

Fact Sheet: UN-Water GLAAS

The UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water *Improving the knowledge-base for decision-making*

In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO), on behalf of UN-Water, published a pilot report aimed at taking a comprehensive overview of the determining factors that are constraining or enabling progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal targets for drinking-water and sanitation. This pilot, or 'proof of concept' was launched in New York in September 2008 during the UN High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals at a side event chaired by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. This pilot UN-Water initiative was well received and a major lesson learned, from the feedback received from donors and recipient countries, is that **the sanitation and drinking-water sector lacks a global periodic comprehensive sector analysis, which is able to talk to and influence the high level policy makers**. This is a major reason why the sector is not given high enough priority by donor and recipient governments alike, even though improvements in the sector are always achievable, greatly cost-effective and could save many lives.

As a result of the feedback received, the pilot report is now to be taken forward with a Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) report; the first of these annual reports being planned for publication in January 2010. GLAAS will cover four main aspects: service levels, policy and institutional setting, human resource capacity, and financial system capacity, with external support agencies and recipient countries being part of the analysis. GLAAS will complement a number of other monitoring exercises, specifically the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation that provides the latest data on access to drinking-water and sanitation, and the second series of the Country Status Overviews, that will provide updated and in-depth analysis of the sector in several African countries.

How does GLAAS add value to sector monitoring?

The UN-Water GLAAS report is designed in response to the need of the UN-family to reduce the reporting burden of Member States and harmonize different reporting mechanisms, at the same time increasing comprehensiveness and accountability of information on the drinking-water and sanitation sector and strengthening evidence-based policy-making in drinking-water and sanitation towards and beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Leading the GLAAS effort, WHO is working in close collaboration with other UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs, major foundations, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

What are the underlying principles of the assessment?

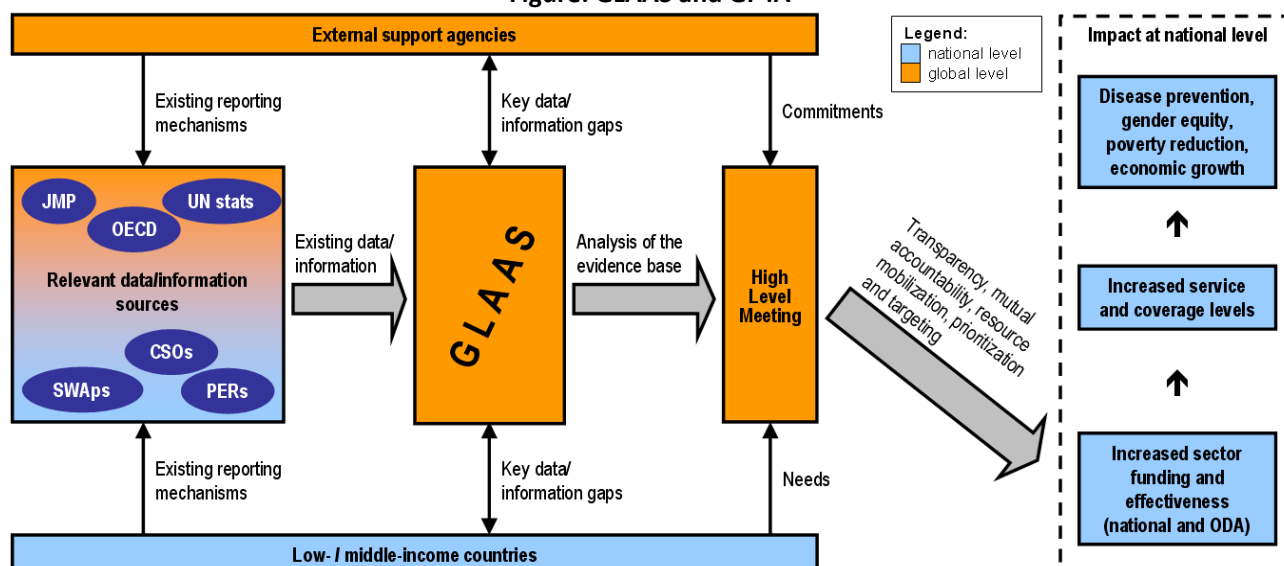
- Mutual accountability of donors and recipient countries;
- Transparency and comprehensiveness of the information presented;
- Harmonization and coordination with other relevant initiatives (EUWI Africa Working Group, WSP's Country Status Overviews, UNESCAP);
- Avoiding unnecessary reporting burden.

How is GLAAS related to the Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply?

The Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply (GF4A) is a political initiative launched in New York in September 2008. It was initiated by the governments of the Netherlands and the UK, but it now includes a wide array of governments, NGOs and international organizations. Building on existing initiatives, the GF4A provides a global platform to bring political focus and accountability to the sanitation and water supply sectors and help donors and development partners to coordinate their efforts and to direct resources where they are needed most.

GLAAS is a resource for the GF4A. In particular, the GLAAS findings are used as a basis for the strategic discussions that will take place at regional sector meetings, to be convened in late 2009, in preparation for the first global High Level Meeting on Sanitation and Water Supply in March 2010, which will be hosted by UNICEF in Washington D.C. to coincide with the World Bank's Spring Meetings. This will ensure that the evidence provided by GLAAS informs global high-level policy making and improves sector performance, which will provide direct health and economic benefits for all, but especially for the most vulnerable populations.

Figure: GLAAS and GF4A



What information will be assessed?

The GLAAS report integrates and assesses data from several different sources, including the most up-to-date existing global and regional sector monitoring efforts, such as:

- WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation
- OECD Creditor Reporting System
- Regional assessments (Water Sanitation Program, World Bank)
- Global health indicators
- Global economic indicators

In addition, the assessment identifies gaps in sector knowledge and collects and summarizes additional data where available, for example:

- Country sector progress compared to country objectives
- Trends in capacity strengthening
- Human resource capacity obstacles
- Non-OECD donor organization financial flows
- Projected future aid flows

What will be included in the GLAAS report?

- The GLAAS report will be a global analysis of available relevant data and information (e.g. JMP, OECD, WSP) along with an analysis of new information and the identification of critical information gaps.
- Four main dimensions of the sector will be reviewed including: 1) service levels, 2) policy and institutional setting, 3) human resource capacity, and 4) financial system capacity.
- The report will focus on the status of the sectors as they relate to the provision of drinking-water and sanitation services only.
- GLAAS will globally assess the activities and outputs of external support agencies and countries. In future assessments, private sector capacity and household contributions may be further researched.

Contact information

The GLAAS effort is continually seeking opportunities to develop and strengthen collaboration with global, regional, and national partners and stakeholders. If you are interested in learning more, or recognize an opportunity for collaboration, please visit www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/glaas and contact the GLAAS Team at WHO, E-mail: glaas@who.int.