

Context

The third SWA High Level Meeting (HLM), which took place in Washington, DC on 11 April 2014, was attended by 20 ministers of finance and 35 ministers responsible for water and sanitation. Sixteen donors and development banks attended the meeting – six represented by ministers or heads of agencies. Senior representatives of civil society organizations and UN agencies also participated. At the meeting, developing countries (“countries”) and donors/development banks (“donors”)¹ tabled commitments to improve access to water and sanitation. The HLM is a major biennial milestone in the on-going SWA High-Level Commitments Dialogue (HLCD), which aims to strengthen sector accountability through the development, implementation and monitoring of commitments.

Overview of 2014 commitments

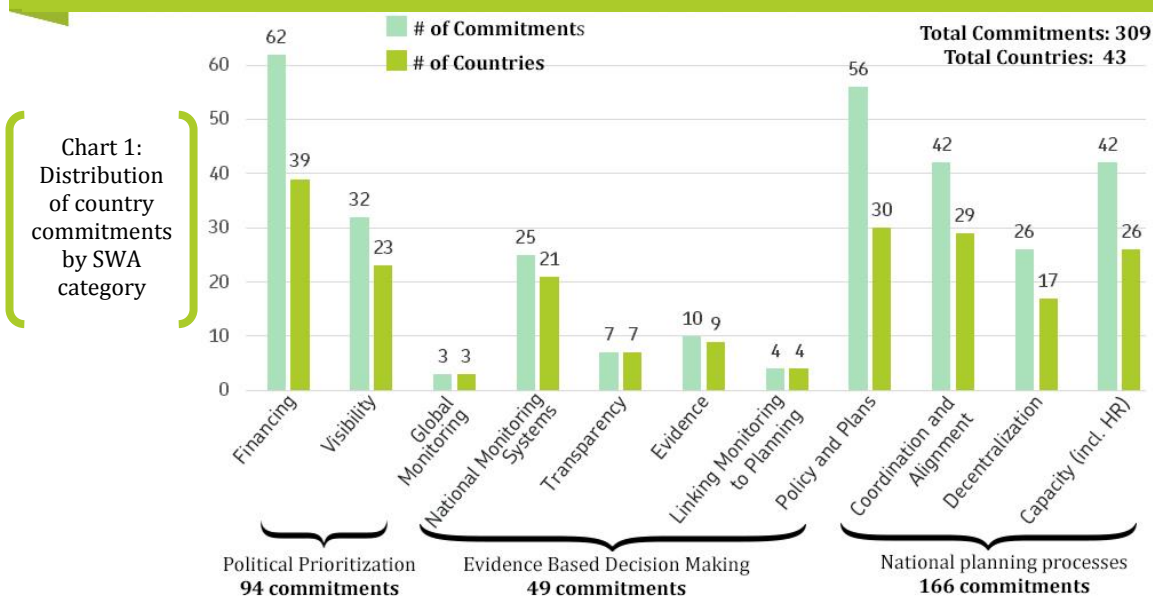
Forty-three countries and 12 donors tabled Statements of Commitments at the 2014 HLM. Commitments by countries generally articulate actions aimed at addressing bottlenecks in strengthening the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, while donors develop commitments to address priorities in their development assistance programs. In 2014, there was a focus on eliminating inequalities in access and improving sustainability of services.



Overview – Countries

In their Statements, countries table specific commitments and also articulate overarching longer-term visions. While only the specific commitments will be monitored through the HLCD², the visions are important indications of the political prioritization countries are now placing on WASH. Over half of the countries (23 countries) that tabled Statements set out a vision to achieve universal access for both water and sanitation by or before 2030. To address an important obstacle to achieving universal access, two-thirds of countries (35 countries) have a vision to eliminate inequalities. Further, one-third of countries (19 countries) aim at improving sustainability of access. Finally, 18 countries aim to eliminate open defecation by or before 2030 and an additional four countries aim at reducing open defecation considerably.

COUNTRIES: The majority of commitments focus on strengthening national planning processes



¹For the purposes of brevity, donors and development banks are referred to in this document as ‘donors’ and developing countries as ‘countries’. Within the SWA partnership, development banks are not considered donors and in most cases are in fact lenders rather than donors. However, in this document donors and development banks are referred to as ‘donors’ to indicate all external agencies providing finance.

² Longer-term visions are largely articulated in terms of improving access which is monitored by national systems and the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on Drinking-Water and Sanitation (JMP).

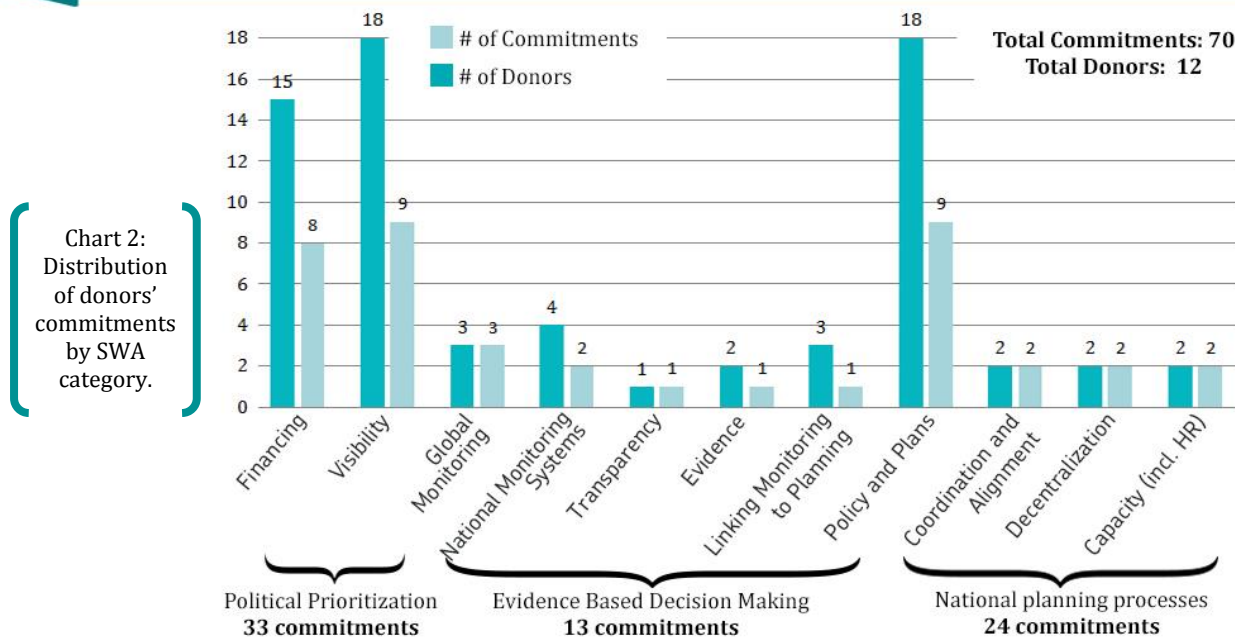
The majority of the 309 commitments made by the 43 countries focus on strengthening national planning processes and many focus on political prioritization. Key trends in the commitments include:

- **Political prioritization**
 - Two-thirds of countries (39 countries) commit to increasing sector financing.
 - More than half of the countries (23 countries) recognize the importance of making WASH, especially sanitation, a priority in national development agendas and strategic plans.
- **Evidence-based decision making**
 - Commitments in this area build mostly on 2012 HLM commitments. For example, successful monitoring pilots will be extended from a few districts to the whole country.
- **National planning processes**
 - Almost two-thirds of countries commit to improve coordination (29 countries) and to strengthen policy and plans (30 countries).
 - Over half of the countries commit to strengthen the capacity of human resources and institutions (26 countries) and further enhance the decentralization of services (17 countries). Many of these commitments are closely related to improving the sustainability of service delivery.

Overview – Donors

The majority (47%) of the 70 commitments made by eight donors focus on increasing political prioritization of the WASH sector while another 34% of commitments focus on strengthening national planning processes. A few commitments relate to improving evidence-based decision making.

DONORS: Most donor commitments are about political prioritization of WASH



Methodology of the analysis

A rigorous process of analysis by the SWA Secretariat follows each HLM in order to categorise commitments according to the SWA priority areas and categories. The SWA Secretariat reviewed each official Statement of Commitment and identified, organized, and coded each commitment before adding them to a database. The commitments as worded in the database – which are approved by each partner – will constitute the basis for monitoring activities over the next two years. The database of commitments is available on the SWA website.

The process of making commitments

The High-Level Commitments Dialogue (HLCD) encompasses the High Level Meetings, the preparatory process that countries and donors conduct in advance of the HLMs to develop commitments and the annual monitoring of the commitments. The HLCD is designed to encourage an on-going political dialogue, results on the ground and accountability in the sector. In preparation for the 2014 HLM, 46 developing countries and 16 donors and development banks engaged in an intense five-month preparatory process facilitated by the SWA Secretariat. In 2014, there was a concerted effort to develop commitments which are “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). Two-thirds of countries (29 countries) report using one or a combination of available sector analyses to identify bottlenecks, making the commitments relevant to each country’s context and strategy to accelerate progress towards universal access.

Additionally 80 percent of countries tabled a smaller and more focused set of commitments at the 2014 HLM than the broader sets of commitments tabled in 2012. Additionally, one-third of countries (13 countries) report having involved civil society in the development of commitments, demonstrating remarkable inclusiveness.

The efforts invested to develop a focused, SMART set of commitments, by a broad set of stakeholders provides a basis from which partners can clearly advocate for results, better implement actions and effectively monitor progress. SWA partners are now poised to translate commitments into results on the ground and improve transparency and accountability in the sector.

Two-thirds of countries used sector analysis tools to develop 2014 HLM commitments

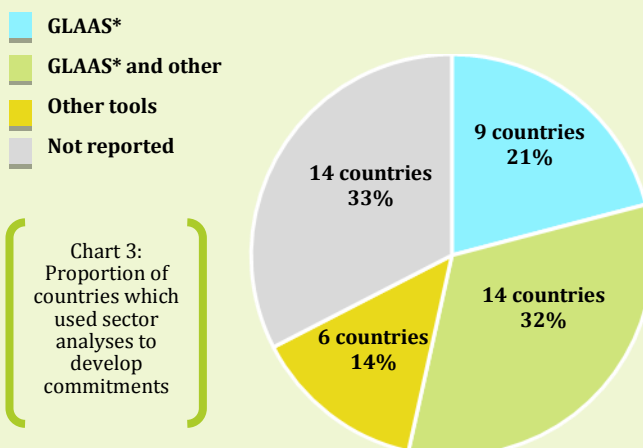


Chart 3: Proportion of countries which used sector analyses to develop commitments

* UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) Report

Focus on eliminating inequalities and improving sustainability

An analysis of partners’ Statements of Commitments reveal a focus around the two themes of the 2014 HLM: eliminating inequalities and improving sustainability. This is demonstrated both in the overarching visions and in the specific commitments.

In the countries’ overarching visions, three-quarters of countries (35 countries) recognize that the elimination of socio-economic and geographic inequalities is fundamental to achieving the goal of universal access. One-third of countries (19 countries) recognize that it is important to sustain gains made in increase in coverage through the improvement of technical, institutional and environmental sustainability. While nearly all partner commitments could be interpreted as broadly contributing to improving inequalities and sustainability, one-third of commitments are clearly and directly targeted to impact these two HLM themes.

HLCD Themes: Over one-third of partners’ commitments relate to either improving sustainability or eliminating inequalities.

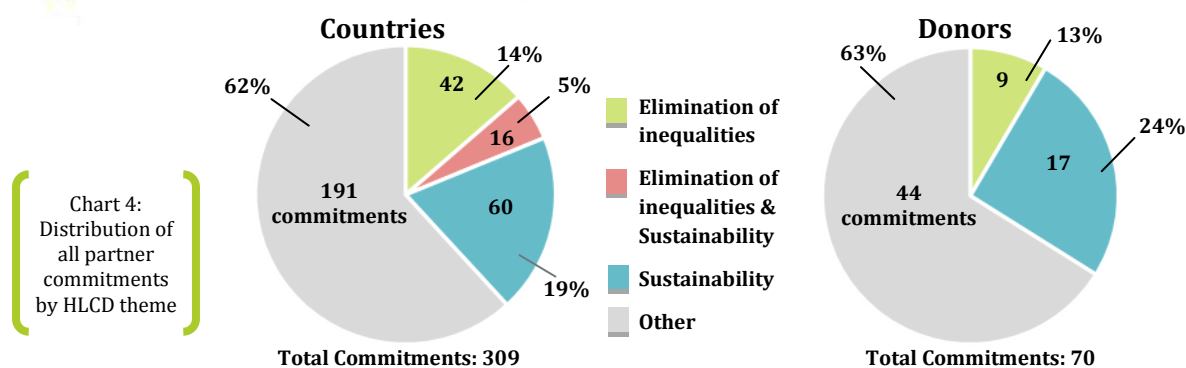


Chart 4: Distribution of all partner commitments by HLCD theme

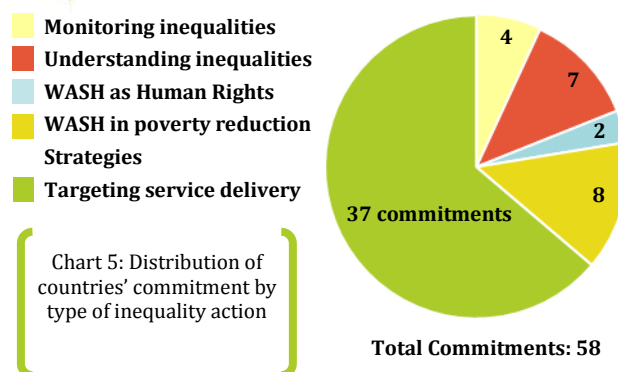
Commitments to eliminate inequalities – Countries

An analysis of country Statements of Commitments shows an interest in tackling inequalities, both in the vision and commitments. Three-quarters of countries (35 countries) mention equality in their vision, and two-thirds of countries (27 countries) made specific commitments (58 countries) relating to the elimination of inequalities. Many commitments focus on targeting service delivery specific geographical areas or socio-economic groups to address disparities. Other commitments indicate the intention to better understand approaches that work and develop concrete strategies to address inequalities.

Commitments in this area include:

- **Targeting service delivery to address geographical or socio-economic disparities** (37 commitments from 16 countries):
 - *Mozambique commits to allocate at least 40% of WASH sector funds to district and municipal governments for sanitation and rural water supply.*
- **Positioning WASH as a human right** (2 commitments from 2 countries: Paraguay, Senegal):
 - *Paraguay commits to make progress towards the realization of the human right to water, sanitation and hygiene.*
- **Prioritizing WASH in poverty reduction strategies** (8 commitments from 7 countries: Benin, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Paraguay, Togo):
 - *Côte d'Ivoire commits to include the elimination of open defecation in the 2014-2016 Poverty Reduction Strategy and in the National Health and Nutrition Plan by 2015.*
- **Undertaking studies to understand inequalities** (11 commitments from 10 countries: Benin, Chad, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, Guinea, Paraguay, Togo):
 - *Benin, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia commit to carry out studies in peri-urban areas to understand sanitation approaches that are most effective for the urban poor.*
- **Monitoring inequalities** (4 commitments from 4 countries: Ghana, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sudan):
 - *Pakistan commits to introduce a framework to monitor inequality.*

Eliminating inequalities: the largest share of commitments relates to targeting service delivery to address socio-economic and geographic disparities



Commitments to improve sustainability–Countries

Country Statements of Commitments also show a great deal of attention to sustainability: one-third of countries (19 countries) set out a broad vision to improve sustainability and 88% of countries (38 countries) committed to specific commitments which outline actions to directly impact the improvement of sustainability (76 commitments).

Commitments to improve sustainability address both strengthening operation and maintenance (O&M) as well as developing strong policies, institutions and human resources at national and local level. Policies include those focusing on the life-cycle of service delivery, separating service delivery from regulatory functions, introducing private sector management and developing human resources to manage and regulate service delivery.

Commitments in this area include:

- **Policy and plans for sustainability** (22 commitments from 15 countries):
 - *Afghanistan commits to develop and test a comprehensive strategy for operation and maintenance and community water safety planning in provinces.*
- **Decentralization for sustainability** (17 commitments from 11 countries):
 - *Benin, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea commit to create capacity for local authorities to carry out decentralised operation and maintenance of services.*

- **Capacity of institutions and Human Resources for sustainability** (19 commitments from 14 countries):
 - *Senegal commits to establish Rural Wells Office (OFOR) - a public body responsible for monitoring the operation and management of rural water schemes and providing support and advice to private sector operators.*
- **Sustainable financing of WASH services, specifically, financing O&M** (10 commitments from 8 countries: Benin, Chad, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, Vietnam):
 - *Madagascar commits to increase the budget for maintaining existing water systems and halve the rate of breakdowns.*
- **Transparency and monitoring for sustainability** (3 commitments from 3 countries: Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan):
 - *Ethiopia commits to develop mechanisms for sustainability checks for water and sanitation facilities.*
- **Coordination for sustainability** (5 commitments from 5 countries: Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Paraguay):
 - *Mali commits to extend sustainability pacts from three regions in 2014 to five regions in 2016.*

Improving Sustainability: the largest share of commitments relates to plans, decentralization & capacity

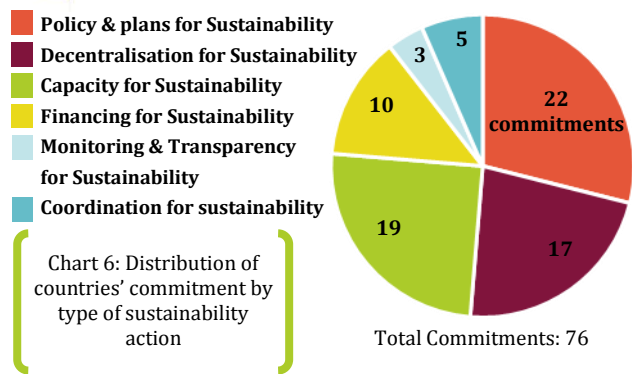


Chart 6: Distribution of countries' commitment by type of sustainability action

Commitments to improve inequality and sustainability – Donors

Eight donors (African Development Bank, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, USAID) made nine commitments on elimination of inequalities, which includes better targeting of specific socio-economic groups such as women and poor populations.

Examples:

- *Japan commits over 3 billion USD over 3 years from 2013 to 2015 towards women's empowerment and gender-equality.*
- *Sweden commits to allocate 63 million USD for each year from 2014 to 2017 towards WASH programs with a specific focus on women and children's access to improved water, sanitation and hygiene.*

Seven donors (African Development Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, USAID) made 17 commitments on sustainability. These include the promotion of: a more sustainable use of water as a post 2015 indicator, the use of life-cycle cost approaches, capacity development for sustainability and improved monitoring of and knowledge-sharing on sustainability.

Examples:

- *The Netherlands expects all of its partner programmes to include a component to strengthen sector capacities needed for sustained service delivery.*
- *USAID commits to the development of a knowledge product, through the Sustainable WASH Knowledge Platform, which will help inform the global community on issues of scale and sustainability of sanitation services.*

Highlights by SWA category – Countries

As commitments are developed individually by each country, the actions articulated are context-specific. Therefore, aggregating commitments can only be done in broad categorizations. Commitments have been coded into 12 categories clustered around the three priority areas of the partnership. Below are a few highlighted categories where notable commitments were made.

Highlight

Improving Sector Financing

Nearly 90% of countries (39 countries) have made 62 commitments to improve sector financing.

Short-term improvements. Countries committed to increase budget allocations (27 countries), improve mobilization of sector funding by partners (11 countries), and sustain the current level of financing (one country). The table below illustrates commitments to increase budget allocations.

Type of increased allocation	# of countries	Name of countries
Increased budget as % of GDP, or % of national expenditure, or % increase from previous years (for GDP, increases range from 0.5% to 5%)	20 countries	Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, CAR, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, Vie Nam, Zimbabwe
Increased budget as a specific amount	2 countries	Burkina Faso: 38 million USD each year until 2016 Mongolia: 373 million USD between 2014-16
Increased Budget – no specific amount	5 countries	Burundi, Cameron, Ghana, Madagascar, Timor-Leste

Structural improvements. Eighteen percent of countries (8 countries: Bangladesh, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Tanzania, Benin, Liberia, Togo) made commitments to undertake financial system structural reforms:

- Establishing separate budget lines for water, hygiene and sanitation: (5 countries: Bangladesh, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Tanzania);
- Developing alternative financing mechanisms: (3 countries: Benin, Liberia, Togo)

Example: Togo commits to establish a sustainable fund for safe water and sanitation.

Financing strategies. Additionally, seven countries (Benin, Chad, Kenya, Nepal, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia) made commitments to strengthen financing strategies, investments plans or Mid-term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF).

Example: Kenya commits to develop a WASH investment plan, which will be integrated into the national MTEF.

Highlight

Strengthening coordination

Two-thirds of countries (29 countries) made 42 commitments to improve sector coordination. These include:

- Creating or strengthening inter-ministerial working groups and promoting coordination among partners (13 countries);
- Introducing or strengthen Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP), (two countries: Malawi and Rwanda);
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities among the various ministries or departments responsible for water and sanitation (four countries: The Gambia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe);
- Harmonizing sector policy and plans (eight countries: DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria and Sri Lanka).

Examples:

- *Rwanda commits to develop “operation and partnership principles” between the government and development partners.*
- *In Mongolia, the Ministry of Health commits to take clear leadership of the national sanitation portfolio.*
- *Zimbabwe commits to establish a WASH regulatory framework and rationalise roles and responsibilities of service authorities and service providers.*
- *The Democratic Republic of Congo commits to harmonise hygiene and sanitation policies in order to develop an effective framework for program implementation.*

Highlight

Strengthening Capacity

Almost two-thirds of countries (26 countries) made commitments (42 commitments) to improve human resource and institutional capacity. Commitments in these areas include:

- Recruiting extra staff: 5 countries (Ethiopia, Mauritania, South Sudan, Togo, and Uganda);
- Developing capacity development plans or carrying out capacity needs assessments: 5 countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Senegal, The Gambia, Viet Nam);
- Establish new institutions or strengthen existing ones: 12 countries.

Examples:

- *Uganda commits to increase the percentage of filled sector posts from 71% to 80% by 2016.*
- *Afghanistan commits to use existing capacity needs assessments and studies to develop a capacity building strategy and a two-year action plan.*
- *Rwanda commits to establish an autonomous water and sanitation public corporation to ensure efficient service delivery and sustainability by end 2015.*

Highlight

Improving Decentralization

One-third of countries (17 countries) made 26 commitments to further the decentralization of services. Commitments included: the strengthening human resources and institutional capacity at decentralized level; the transfer of competencies and funds to the decentralised level; and the introduction of decentralized plans and targets:

- Strengthening institutions at decentralised level (8 countries: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Guinea Conakry, Madagascar, Paraguay, Rwanda, Senegal, Chad);
- Strengthening human resources capacity at the subnational level (7 countries: Benin, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mozambique, Malawi and Tanzania);
- Decentralizing financing (4 countries: Angola, Burkina, Madagascar and Mozambique);
- Decentralising plans and targets (2 countries: Pakistan and Uganda).

Examples:

- *Rwanda commits to streamline and strengthen the existing performance contracting mechanism for WASH between local and central government.*
- *Tanzania commits to supervise the recruitment of registrars at Local Government Authorities by 2016. The latter will be responsible for registration of Community Owned Water Supply Organizations (COWSOs).*
- *Pakistan commits to develop provincial WASH plans with financial estimates and physical targets. Angola commits to ensure the separation of the budget earmarked for the water and sanitation sector at provincial and municipal levels.*

Highlights by SWA category – Donors

Highlight

Improving Financing

Eight donors (African Development Bank, France, Japan, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USAID) made 15 commitments on improved financing.

Examples:

Type of Financial Commitment	Country	Commitment
Commitments to spend/ allocate a specific amount of money	African Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch 47 new WASH operations for 2014–2016 -worth Euro 1,28 billion or US\$ 1,77 billion- leveraging at least an equivalent amount of co-financing from the private sector, civil society, other donors and beneficiaries.

Type of Financial Commitment	Country	Commitment
	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates an average of 700 million euros annually to the water and sanitation sector. • Commits an average of 350 million euros annually to Sub-Saharan Africa for improved access to water and sanitation, and adapting to climate change. • Commits to increase spending by up to 500,000 euros for advocacy/information on social finance.
	The Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates 100 million USD per year, from 2014-2017, to improve access to drinking water and sanitation, and hygiene promotion. • Financially supports with 10 million euros (until 2018) the 'Football for Water' initiative to provide WASH in schools in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique. • Earmarks 10 million euros for a new 'Water Knowledge and Innovation Platform' focused at developing knowledge and innovations for sustainable water use in Sub-Saharan Africa.
	Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates approximately 410 million SEK - 63 million - USD - for each year from 2014 to 2017 towards WASH programs, with a focus on women's and children's access. • Commits to contribute to Multilateral Global Support 1,597 SEK million (250 million USD). • Commits for 2013-2016 to WASH bilateral programmes in the following countries these amounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kenya: 99 million SEK (15.4 million USD) ○ Bangladesh: 76 million (11.8 million USD) ○ Bolivia: 41 million SEK (6.3 million USD) ○ Mali: 22 million SEK (3.4 million USD)
	Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until 2017, Switzerland commits to spend USD 100 million annually on WASH: 80% to be spent in rural areas; 70% for inst. Strengthening/capacity building; and 90% in off tracked countries for sanitation.
Commitments that benefit a certain number of people	USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to provide a minimum of 10 million people with sustainable access to improved water supply by 2018.
	Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to contribute to the improvement of access to safe drinking water and sanitary conditions for 10 million people.
	United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to reach 60 million people through our water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, over the five years to 2015,

Conclusions

The Statements of Commitments tabled at the 2014 HLM demonstrate a maturing of the SWA accountability mechanism. The country Statements have been developed with bold visions and commitments which emphasise the themes of eliminating inequalities and improving sustainability, as well as eliminating open defecation. Donor Statements reiterated major sector commitments and demonstrate commitment to support countries and sustainability. As such, SWA partners are positioned to undertake long-term institutional changes and contribute overall to the sustainability of service delivery.

The efforts invested to develop a focused, SMART set of commitments by a broad set of stakeholders; provides a basis from which partners can clearly advocate for results, better implement actions and effectively monitor progress. SWA partners are now poised to translate commitments into results on the ground and improve transparency and accountability in the sector.

Other documents in **2014 SWA High Level Dialogue Summaries** series:

- [#1: Overall conclusions from the 2014 HLM](#)
- [#2: Highlights from the 2014 High Level Meeting](#)
- [#3: Highlights from the 2014 Sector Ministers' Meeting](#)
- #4: Overview of the 2014 HLM Commitments