

Addressing Africa's Sanitation Crisis: Monitoring the Sharm el-Sheikh Ngor Commitment on Sanitation and Hygiene



Sanitation and hygiene are key drivers for economic and human development. Sanitation and hygiene are critical to the achievement of not only SDG 6, but also other development goals including health, nutrition, education and gender equality. Sanitation is recognised as a human right. And yet, there is a sanitation crisis in Africa.

Throughout much of Africa, access to at least basic sanitation is below 50%. In Sub-Saharan Africa access to safely managed sanitation is at 20% in urban areas and 18% in rural areas. Only 8% of the population are connected to formal sewer connections.

Open defecation remains high across Sub-Saharan Africa and is predominantly a rural issue. Regional averages mask countries with extremely high open defecation rates; in 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa more than half of the rural population practise open defecation.

Data to monitor hygiene is available for only 37 countries; in 35 of these, less than 50% of the population have basic handwashing with soap facilities at home.

Institutional sanitation and hygiene are also in crisis – one in three schools in Africa have no sanitation service at all, and two in three schools have no basic hygiene services. Whilst the burden of a lack of sanitation is currently felt most acutely in rural areas, demographic changes project a tripling of populations of African cities by 2050. This will undoubtedly lead to complex sanitation challenges which will need to be addressed in urban areas.

The Ngor Commitments

The Ngor Vision on Sanitation and Hygiene is that *universal access to adequate and sustainable sanitation and hygiene services will be achieved and open defecation eliminated by 2030*. This vision closely aligns with the SDG sanitation and hygiene targets. The Ngor Declaration on Sanitation and Hygiene sets out the Ngor Commitments which recognise the areas of the enabling environment that need to be addressed in order to achieve its Vision. The Ngor Commitments are the building blocks of an effective sanitation and hygiene sector. It is only when progress is achieved across all the

Ngor Commitments that the enabling environment will support accelerated access.

The Ngor Commitment Monitoring results

AMCOW is mandated to monitor progress against the Ngor Commitments, and this regular monitoring and reporting of country progress is the cornerstone of the AfricaSan movement. The Ngor Commitment monitoring process captures the Ngor Commitments both in terms of whether the building blocks of the enabling environment are in place, and subsequently whether progress is made against country-specific targets.

The results of the 2018-19 monitoring round show that progress in the enabling environment for sanitation and hygiene is uneven. While progress is being made in commitment areas concerning *leadership and coordination*, and *establishing government-led monitoring and review systems*, other areas of the enabling environment are being left behind and will act as a drag on sector progress. Three Ngor Commitments in particular are highlighted as showing least progress – *eliminating inequality*, *establishing budgets*, and *waste management*. These commitments require a redoubling of efforts to prevent them from becoming critical bottlenecks to the achievement of the Ngor Vision.

Situation and key recommendations for high-level decision makers in the 3 lowest scoring commitments

C1: Focus on the poorest, most marginalised and unserved aimed at progressively eliminating inequalities in access and use and implement national and local strategies with an emphasis on equity and sustainability

“Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)” underpins the Ngor Vision and Commitments and SDG targets, and yet there has been limited progress on the Ngor Commitment to eliminate inequalities in access and use. There has been some progress on addressing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable

through strategic plans based on needs assessments, however this often doesn't go far enough. More than half of studies to identify inequalities are not nationally representative, and where sanitation and hygiene plans include the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable half don't include

targets. Less than one quarter of countries focus on sustainability through undertaking and publishing results of evaluations. And two thirds of countries do not track user satisfaction.

To secure progress against the Ngor vision the sanitation and hygiene sector needs to get better at identifying and targeting the most vulnerable groups with strategies and interventions, including product and service innovations. While action to address inequalities is required by all actors, it is ultimately the responsibility of governments to ensure that no one is left behind.

Recommended actions to be taken by high-level decision makers to address the gaps in C1:

- Commit to ensuring that no one is left behind and assume responsibility to provide affordable and acceptable services to all.
- Include specific targets to leave no one behind into national policies and strategies, and specifically include the poorest and most vulnerable in planning targets and budgets.

C3: Establish and track sanitation and hygiene budget lines that consistently increase annually to reach a minimum of 0.5% GDP by 2020

The overall cost requirements for achieving and sustaining universal sanitation and hygiene coverage are significantly greater than current resources available; only one country reports having a budget line that has increased to reach the 0.5% GDP target. Putting in place the enabling environment for sanitation and hygiene budgets remains a key challenge to the Ngor Vision across Africa. There is limited progress on investment planning with only 6 countries having investment plans for sanitation and hygiene which define the budget required to meet country goals defined for both SDG 1.4 (basic sanitation) and SDG 6.2 (safely managed sanitation). There is also limited progress on effective and comprehensive budget tracking; less than a third of countries that have established budget-tracking mechanisms for sanitation and hygiene are able to fully capture expenditure across the entire sector. The Ngor Vision cannot be achieved without securing and sustaining dedicated

investments. Stakeholders need to unite to mobilize financial resources for sanitation and hygiene through both existing and new investments aimed at closing the financing gap.

Recommended actions to be taken by high-level decision makers to address the gaps in C3:

- Recognise the importance of the Sanitation Economy, mobilise additional resources from public financing and introduce innovative financing approaches for sanitation and hygiene.
- Work with the private sector to unlock new and promising financing streams to create scalable solutions.

C7: Progressively eliminate untreated waste, encouraging its productive use

Eliminating untreated waste, and encouraging its productive re-use is essential for *safely managed* sanitation targets. However, it is currently the worst performing of the Ngor commitments, with little progress made in establishing the enabling environment for the elimination of untreated waste.

Existing faecal waste management definitions, standards, and regulations are not consistent or adequately enforced. For example, 28 countries have included faecal waste management in some definitions, however it is consistently included across all ODF and sanitation service definitions in less than half of these cases. Only 6 out of 26 countries which have faecal sludge management regulations and bylaws in place, report that the regulations and bylaws are comprehensive and enforced. Essentially no

country is able to track the amount of faecal waste being disposed of in the environment. As a first step African countries need to establish a national baseline, develop a tracking mechanism and set ambitious targets to address this urgent issue. Sector stakeholders must push the sanitation agenda beyond access to basic services to ensure *safely managed* sanitation for all.

Recommended actions to be taken by high-level decision makers to address the gaps in C7:

- Be the driving force behind a sanitation agenda that goes beyond access to basic services to ensure that safely managed services for all becomes the target of national sanitation and hygiene efforts.
- A focus on promoting and amplifying equitable and inclusive approaches to sanitation
- Taking the lead on advocacy efforts aimed at closing the financing gap for investments in water and sanitation infrastructure
- Developing model sanitation guidelines and policies, plans and regulations that Member States can adapt and implement covering all aspects of safely managed sanitation and hygiene.

AMCOW strategic actions towards accelerating the achievement of the Ngor Commitments

AMCOW's strategy 2018-2030 elaborates its strategic and cross cutting priorities in support of the organisational vision of *A water secure Africa with safe sanitation for all*. Under the new strategy *ensuring safely managed sanitation and hygiene* is one of four strategic priorities – a clear indication of AMCOW's ongoing commitment to work with others to address the sanitation crisis in Africa. AMCOW's strategic actions support and drive progress in the Ngor Commitments for Sanitation and Hygiene including through: