approach calls for complementary, aligned, and well-coordinated action by all key actors in planning, programming, implementation, and financing of operations, preferably formulated in commonly agreed measurable results over multiple years.

Currently, humanitarian action with complementary development and peacebuilding approaches for the WASH sector to enhance resilience are siloed. Gaps remain in cultivating partnerships and enhancing ways of working for humanitarian, development, and peace collaboration. The mandates and methodologies for joint analysis, data collection, strategic planning, geographic focus areas, and financing for WASH outcomes are misaligned. The capacity and resources to drive innovative and transformative WASH outcomes are divided. To address these challenges, all WASH partners and national coordination mechanisms play a key role as champions in this process.



Joint Operational Framework

One example of how this approach has been applied in the WASH sector, is the collaboration of over 50 global WASH agencies, under the leadership of the German WASH Network to develop a Joint Operational Framework (JOF) to strengthen WASH resilience, conflict sensitivity, and peacebuilding. The JOF provides a unique opportunity, as it draws upon global-level guidance, to adapt the collective outcomes for the WASH sector. It highlights a theory of change for integrating resilience, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding capacities into local WASH systems and proposes sector-specific outputs as well as practical steps and entry points for policymakers and practitioners.

The GWC and its members/partners are hereby renewing their commitments to supporting over 30 countries for over 100 million people annually in humanitarian contexts until 2025 by the following **commitments and messages**:

1

We commit to strengthening collective action and advocating for the WASH sector to consistently provide timely, predictable, high-quality water and sanitation outcomes by providing thought leadership and spearheading coordination.

This requires continued investment in system-wide preparedness and coordination of response capacity that provides clear leadership and accountability in humanitarian crises. It also requires clusters and sectors at the country level to engage with development and peace actors and related processes to foster and drive a collective outcome approach, as defined by IASC³.

2

We commit to promoting joint analysis or sharing of analyses to obtain a shared understanding of need, risk, and vulnerability and the optimization of relevant data and information to understand gaps and make evidence-based decisions.

This can be done by adopting joint data frameworks such as the WASH Insecurity Analysis to ensure that articulation of 'collective outcomes' is based on the areas of greatest need, risk, and vulnerability.



Based on the human right to water and sanitation, WASH Insecurity Analysis (WIA) identifies geographic areas and quantifies the population at risk of WASH insecurity and the population already experiencing WASH insecurity.

It is a tool and a process that can bring together diverse stakeholders across the humanitarian-to-development continuum, including those working in the nexus space or fragile contexts, and promotes localization by providing analytical insights at the local level before and aftershocks. It can be used by governments and development actors to prioritize sectoral investments.

3

We commit to incorporating pathways that link the strategic direction of national priorities across humanitarian and development planning processes, including Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) to the Country Context Analysis (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).⁴

This requires enhanced collaboration and entry points between technical clusters/sectors and development working groups or similar architectures, under the leadership of OCHA and UNDP (UNCT and HCT.)

[3] IASC Guidance Note : [Advancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach through IASC global clusters](#), December 2023

[4] Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), Common Country Analysis (CCA) and [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework](#)

4

We commit to joined-up planning and programming supporting these collective outcomes or priorities.

This requires the development of context-specific joint operational frameworks to enable better collaboration and higher coherence among humanitarian, development, and peace actors, especially in protracted and recurrent crises.

5

We commit to calling for the recalibration of financing mechanisms to support humanitarian and development priorities as defined by collective outcomes.

This requires more flexible funding instruments like USAID's Fragile Waters, which uses locally-led approaches to increase water security in fragile contexts, working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

6

We commit to being champion advocates for innovative partnerships and coordination of an integrated humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach through "joined up" action and collective outcomes.

This requires better evidence-based advocacy focused on WASH, showcasing how survival and resilient WASH is essential to other sectors such as this campaign or the Humanitarian WASH Road Map Call to Action.

7

We commit to contributing to creating a professional and motivated workforce with expertise in coordination that drives innovative and transformative WASH outcomes across humanitarian action, development cooperation and peacebuilding.

This requires an accelerated localization agenda and increased local capacity for WASH coordination and response that engages with the private sector to collectively reach the needs of affected populations.

8

We commit to supporting the safety and security of water resources, WASH personnel, and water infrastructure by advocating for compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL).

This requires strong networks such as the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflict who are committed to advancing Water for Peace and achieving profound and far-reaching impacts that go beyond the goals stipulated in the SDGs.



Call to Action

To address the current challenges, all WASH partners and national coordination mechanisms play a key role as key champions in this process. Together, we can join forces to call upon governments/member states to strengthen coordination and deliver collective action to achieve the SDGs.

1 We call upon governments/member states to strengthen collective action for the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector to consistently provide timely, predictable, and high-quality water, sanitation and hygiene outcomes.

There is a need to ensure effective and accountable coordination to achieve collective WASH outcomes that promote synergy and complementarity and requires aligned and well-coordinated action across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to meet the needs of the people most affected by and vulnerable to crises.

2 We call upon governments/member states to ensure joint analysis or sharing of analyses to obtain a shared understanding of need, risk and vulnerability.

There is a need to articulate these as collective outcomes that prioritise the areas of greatest need, risk and vulnerability. Special focus should be given to countries with limited progress on the achievement of SDG 6, and populations without access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene services. It is only by starting with the most vulnerable that we can reach the SDGs.

3 We call upon governments/member states to ensure they have relevant data and information to understand gaps and make evidence-based decisions.

Governments should support the institutionalisation of data collection and monitoring within national systems and at all levels (community, utilities, sub-national and national), the use of consistent methodologies such as the WASH Insecurity Analysis, including standardised terms and questions by identifying and prioritising gaps in data collection and analysis, particularly in vulnerable communities.

4 We call upon governments/member states to ensure humanitarian and development complementary strategic planning.

There is a need to align and harmonise socio-economic and development frameworks with humanitarian strategic plans. Incorporating pathways that link the strategic direction of national priorities and plans, such as the HNO/HRP to the CCA and the UNSDCF is vital.



5 We call upon governments/member states to ensure that humanitarian and development financing are aligned or harmonised around these collective outcomes or priorities.

There is a need to influence funding mechanisms to shift towards flexible, multi-year financing for the sector and transparent resource mobilisation and funds monitoring that support advocacy efforts.

6 We call upon governments/member states to build a professional, motivated workforce through a range of capacity development approaches.

There is a need for capacity and resources to drive innovative and transformative WASH outcomes across humanitarian action, development cooperation and peacebuilding. This includes strengthening capacity in technical areas specific to water, sanitation and hygiene service delivery and coordination, including competence in long-term planning and budgeting, improved cost recovery, revenue generation, community-based approaches and financial sustainability.

7 The WASH sector is called on to ensure that both humanitarian and development WASH interventions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts are conflict-sensitive as a minimum requirement.

Governments, the WASH sector and the private sector are called on to adopt a more systematic and strategic approach to leveraging WASH interventions to address the drivers and dynamics of conflict and to sustain peace.

8 We call upon governments, the WASH sector, donors and other sectors to realize the rights to water and sanitation for the entire community including host communities, internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants, women, girls and boys, persons with disabilities, etc. through inclusive policies, planning and programming and by strengthening multisectoral collaboration.



Related Resource

The Global WASH Cluster Collective Outcomes

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**this does not mean official endorsement by organisations*

Sources

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