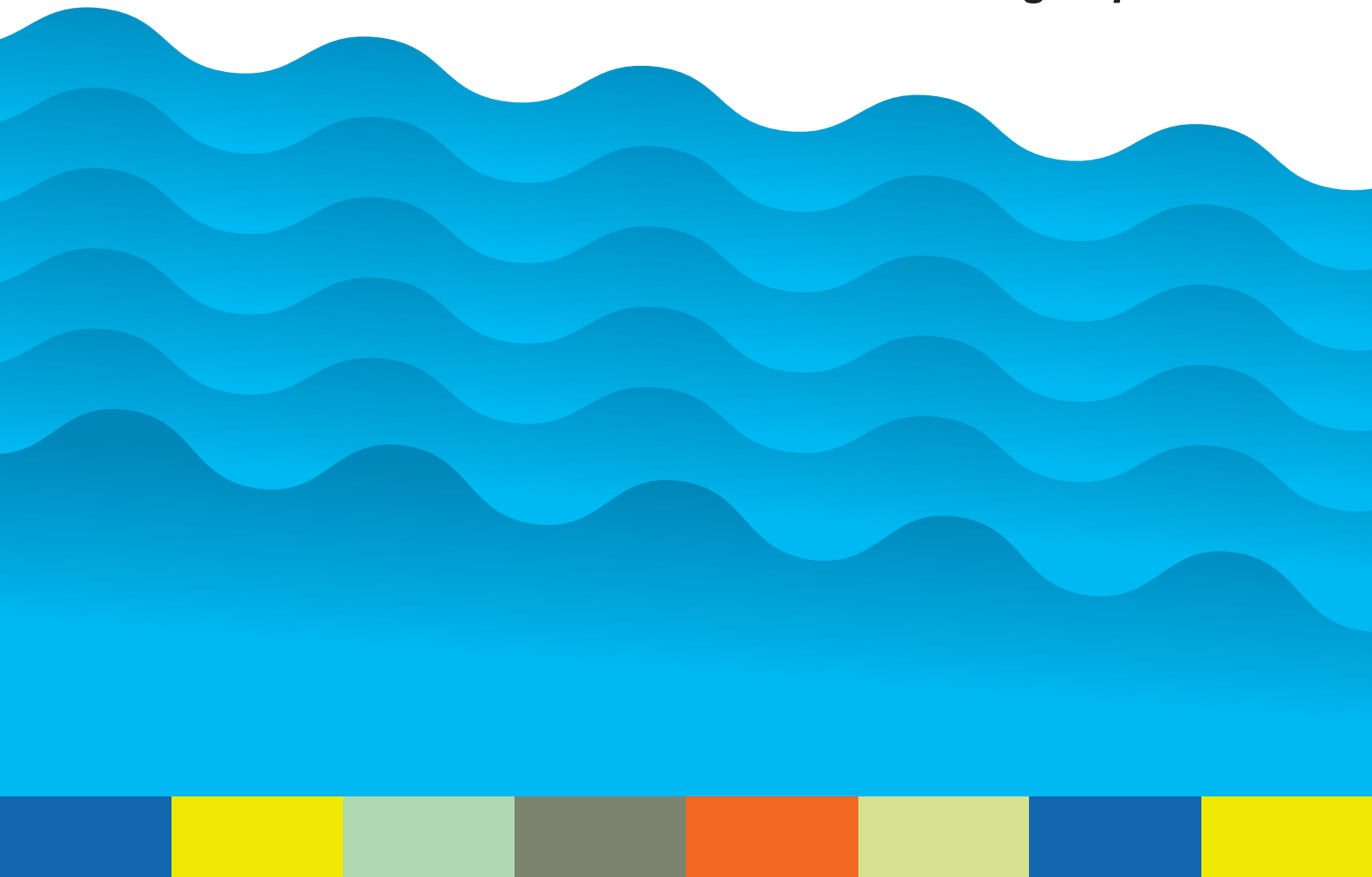


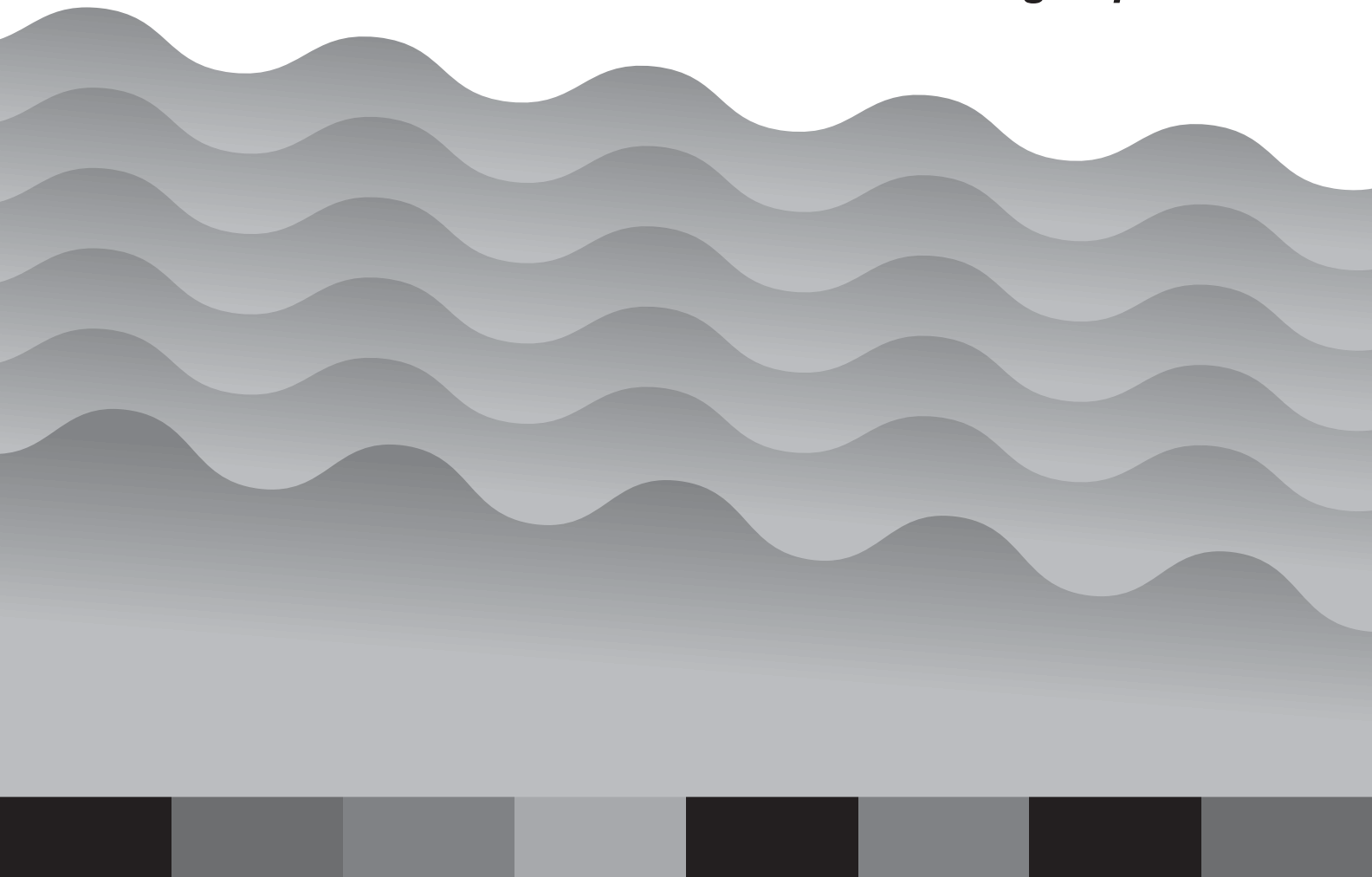
Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure Access to Water and Sanitation for All

Briefing Paper



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Briefing Paper



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Preface

The Briefing Papers on Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation has been prepared to provide background information to political party officials on Pakistan's international commitments under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the progress in achieving the goal in Pakistan.

Pakistan has adopted SDGs as Pakistan's National Development Goals. These goals are being aligned with the national, provincial and local planning and financing frameworks. Political parties have a key role to play in overseeing and monitoring of the SDGs implementation at various levels and it is important that they involve with and oversee State's planning and implementation of SDGs agenda.

This Briefing Paper has been authored by Ms. Aasiya Riaz, Joint Director, PILDAT.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the data contained in this paper. Any error or omission, therefore, is not deliberate.

Islamabad
February 2019

Introduction and Context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are defined as 'a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.'¹

The Sustainable Development Goals, 17 in total, build on the momentum generated by the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The objective behind SDGs has been to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges of the world.

While each of the 17 SDGs addresses a distinct area, the goals are interconnected in a manner that accomplishing one goal requires tackling issues more commonly associated with one or all SDGs.

Figure 1: 17 Sustainable Development Goals



Source: UN.ORG

Pakistan is one of the 189 United Nations' member countries committed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) enshrined under the *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Importantly, Pakistan's progress on 33 indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) till 2015 revealed that while we were on track to achieve the targets for nine indicators, progress on the remaining 24 was off track. Therefore, in the next instalment of the United Nation's development agenda i.e the SDGs, Pakistan's potential and the road map required to achieve irreversible progress on it, needs to be overseen for effective and timely implementation.

Given that post-2015, the Sustainable

Development Goals have replaced MDGs, with a unique focus on devising strategies on how to localize these goals, the role of the political parties is of central importance. This is not only because political parties are required to be best in tune with regards to local needs, but also because it is parties which must familiarise themselves with the SDGs so that they can understand and oversee the progress of Pakistan's implementation of these Sustainable Development Goals.

Understanding of Sustainable Development Goals is also important so that parties are aware of the gaps that are present in the Federation and Provinces' policy and legislative frameworks vis-à-vis the SDGs, and the required reforms to further this development agenda in the form of policies, regulations and requirement of consistent oversight. In this context, it is important that political parties incorporate SDGs in their election manifestoes and monitor the implementation of such items in the ruling parties' manifestoes.

Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure Access to Water and Sanitation for All

Goal 6 aims to Ensure Access to Water and Sanitation for All. Goal 6 is also briefly described as Clean Water and Sanitation.

In the background to developing this Goal, United Nations cites that water scarcity affects more than 40 per cent of people around the world and is projected to increase with the rise of global temperatures as a result of climate change. Although since 1990, nearly 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved water and sanitation, dwindling supplies of safe drinking water is a major problem impacting every continent. UN further projects that by 2050, globally, at least one in four people will be affected by recurring water shortages.

Goal 6, therefore, focuses on ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030. The goal requires that countries invest in adequate infrastructure, provide sanitation facilities, and encourage hygiene at every level. It also requires protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems such as forests, mountains, wetlands and rivers.

1. United Nations Development Programme. "What are the Sustainable Development Goals." [undp.org.
http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html) (accessed February 08, 2019).

'Scarcity': Water scarcity can mean scarcity in availability due to physical shortage, or scarcity in access due to the failure of institutions to ensure a regular supply or due to a lack of adequate infrastructure.

'Water stress': Water stress occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available amount during a certain period or when poor quality restricts its use. Water stress causes deterioration of fresh water resources in terms of quantity (aquifer over-exploitation, dry rivers, etc.) and quality (eutrophication, organic matter pollution, saline intrusion, etc.).²

"Sufficient": The water supply for each person must be sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses. These uses ordinarily include drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, personal and household hygiene.³

"Safe": The water required for each personal or domestic use must be safe, therefore free from micro-organisms, chemical substances and radiological hazards that constitute a threat to a person's health. Measures of drinking-water safety are usually defined by national and/or local standards for drinking-water quality.⁴

"Acceptable": Water should be of an acceptable colour, odour and taste for each personal or domestic use. All water facilities and services must be culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender, lifecycle and privacy requirements.⁵

"Physically accessible": Everyone has the right to a water and sanitation service that is physically accessible within, or in the immediate vicinity of the household, educational institution, workplace or health institution.⁶

"Affordable": Water, and water facilities and services, must be affordable for all.⁷

'Sanitation': Refers to the provision of facilities and services for the safe management of human excreta from the toilet to containment and storage and treatment onsite or conveyance, treatment and eventual safe end use or disposal. More broadly sanitation also included the safe management of solid waste and animal waste.⁸

'Hygiene': Hygiene is the conditions and practices that help maintain health and prevent spread of disease including handwashing, menstrual hygiene management and food hygiene⁹

'Adequate': Implies a system which hygienically separates excreta from human contact as well as safe reuse/treatment of excreta in situ, or safe transport and treatment off-site¹⁰

'Equitable': Implies progressive reduction and elimination of inequalities between population subgroups¹¹

'Good Ambient Water Quality': "Good" indicates an ambient water quality that does not damage ecosystem function and human health according to core ambient water quality parameters. Overall water quality is estimated based on a core set of parameters which inform on major water quality

2. European Environment Agency. "Water glossary." <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water/glossary> ((accessed on February 13, 2019).
3. UN Water. "Human Rights to Water and Sanitation." <http://www.unwater.org/water-facts/human-rights/> (accessed on February 13, 2019).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. World Health Organisation. "Sanitation." <https://www.who.int/topics/sanitation/en/> (accessed on February 13, 2019).
9. WHO International. "Annex 2: Safely Managed Sanitation Services." https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/coverage/explanatorynote-sdg-621-safelymanagedsanitationsServices161027.pdf?ua=1 (accessed on February 13, 2019).
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

impairments present in many parts of the world. For surface water, these parameters are dissolved oxygen, electrical conductivity, nitrogen, phosphorus and pH and for groundwater they are electrical conductivity, nitrate and pH.

'Water Use Efficiency': Water Use Efficiency (WUE) at national level is the sum of the efficiencies in the major economic sectors weighted according to the proportion of water withdrawn by each sector over the total withdrawals. The indicator measures changes in WUE and has been designed to address the economic component of SDG Target 6.4.¹²

'Integrated Water Resource Management': Indicator 6.5.1 tracks the degree of integrated water resources management (IWRM) implementation, by assessing the four key components of IWRM: Enabling environment, Institutions and participation, Management instruments and Financing. It takes into account the various users and uses of water, with the aim of promoting positive social, economic and environmental impacts at all levels, including the [transboundary level](#), where appropriate.¹³

'Protect': The indicator seeks to halt the degradation and destruction of these ecosystems, and to assist the recovery of those already degraded. The target includes water-related ecosystems such as vegetated wetlands, rivers, lakes, reservoirs and groundwater, as well as those occurring in mountains and forests, which play a special role in storing freshwater and maintaining water quality.¹⁴

'Participation': Target 6.b aims for the participation of local communities in water and sanitation planning and management, which is essential for ensuring that the needs of all people are being met. The involvement of relevant stakeholders is further necessary to ensure: that the technical and administrative solutions decided upon are suitable for specific socioeconomic contexts, the full understanding of the impacts of a certain development decision and the encouragement of local ownership of the solutions when implemented (to ensure sustainability over time). Target 6.b supports the implementation of all SDG 6 targets (targets 6.1–6.6 and 6.a) by promoting the meaningful involvement of local communities, which is also a central component of IWRM.¹⁵

'Improved Sanitation Facility': Improved sanitation facilities include flush or pour-flush toilets to sewerage systems, septic tanks or pit latrines, improved pit latrines and composting toilets.¹⁶

'High levels of water stress': The level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources is the ratio between total freshwater withdrawn by major economic sectors and total renewable freshwater resources, after taking into account environmental water requirements. This indicator is also known as water withdrawal intensity and will measure progress towards SDG Target 6.4

Targets and Indicators of Sustainable Development Goal 6

Each Sustainable Development Goal has set a number of targets and indicators to facilitate implementation by each signatory State. The Sustainable Development Goal 6: *Ensure Access to Water and Sanitation for All*, has following Targets and Indicators:

12. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. SDG Indicator 6.4.1 - Water use efficiency. <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/641/en/> (accessed February 19, 2019).
13. UN Water. "Indicator 6.5.1 – Water resources management" <http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/target-65/indicators651/> (accessed February 19, 2019).
14. SDG6Monitoring.Org. "Target 6.6 – Ecosystems." <http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/target-66/> (accessed February 19, 2019).
15. UN Water. "Target 6.b – Stakeholder participation." <http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/target-6b/> (accessed February 19, 2019).
16. UN Water. "Indicator 6.2.1 – Sanitation and hygiene." <http://www.sdg6monitoring.org/indicators/target-6-2/indicators621/> (accessed February 19, 2019).

Table 1: SDG 6 Targets and Indicators

No.	Targets	No.	Indicators
6.1	By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all	6.1.1	Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
6.2	By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations	6.2.1	Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
6.3	By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally	6.3.1	Proportion of wastewater safely treated
6.4	By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	6.3.2	Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
		6.4.1	Change in water-use efficiency over time
		6.4.2	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources
6.5	By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	6.5.1	Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0-100)
		6.5.2	Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation
6.6	By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including	6.6.1	Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time
6.A	By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	6.A.1	Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
6.B	Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	6.B.1	Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

Global Progress on Implementation of SDG 6

Progress on implementation of SDG 6 shows mixed results. A majority of the world's population still lack safe sanitation, and 3 in 10 lack safe drinking water. [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018](#)¹⁷ provides a regional overview of implementation. It says that in 2015, 5.2 billion people (71 per cent of the global population) used safely managed drinking water services—that is, an improved water source located on premises, available when needed and free from contamination. An additional 1.3 billion people (17 per cent of the population) used a basic drinking water service—an improved water source not more than 30 minutes away. This means that 844 million people still lacked even a basic level of service. Based on estimates from 84 countries in 2015, 39 per cent of the global population used safely managed sanitation services—basic facilities that safely dispose of human waste. An additional 29 per cent of the global population used a basic sanitation service—an improved facility that is not shared. That year, 2.3 billion people lacked even a basic level of service, and 892 million people continued to practice open defecation. Only 27 per cent of the population in least developed countries had basic handwashing facilities.

The Case of Pakistan

While Pakistan is scheduled to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the 2019 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), a group of stakeholders in Pakistan have issued a report outlining the country's achievements and challenges related to SDG implementation.¹⁸ The report notes that SDGs 1 (no poverty), 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) are a priority for the country,

and that the government has approved a national SDG framework that includes national SDG targets and indicators. On challenges, however, the report expresses disappointment on implementation of policies related to the SDGs and terms it as “extremely weak” institutional coordination at “every level” of government, and among SDG task forces and units on SDG implementation progress and challenges.

Pakistan has been long facing the crisis of water scarcity and inadequate facilities of supply of clean drinking water and sanitation. Pakistan is one of the 37 countries of the world with extremely high levels of water stress, a condition when the demand for water exceeds the available of water or when poor quality restricts its use. It is estimated to reach absolute water scarcity by 2025.

While the country has seen some increase in access to water and sanitation over the years, water contamination and lack of adequate facilities for and mixing of untreated waste water has exacerbated the risks linked with poor sanitation. Water tests across Pakistan have revealed shockingly high rates of *E. coli* contamination in both surface and ground water. In addition to direct consumption, untreated waste water is routinely mixed with surface and ground water for use in crop irrigation.¹⁹

The Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2017-2018²⁰ notes that in Pakistan, *'supply of drinkable water and sanitation services (WSS) requires special attention as presently a large number of households do not have access to enough potable or shallow water and there is lack of proper sanitation system. Poor sanitation leads to sickness as well as negative impact of ecosystem.'* The report also notes that *'due to water scarcity in the country, waste water treatment is imperative for the continuous and affluent supply of water for agriculture in future. Despite having the potential and capacity of our industry for designing and fabricating waste water/sewage treatment plants locally, only a*

17. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals 2018.” <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/goal-06/> (accessed February 5, 2019).

18. SDGs Knowledge Hub. “Stakeholders Report on SDG Progress and Challenges in Pakistan.”

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/stakeholders-report-on-sdg-progress-and-challenges-in-pakistan/> (accessed February 13, 2019).

19. Mansuri, Ghazala; Sami, Mohammad Farhanullah; Ali, Muhammad; Doan, Hang Thi Thu; Javed, Bilal; Pandey, Priyanka. “When Water Becomes a Hazard : A Diagnostic Report on The State of Water Supply, Sanitation and Poverty in Pakistan and Its Impact on Child Stunting.” Working Paper. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/649341541535842288/When-Water-Becomes-a-Hazard-A-Diagnostic-Report-on-The-State-of-Water-Supply-Sanitation-and-Poverty-in-Pakistan-and-Its-Impact-on-Child-Stunting> (accessed February 10, 2019).

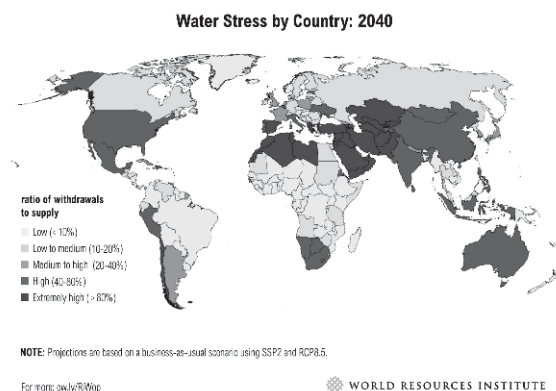
20. The Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2017-2018. http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_18/16-Climate_change.pdf (accessed February 10, 2019).

meagre portion of industrial wastewater is being treated and reused.'

Due to increasing population, the stresses of clean water supply and sanitation have increased over the years. Pakistan is one of the top 10 countries with the lowest access to clean water.²¹ While Pakistan has improved its ranking and falls at number 5 out of the 10 countries that have most improved water access by number since 2000 by reaching over 44 million citizens, it falls below China, India, Indonesia and Nigeria. Estimates suggest that in Pakistan, 88.5% of people have access to clean water close to home, 79.2% of the poorest people have clean water while 98% of the richest people have clean water.²²

The World Resources Institute places Pakistan to be in the *Extremely High* Water Stress category by 2040 if the business-as-usual scenario persists and investments are not made both in availability of water and effective and across-the-board water conservation strategies. In such a scenario, Pakistan is to rank at 23 out of 33 countries facing water stress by 2040.

Figure 2: Water Stress by Country: 2040²³



Source: World Resource Institute

Figure 3: Top 33 Water Stress Countries by 2040

RANK	NAME	ALL SECTORS	RANK	NAME	ALL SECTORS
1	Bahrain	5.00	18	Azerbaijan	4.69
1	Kuwait	5.00	19	Morocco	4.68
1	Qatar	5.00	20	Kazakhstan	4.66
1	San Marino	5.00	21	Iraq	4.66
1	Singapore	5.00	22	Armenia	4.60
1	United Arab Emirates	5.00	23	Pakistan	4.48
1	Palestine	5.00	24	Chile	4.45
8	Israel	5.00	25	Syria	4.44
9	Saudi Arabia	4.99	26	Turkmenistan	4.30
10	Oman	4.97	27	Turkey	4.27
11	Lebanon	4.97	28	Greece	4.23
12	Kyrgyzstan	4.93	29	Uzbekistan	4.19
13	Iran	4.91	30	Algeria	4.17
14	Jordan	4.86	31	Afghanistan	4.12
15	Libya	4.77	32	Spain	4.07
16	Yemen	4.74	33	Tunisia	4.06
17	Macedonia	4.70			

<http://ow.ly/RiWop>

Source: World Resource Institute

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Though India too is likely to be among *High Stress* water countries by 2040, it does not fall within the 33 water stressed countries by 2040. However, the World Resources Institute data shows that more than 100 million people live in areas of poor water quality.²⁴ According to the *Water Gap: The State of the World's Water 2018* report India tops the list of top 10 countries with lowest access to clean water close to home – by population. India is also termed as one of the world's most-improved nations for reaching the most people with clean water, but faces challenges with falling groundwater levels, drought, demand from agriculture and industry, pollution and poor water resource management – challenges that will intensify as climate change contributes to more extreme weather shocks. India, however, has 88% of people with access to clean water close to home as compared to 88.5% of Pakistanis with access to clean water close to home.²⁵

However, Pakistan faces both the issues of access to water and that of a poor quality of water. Only 39 per cent of Pakistanis have access to safe drinking water and these levels of safety also vary from region to region.²⁶ While rural areas and poor

- The Gulf News. "21 million in Pakistan don't have access to clean water: report." <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/21-million-in-pakistan-dont-have-access-to-clean-water-report-1.2192988> (accessed February 19, 2019).
- WaterAid. "The Water Gap. The State of the World's Water 2018." March 2018. [washmatters.wateraid.org](https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxooof256/files/The%20Water%20Gap%20State%20of%20Water%20report%20l%20pages.pdf). <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxooof256/files/The%20Water%20Gap%20State%20of%20Water%20report%20l%20pages.pdf> (accessed on February 10, 2019).
- The World Resources Institute. "Ranking the World's Most Water-Stressed Countries in 2040." <https://www.wri.org/blog/2015/08/ranking-world-s-most-water-stressed-countries-2040> (accessed February 12, 2019).
- The World Resources Institute. "3 Maps Explain India's Growing Water Risks." <https://www.wri.org/blog/2015/02/3-maps-explain-india-s-growing-water-risks> (accessed February 19, 2019).
- WaterAid. "The Water Gap. The State of the World's Water 2018." March 2018. [washmatters.wateraid.org](https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxooof256/files/The%20Water%20Gap%20State%20of%20Water%20report%20l%20pages.pdf). <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/sites/g/files/jkxooof256/files/The%20Water%20Gap%20State%20of%20Water%20report%20l%20pages.pdf> (accessed on February 10, 2019).
- The Gulf News. "21 million in Pakistan don't have access to clean water: report." [gulfnews.com](https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/21-million-in-pakistan-dont-have-access-to-clean-water-report-1.2192988). <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/21-million-in-pakistan-dont-have-access-to-clean-water-report-1.2192988> (accessed February 12, 2019).

face greater issues, the situation has been alarming for instance in big metropolis like Karachi also.

Pakistan gets its water supply through underground water reserves, Himalayan glaciers and via monsoon rainfall. Coupled with lack of water storage capabilities and unsustainable groundwater utilisation, the country is running out of available water reserves.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), between 50 and 100 litres of water per person per day are needed to ensure that most basic needs are met and few health concerns arise. International standards require 1000 m³ (Cubic Meter) per capita per annum as the value for water scarcity,²⁷ and per capita availability of water in Pakistan has already dropped to 1038 m³ per capita. The per person water availability in Pakistan was 5,100 cubic metres in 1951 which dropped down to 1,100 cubic metres and is further expected to decrease to 700 cubic metres by the year 2025, a state which is referred to as 'physical water scarcity'.²⁸

At the heart of the water shortage and availability of poor quality water lies lack of comprehensive national planning. Despite continuous concerns, the questions of water resources management and inter-provincial differences on the subject persist. Pakistan seems to be facing the cycles of extra-ordinary dry and wet spells. It undergoes cyclic issues of drought like conditions for a few years followed by flooding, leading to severe losses in both cases.

The scenario gets further grim by taking into account the unregulated exploitation of groundwater resources which is leading to fast depletion of groundwater aquifers resulting into further shortage. Add to this scenario the impact of climate change on Pakistan's already stressed

water resources and lack of water conservation strategies and the requirement of a comprehensive water strategy becomes even more critical.

In addition to dwindling supply of adequate water, water quality has also become an alarming issue for Pakistan. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), only 36 per cent of the Pakistani population on average, including 41% in urban areas and 32% rural areas, has access to safe drinking water in the country. Results of the water-quality monitoring efforts by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) indicate that 69 to 85% of collected samples of water were contaminated.²⁹

While Federal and Provincial Governments have introduced and set up water supply schemes including public filtration plants, these do not cover the entire country and citizens often face issues of access. As per the PCRWR Report, *Water Quality Status of Major Cities of Pakistan 2015-2016*,³⁰ out of 369 sources, 114 or 31% sources were safe while 255 or 69% sources were unsafe when compared with National Standards for Drinking Water Quality. While an increasing number of city-dwellers rely on bottled water, problems also persist with both quality of available water and the issue of pricing, as recently taken up by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. As per PCRWR, 8 per cent of the bottled water is unsafe.³¹

Lack of access to adequate sanitation facilities is another issue, not just in Pakistan, but around the world also. It is estimated that globally, around 2.6 million men, women and especially children continue to die every year from diseases caused by unsafe water and an unsanitary environment. In 2018, one third of the world's population is still drinking water that can endanger their health. 2.6 billion people still lack adequate sanitation facilities.³²

27. UN.Org. <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/index.shtml>. (accessed February 12, 2019).

28. Dawn.Com. "Water conservation: For our sustainable future." <https://www.dawn.com/news/796021/water-conservation-for-our-sustainable-future>. (as accessed February 10, 2019).

29. Daily Pakistan Global.

30. Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Report "Water Quality Status of Major Cities of Pakistan 2015-2016." <http://www.pcrwr.gov.pk/Publications/Reports/Water%20Quality%20Statu%20of%20Major%20Cities%20of%20Pakistan%202015-16.pdf> (accessed February 09, 2019).

31. Crp.org.pk. "Assessing the drinking water challenge in Pakistan." November 2018. <https://www.crcp.org.pk/images/PDF/Publications/Drinking-Water--Policy-Brief--Nov2018-Formatted.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2019).

32. Reliefweb.international. "2018 Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Barometer." March 2018. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018-Water-Hygiene-and-Sanitation-Barometer.pdf> (as accessed on February 12, 2019).

In 2017, Pakistan was termed as the seventh worst country in terms of access to basic sanitation, as its 42 per cent of the population remained without access to basic sanitation. A report by WaterAid estimated 79 million people to lack a decent toilet, while 37 per cent had no system for wastewater disposal, leading to spread of diseases due to contamination of water and contact with human waste.³³

While Pakistan improved in numbers of citizens with access to basic sanitation services with 58% population, and 36% of the population having access to safely managed water sources, experts have termed wider availability of water, sanitation, and hygiene as big challenges for Pakistan today and in the future. Pakistan has the 5th highest number of people (22 million) practicing open defecation with a stark rural-urban sanitation inequality; less than 1% open defecation is reported in urban areas as compared to 19% in rural areas.³⁴ India alone has an estimated 600 million people defecating openly, according to a study by the United Nations, accounting for more open defecation than any other country in the world.³⁵

Indian Government figures, however, show that India has recently improved the country's sanitation coverage from **39% to 65%**. However, reportedly, as of January 2018, there had been no independent verification of the numbers, which had caused the World Bank to delay the release of a US \$1.5 billion loan.³⁶

There is also an economic cost to poor quality of water and sanitation in Pakistan. According to Economic Survey of Pakistan, water and hygiene related diseases are costing Pakistan's economy annual national income losses of US\$380 to US\$883 million of the GDP while 250,000 children less than five years of age die every year in the country due to diarrheal diseases.

The first-ever National Water Policy,³⁷ approved by the Council of Common Interests in April 2018

after considerable delays, recognises Drinking and Sanitation (WASH) of water as a key priority. It aims to undertake "plans and initiatives ... to progressively provide access to clean and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to the urban and rural population of the country." The policy states that full financial sustainability shall be aimed at for the Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Systems through effective reduction in wastage, theft and non-revenue water allocation and 100% metering, with effective safety-nets for the urban and peri-urban poor. The policy recognises that urban water tariffs must be revised to ensure financial sustainability, adding that rural water supply and sanitation services shall be priced at affordable rates.

The policy signed by 4 provinces promises that "under no circumstances, shall the quality of drinking water, urban or rural, be allowed to fall below the specified standards. Each agency responsible for delivery of such services shall prepare Quality Monitoring Plans and shall be responsible for their rigorous enforcement." The provinces also recognised that all drinking water and sanitation plans will be adopted in line with the National Drinking Water and Sanitation Policies and Sustainable Development Goals. The policy stated that less than 1% of total wastewater in the country is treated before disposal and therefore, treatment is to be promoted at centralized level (in technical terms) at first and will be decentralized in due course of time."

Data Reporting Gaps

As explained earlier, Pakistan adopted SDGs in 2015 as National Development Goals after which Federal and Provincial Governments have begun mainstreaming the SDGs into national and provincial planning.

A Study conducted by the Federal SDGs Support Unit in June 2018 put together Data Reporting Gaps analysis as the initial point for mainstreaming of the SDGs. The study concludes that while Pakistan fares reasonably well in

33. Dawn.com. "Pakistan 7th Worst Country in Access to Sanitation." November 23, 2017. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1372293>. (as accessed February 12, 2019).
34. Dailytimes.com.pk. "The Cost of Poor Sanitation in Pakistan." January 14, 2019. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/343821/the-cost-of-poor-sanitation-in-pakistan/>. (as accessed February 12, 2019).
35. The Diplomat. "Is India Really 'Winning Its War' on Open Defecation?" <https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/is-india-really-winning-its-war-on-open-defecation/> (as accessed February 12, 2019).
36. Brilliant Mpas.Com. "Change in Percentage Of Indian Households with Toilets From 2014 to 2017." <https://brilliantmpas.com/indian-toilets/> (accessed February 13, 2019).
37. National Water Policy, 2018. Ministry of Water and Power. <http://water.muett.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/National-Water-Policy.pdf> (accessed February 18, 2019).

capturing the inclusion and equity aspects of SDGs, substantial improvement is needed to report on certain goals including the goal on clean water and sanitation and therefore ministries dealing with these goals, including goal 6, must embed a result-based framework in their policies and plans.

Why is it Important for Political Parties to be Aware of SDG-6 – Clean Water and Sanitation?

Political parties are the building blocks of democratic governance. It is the parties which, based on their policy agendas, seek public support to run the affairs of the State. It is therefore fundamentally important that parties are aware not just of issues facing Pakistan but also of the global commitments undertaken by the State of Pakistan.

On 28 July 2010, through Resolution 64/292, the United Nations General Assembly explicitly recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States and international organisations to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.³⁸

The constitution of Pakistan also recognises that “no person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law” (Article 9). It is, therefore, the responsibility of the State to provide clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to all citizens. While legal frameworks for protection of consumers are available but right to safe drinking water and sanitation need to be recognized in clear terms in the Constitution and legal frameworks in Pakistan.³⁹

In addition to being a signatory to all SDGs, Pakistan has also undertaken efforts to localise all SDGs. In doing so, the Planning Commission at the Federal level and Planning and Development Departments at the Provincial levels have begun the efforts for localisation of all SDGs. In addition, Parliamentary and Provincial Assembly Committees were set-up to oversee the implementation of SDGs.

However, it is important that at the level of legislatures, sectoral committees overseeing performance of ministries and departments carry regular oversight of implementation of SDGs. It may also be a good idea if Political parties also develop policy cells that periodically review progress on implementation of SDGs by national, provincial and local governments.

Political parties need to prepare policy solutions to ensure safe drinking water supply and sanitation facilities for every citizen. In liaising with subject experts, parties must find innovative solutions to address persistent issues of water availability, water quality, conservation, quality control and pricing. While SDGs offer us global directions, it is up to the State of Pakistan to develop and find local solutions to address the national challenges.

Pakistan is scheduled to present a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the 2019 session of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). It is important, therefore, that all stakeholders, especially political parties, oversee the progress on implementation and demand a review of draft report before Pakistan presents it globally.

38. Un.org. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml (accessed February 10, 2019).

39. Crcp.org.pk. “Assessing the drinking water challenge in Pakistan.” November 2018. <https://www.crcp.org.pk/images/PDF/Publications/Drinking-Water--Policy-Brief--Nov2018-Formatted.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2019).



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