

UNICEF Pakistan WASH Strategic Review May 2016



Enabling Environment: WASH sector reform

Brief by Kamran Naeem – WASH Specialist Islamabad

1. Introduction:

Pakistan made a remarkable achievement of meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for sanitation in 2015. The Government is now expected to do well in taking on the next challenges posed by ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key among the challenges related to SDG-6 are reduction in access related disparities and improvement of drinking water quality. Huge gaps exist in access to improved sanitation between rural (51%)¹ and urban (83%) populations and between highest (84%) and lowest (29%) wealth quintiles. While 91% of people in Pakistan have gained access to improved drinking water sources, 80-85 % water samples are bacteriologically unsafe for drinking².

Public expenditure on WASH was low at 0.22% of GDP in 2014-2015, ten times less than education (2.49% of GDP)³. The economic impact of poor sanitation and hygiene is large with an annual loss of 3.94% of the GDP⁴. While public spending on water and sanitation is relatively low and suffered a decline in the provinces during the past, a significant increase of almost 29% in 2014-15 suggests a recent and improved prioritisation by the political leadership. Private sector has also expressed keen interest to invest in WASH sector⁵.

Another positive development was the Second Pakistan Conference on Sanitation (PACOSAN II), which was inaugurated by the Honorable President of Pakistan, H.E. Mamnoon Hussain in Feb 2015, who launched a campaign for improved sanitation in the country. Further, Pakistan is an active member of regional forum of South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN) and Sanitation and Water for All (SWA).

From 2006 to 2010, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) developed national policies for sanitation and drinking water and a strategic guidance document for Pakistan Approach to Total Sanitation (PATS). After the 18th amendment to the constitution of Pakistan in April 2010, the role of provincial governments was augmented. Provincial and AJK policies were developed, including separate drinking water and sanitation policies. While the majority of these provincial policies are endorsed by the governments, many are pending approval by the provincial cabinets. After almost five years without an institutional home for WASH at the national level, it returned to the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) in early 2016.

Another political development in recent times was the adoption of the new Local Government Acts (LGAs) in 2013. Local governments now have more responsibility for rural water and sanitation at district and UC level, which has further complicated overlapping roles and responsibilities with the Public Health Engineering Departments (PHED).

2. Overview/rationale:

The new UNICEF Global WASH Strategy 2016 – 2030 calls for strengthening of the Enabling Environment (EE)⁶. UNICEF Pakistan facilitated a discussion led by government in a national WASH Theory of Change (TOC) workshop in late 2014, identifying the following bottlenecks:

¹ Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) of WHO and UNICEF - report 2015

² Results of the rural water quality monitoring of 48 tehsils out of 64 monitored by Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) <http://www.pcrwr.gov.pk/waterqlty.html>

³ Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme Financial Progress Reports, 2012, 2013 and 2014-15, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan

⁴ The economic impact of inadequate sanitation in Pakistan, Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP), World Bank

⁵ MoU of WASH sector partners with Executive Committee of Presidents of Chambers of Commerce in Pakistan

⁶ UNICEF Global WASH Strategy 2016-2030

Policies: Existing national and provincial policies neither address challenges posed by the SDGs nor suggest utilization of elected LG bodies at grass root level. Policies also lack a strong human rights perspective to address inequities directly, which has been recognized by the government as a major challenge⁷.

Sector Coordination: Coordination mechanism for the recently assumed role of MoCC at federal level and provincial governments needs to be developed. At federal level, WASH sector coordination between Ministries of Planning, Finance and MoCC is weak. Similar overlap of roles and responsibilities at provincial level among PHED, LG and Planning and Development (P&D) make sector coordination complex, and these departments often work in silos. Different coordination forums exist at provincial and national level for development and humanitarian actors. There is no common WASH sector coordination forum for donors, government, UN, and CSOs at provincial and national level. Sector monitoring and regulation is weak, sector partners use different sets of indicators to measure performance of WASH interventions, and ground water extraction and waste disposal is relatively unchecked.

Capacity Development: At the federal level, MoCC lacks capacity to meet the requirements of its new role. Similarly provincial LG, PHED, P&D lack capacity to provide WASH services at scale, especially in the SDGs context. There is need to build both human resources and institutional capacity and to strengthen systems across national and provincial governments in the WASH sector.

Budgeting and Financing: While WASH sector financing has improved in the last budget, it is still relatively low and the gap for meeting the SDG targets by 2030 is unknown. Provincial public sector budgets are prepared without consultation or evidence based reviews and are largely based on political priorities. There are other competing priorities against WASH sector which take precedence and decision makers are not adequately informed about the WASH situation, with substantial evidence at the right time during budget preparatory process at district, province and national level.

Political leadership: Federal government (MoCC) makes national commitments on international (SWA HLM) and regional (SACOSAN) forums. These commitments are non-binding and are formulated with some consultation of provincial governments and with little or no engagement of political leadership. Provinces, responsible for delivering on commitments, have therefore less ownership. Public budgetary allocations are not connected with the commitments made by the government. There is an opportunity to engage parliamentarians more effectively due to the recent establishment of the 'Parliamentary SDGs task force' with national and provincial members.

3. New approach:

Emerging areas of UNICEF focus for the remaining period of the country programme are therefore to assist governments in i) facilitating SDG-6 dialogue (*SDG dialogue*); ii) Revision of Policies iii) institutionalizing annual joint sector reviews (JSRs) to influence provincial planning and budget preparatory processes (*JSR and advocacy*); iv) improving WASH sector coordination (*Sector Coordination*) and v)



⁷ Government of Pakistan presentation at High Level Ministerial Meeting of Sanitation and Water for All, at Addis Ababa, March 2016.

facilitating national forums for high level government commitments on WASH (*National Forums and Commitments-PACOSAN*).

- ✓ **SDG Dialogue:** In the new approach UNICEF will assist governments to facilitate a series of structured events at national and provincial level to initiate WASH sector stakeholders' dialogue on adoption of SDG-6. Government-led pre-planned dialogues will seek to develop joint comprehension of sector stakeholders on targets 6.1 and 6.2 and reach agreements on SMART⁸ indicators against both. Recommendations/Standards will guide the planning and budgeting processes as well as revision of WASH policies and sector master plans.
- ✓ **Policy Revision:** Existing WASH policies at national and provincial level will be revised to adopt strengthened human rights based approach and emerging challenges in light of SDG consultations at provincial and national level. Subsequently SDG strategies and action plans will be developed for each province, building upon the work already done by the provincial governments e.g. provincial WASH sector master plans. National policies will be revised first and then process will be rolled out in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab initially and other provinces later. Federal government will be assisted to provide technical guidance to provinces for the whole process and steer its roll out.
- ✓ **Strengthening Provincial Government Planning and Budgeting process through JSR and Advocacy (Fig 2):** UNICEF will focus on supporting the government and sector partners in conducting systematic annual provincial JSRs to jointly identify priority bottlenecks and integrate these into the government's planning and budgeting process to remove bottlenecks, strategize on financing options, monitor the service delivery levels against a harmonized set of indicators and keep track of sector progress towards achievement of SDG-6. UNICEF will also focus on strengthening mutual accountability relationships at national and provincial level through JSRs. WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASHBAT) V2.0 will be used for analysis of the situation in provincial JSRs.
- ✓ **Advocacy and Communication Plan:** UNICEF will develop a work plan to support government EE. UNICEF work plan will include an advocacy and communication plan, with a time line from December to June, to influence the budget preparatory processes through consultative events and evidence dissemination in SDG-Policy dialogue, JSR process and communication campaigns. WASH sector studies e.g. ongoing Sustainability Check (SC) study, Service Delivery Assessments (SDAs), analyses from the provincial datasets e.g. MICS, PSLM and MIS, and other studies which can contribute to JSR will be consolidated/organized for review before the JSR workshops in December. WASH sector mass media and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) campaigns in communities will be synchronized with planned advocacy efforts. UNICEF will support implementing partners to include community voices into district level budget preparations and identification of development projects through advocacy with newly elected LG representatives. A bi-annual national JSR will consolidate the provincial JSR discussions for refining the WASH sector theory of change.
- ✓ **National Forums and Commitments - PACOSAN:** The annual JSRs will facilitate provincial WASH commitments by the highest political leadership. These provincial commitments will be consolidated at federal level for formulating the Pakistan's national commitments at SWA High Level Meeting (HLM) and South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN). High level commitments are also expected to influence the WASH budgetary allocations and improve sector

⁸ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART)

financing. These national commitments will be announced as PACOSAN declaration. These harmonized commitments are envisaged to enhance ownership of sector stakeholders along with improved implementation, monitoring and reporting.

- ✓ **Sector Coordination:** UNICEF will support P&D departments of the provincial governments to bring local governments and PHED, along with departments of Education, Nutrition, Health, Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMA) and other WASH sector stakeholders/institutions to one JSR forum. This arrangement may vary from province to province. A review of existing wash sector coordination mechanisms, both for humanitarian and development work, will also be carried out.

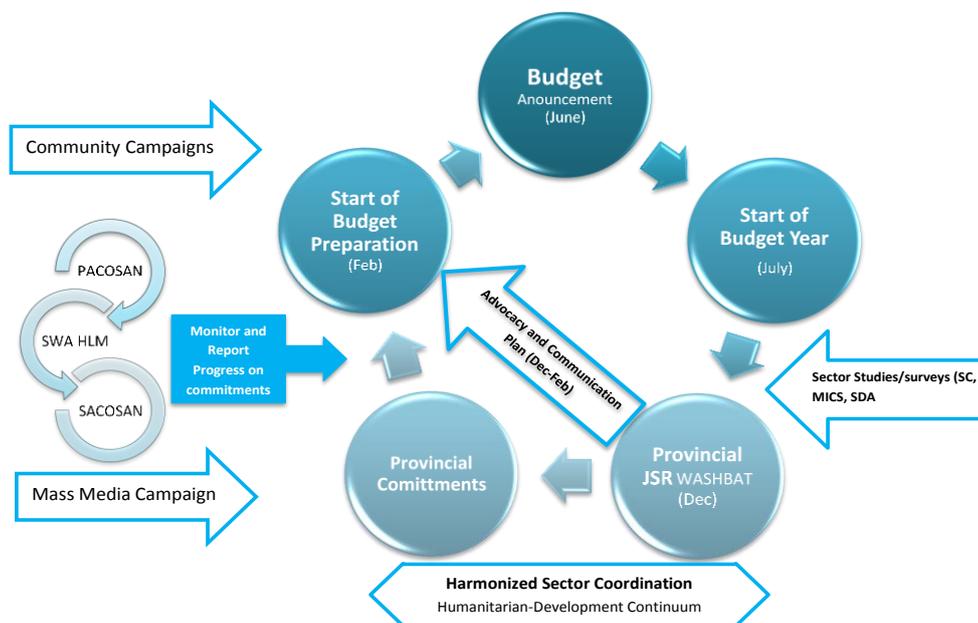


Figure 2: Strengthening provincial government planning and budgeting process through JSR and Advocacy

4. Measurement:

- a. Provincial WASH SDG plans and indicators developed
- b. WASH provincial policies include human rights based approach and SDGs
- c. Annual provincial JSR and biannual PACOSAN conducted, documented and integrated into government planning and budgeting process.
- d. Provincial commitments are part of national commitments at SWA HLM and SACOSAN
- e. WASH Sector coordination structures are operational at the national and provincial level
- f. Increase in WASH sector funding and improved budgeting at the provincial level