

**Written statement by Dr. Jean Baptiste Kamate, Chief Field Operations Officer at World Vision International for the UN Water Conference convened on March 22 – 26, 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.**

World Vision operates in over 100 countries around the world. With nearly 40,000 World Vision staff members—95% of whom work in their own countries—we work across sectors, including livelihoods; food security; economic empowerment; health; education; child protection; and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Over the past 37 years, our work in the WASH sector has grown exponentially. Most recently, between 2011 and 2021 our WASH programming grew by over 500%, enabling us now to directly impact more than 3 million people each year with access to clean water (half of these are children, age 0-18 years.)<sup>1</sup>

We are committed to reaching the world's most vulnerable people, especially in fragile contexts. In our Global WASH Business Plan (2021 to 2025), we are directing 89% of investment toward fragile states. Additionally, our WASH strategy reflects our commitment to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), ensuring that our WASH services are accessible equally to everyone through inclusive design processes.

We announced a continued commitment to the Water Action Agenda during the UN Water Conference to support the achievement of SDG 6. World Vision cannot achieve our ambitious commitment alone. Government, private sector, donors, and most importantly the community members and children whose lives will be directly impacted by this work are key stakeholders that must be engaged as full-fledged members in this effort. We look forward to strengthening our existing partnerships and creating new ones to end the global water crisis once and for all.

To reach our ambitious commitment, World Vision will continue to improve our work in the following key areas and encourage others to join us:

1. **Sustainability:** Assuring sustainability of WASH services is required to achieve SDG6. This requires strong partnerships with governments, private sector, and communities. At World Vision, we ensure sustainability through our long-term engagement with communities that ensures local ownership of projects. We also work with government entities to strengthen capacity to ensure sustained WASH services.
2. **Governance:** We must focus on strong systems of governance to assure lasting operation and maintenance of WASH services. Improved WASH governance, from re-engineering community-based management approaches to strengthening regulatory oversight, represents one of the most important enablers for achieving progress under SDG6 and assuring long-term sustainability.
3. **Piped-water Networks:** World Vision is committed to leading the WASH sector in the transition away from handpumps towards sustainably managed piped-water networks

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<sup>1</sup> Children as per the UN Child Rights Convention of 0 to 18 age bracket.

that provide water as close to people's homes as possible, especially in rural areas.

4. **Digital Monitoring:** World Vision's WASH monitoring agenda provides a framework to assess, adapt, and strengthen monitoring policies and practices to effectively identify service gaps, find solutions, and empower local government agencies and communities to maintain critical WASH assets. This approach assures sustainability, ensures confidence in the data we are reporting, guarantees accountability with partners, and assures water quality.
5. **Financing:** Increased investment is required to reach SDG6. We call on governments and donors to commit to increased funding for capital investments in WASH as well as investments to support long-term maintenance of WASH services, including climate resiliency planning.
6. **Innovative Partnerships:** World Vision engages the private sector to ensure operation and maintenance, and improved access to communities, through existing networks, building and establishing trust, and scaling local capacity.

On behalf of World Vision, I would like to echo the many voices who have expressed the importance of the UN Water Conference. It has been a chance for stakeholders to come together, learn from each other, and commit to practical actions for accelerating progress to SDG 6. Now the work continues; we must hold each other accountable for the bold actions that have been committed to this week. World Vision is prepared to lead on this front. Now is the time to act together as a global community to achieve the promise of SDG6 and ensure that children can achieve life in all its fullness.