



# UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT 2024-2026





## About WaterAid

WaterAid Australia is a member of WaterAid, an international non-governmental organisation determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Only by tackling these three essentials in ways that last can people change their lives for good.

WaterAid is made up of member countries in India, Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Sweden, the UK and the USA. The member countries help coordinate and fund operations across country programs with the mission to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

WaterAid Australia coordinates and fund programs in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

Since we started, we've remained resolutely focused on tackling the three essentials; water, sanitation and hygiene, that transform people's lives. Without all three, people can't live dignified, healthy lives. With all three, they can unlock their potential, break free from poverty, and change their lives for good. Children grow up healthy and strong, women and men get to earn a living, whole communities start to thrive. It sounds normal and it should be. Since 1981 we have reached over 28 million people with clean water, over 28 million people with decent toilets and over 26 million people with good hygiene.

By working closely with partners internationally and on the ground in some of the toughest places in the world, we help achieve widespread change. Millions of people have already taken control of their lives and built better futures.

Now we are working with our supporters and partners to get clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to everyone, everywhere by 2030, in accordance with the UN SDGs. It's about more than installing taps, toilets, boreholes and wells. To make lasting change happen on a massive scale, we:

- convince governments to change laws;
- link policy makers with people on the ground;
- change attitudes and behaviours;
- pool knowledge and resources; and
- rally support from people and organisations around the world

People are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to inspire people, bringing them together to ignite action. We spark chain reactions that lead to lasting change in what's normal. Lasting change in people's habits and expectations. Lasting change in how countries work, not just in how villages and communities work. Lasting change is people's lives.

In 2022, Globally, WaterAid launched our current 10 year strategy which will address the following;

- focus on strengthening national and local WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) systems to support the acceleration towards universal, sustainable and safe WASH
- increase the focus on sanitation and hygiene progress to bring them in line with water access
- over the next decade, we will steadily increase our efforts in urbanized areas to account for up to half our work
- all that we do will be founded in peoples' right to water and sanitation and ensure that our work contributes to progress for all, regardless of gender, age, wealth, caste, location, ethnicity, sexuality, religious or occupational status

Together, we will change millions of lives for the better –and change normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.



16 April 2024

**Ms Sanda Ojiambo**  
**Executive Director**  
**UN Global Compact**

Dear Ms Ojiambo

I am reaching out to reaffirm WaterAid Australia's unwavering support for the United Nations Global Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscoring our steadfast dedication to this worldwide endeavour and its core tenets encompassing human and labour rights, environmental stewardship, governance, and sustainable development.

Our allegiance to the Global Compact stands as a testament to WaterAid's commitment to supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The significance of access to water and sanitation transcends Goal 6 alone, extending its profound impact across various domains such as poverty alleviation, hunger eradication, healthcare, education, and the pursuit of equality. By prioritizing water, sanitation, and hygiene, we embrace an integrated strategy aimed at fostering equitable, resilient, and thriving communities.

Successful realisation of Goal 6 will underpin progress across many other goals, including:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

There remain some major areas of concern:

- **Rapid urbanisation, population growth and economic development** present increasing and competing demands for water
- **Climate change** is likely to lead to more frequent, unpredictable and extreme weather episodes, with poor people disproportionately affected by floods, droughts and contaminated water.

- **Public health** depends on safe water, sanitation and good hygiene. COVID-19 is the perfect example we are all trying to tackle by promoting good hygiene in communities
- **Financing** universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene will require a significant increase in public and private funding
- **Sustaining water and sanitation services and hygiene** is a significant challenge in many developing countries

We understand that access to water, proper sanitation, and good hygiene are fundamental for individuals to lead healthy, secure, and prosperous lives. With unwavering commitment, we strive towards realizing our vision of a world where every person, regardless of location, enjoys these basic human rights and essential services.

In response to this pressing global need, WaterAid's strategy revolves around forging robust partnerships and coalitions as we pursue our ambitious objective of ensuring water, sanitation, and hygiene for all by 2030. We aim to drive change through four interlinked pillars: addressing disparities in access, bolstering sustainable service delivery, integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene with other critical areas of development, and fostering improved hygiene practices.

We commit to sharing our expertise and leadership, drawing upon WaterAid's extensive experience across 34 countries worldwide. This entails contributing to the formulation of specialized initiatives, crafting tools and conducting research, fostering additional partnerships and initiatives, and holding businesses accountable for their adherence to the principles of the Global Compact and their commitments therein.

The attached document details WaterAid's practical actions in influencing change in a broader movement to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Ayles', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Teresa Ayles**

Director Corporate and Community Engagement  
WaterAid Australia



In December 2013, WaterAid Australia signed onto the UN Global Compact (UNGC) and joined the Global Compact Network Australia. Launched in 2000, the UNGC is an international initiative that seeks to improve organisational practices grounded in its Ten Principles in the areas of human and labour rights, environment, governance and sustainable development.

As a signatory to the Global Compact, WaterAid Australia shows leadership in the not for-profit sector and ensures our policies align with the UNGC's universally accepted values and principles.

Water is one of the greatest sustainability challenges facing business and is a key issue for Australia as the world's driest inhabited continent. Water underpins the global economy - it is essential for agriculture, manufacturing, metal, thermal energy, food, beverages, textiles, pulp, paper and many other industries.

Water issues, including access, scarcity and pollution are fundamental risks to business that affect the bottom line and carry environmental and social implications. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which recognise water and sanitation as critical components of sustainable development (Goal 6).

WaterAid sees its corporate relationships as important opportunities to emphasise water's importance in sustainable development. Under the WaterAid Federation, WaterAid Australia is committed to the CEO Water Mandate and advises companies on how they can both protect their water supply needs and ensure that poor, rural communities have access to clean water.

Corporate partnerships are critical to our success, not only in terms of raising valuable funds, but also in ensuring WaterAid leverages on its valuable partners to co-design sustainable technical solutions to water-related issues in developing countries as well as holds a strong voice in campaigning governments locally to help us solve the water and sanitation crisis in developing countries.

As a member and participant in UNGC forums, WaterAid Australia is able to promote the necessity of universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene as a fundamental human right in overcoming poverty. Throughout the process of developing the SDGs, WaterAid campaigned tirelessly and successfully to ensure a dedicated Global Goal for water and sanitation was included.

Through a partnership with WaterAid, companies can strengthen their corporate social responsibility and sustainability programs, commit action toward the SDGs and bring life-saving clean water and sanitation to the world's poorest communities.

In a world with so many competing priorities, WaterAid remains resolutely focused on tackling the three essentials of water, sanitation and hygiene because they transform people's lives for good. Thus, our commitment to the UN Global Compact has many intents and purposes: we aim to increase the awareness among corporate Australia of water supply and sanitation as a basic human right, both domestically and regionally; to promote improved water stewardship amongst corporate Australia, in both their domestic operations and any relevant international operations; to align with and learn from industry leaders in sustainability, and to promote the great work achieved through the Compact to recognise industry and market forces as the great hope to catalyse change.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe our actions to support the Global Compact and its principles over the period April 2024 – March 2026. We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

## Engage with Global Compact Local Networks

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
WaterAid is active within the Australian network, engaging in areas where we can contribute, learn or share	Work on the inclusion and prosecution of SDG 6 shows WaterAid added value to its partners and the water industry at large in a framework for deeper engagement through a common agenda beyond our own business model.
WaterAid promotes its UNGC membership in all WaterAid corporate materials and on its website	Since joining the UNGC, we've seen awareness and interest in the Compact growing within the water and health industry in Australia; a sector lacking in membership for some time. WaterAid, as the charity partner of choice of water companies and utilities, has been instrumental to bring some new partners to the UNGC. We have also been active in the UNGC Australian network by attending different workshops and participating in initiatives to design a joint social agenda between NGOs and the private sector
We share all publications and work-stream papers with WaterAid US & UK and encourage them to participate	Our UK and US offices are also UNGC members, which aligns the UK and US water industry with the network, increasing exponentially the focus on SDGs.

## Join and/or Propose Partnership Projects on Corporate Sustainability

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
Broadening our partnerships with the Australian Water Association (AWA) and partnering with Water New Zealand to strengthen collaboration and mitigate overlap	WaterAid has partnered with AWA (the umbrella organisation for the water industry in Australia) to improve the effectiveness of both organisations through joint development and activities and reciprocal membership, so that collaboration around development of water systems in neighbouring countries is undertaken jointly by WaterAid, AWA and the Australian water utilities to eliminate overlap and better allocate scarce resources. The MoU has also triggered different collaborations with other smaller water networks in Australia. We have also developed an MOU with the water umbrella organisation in New Zealand, Water New Zealand to jointly promote the importance of SDG6 to the New Zealand Water Sector.

Working with the Water Services Association of Australia (WSAA)	We have also partnered with WSAA and AWA to agree on a common agenda for the promotion of SDGs across the water industry, with a particular focus on gender equality. WSAA has reached out to all their members to promote WaterAid's value proposition to the market and has always shared our work and communication on SDGs with their network
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## Engage Companies in Global Compact-related Issues

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
Our collaboration with Australian) & International Events	WaterAid Australia has a presence at Ozwater and AWA State conferences to deliver presentations on the importance of access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and achieving SDG6. WaterAid International and Australian Chair Karlene Maywald has given key notes at recent conferences such as COP28, Singapore Internaitonal Water Week highlighting the importance of the SDGs in poverty alleviation. Further, we contribute to the CEO Water Mandate as an essential platform for supply chain water security and promotion of the human right to water and sanitation in the framework of a rights-based approach.
International Women's Day	IWD is important for WaterAid, as the lack of clean water and decent toilets affect women from an early age, providing recommendation on ways the community can make a positive difference. In Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Cambodia, WaterAid is partnering with womens rights organisations to improve womens leadership, equal participation in decision-making and livelihood opportunities. IWD is an annual opportunity to leverage this impact and influence private sector stakeholders to support gender and WASH efforts.
Investment in WASH	A global vision to end extreme poverty by 2030 begins with water and sanitation. There is an increasing global awareness of the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene to alleviate poverty. Investing in WASH requires an integrated approach with first steps required in a household, community, district and country level. Businesses that are already engaging on WASH make a clear link between business value, and the societal benefit or development impact generated by investing in WASH.

	<p>In 2022, WaterAid released groundbreaking research under the title of 'Boosting your Business: WASH for Work' which in collaboration with our corporate partners demonstrated a clear ROI for businesses that invested in better WASH outcomes for the communities in which they operate. Helping to further support efforts around the globe to attract increased corporate investment in achieving SDG6.</p>
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## Join and/or Support Special Initiatives and Work Streams

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
Influencing the Australian Government on the relevance of WASH for sustainable development and efficient delivery of basic human rights	WaterAid played a major role to ensure the Australian Government's response to COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific region focused on water, sanitation and hygiene. The Government's recent International Aid Policy (2023) sets ambitious targets to tackle climate change, and WaterAid is working to ensure that water, sanitation and hygiene is critical to Australia's approach to adaptation and building resilience.

## Participate in Global Compact Events (Global & Local)

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
Attendance at international events	In 2024, WaterAid Australia will have a delegation at the World Water Forum, in Bali Indonesia. We are coordinating 3 sessions across sanitation and hygiene for all, financing, and stakeholder engagement for improved services. Through our WaterAid global federation will also continue to have a presence at World Water Week and COP every year.
Attendance at Australian events	WaterAid Australia is a regular at all UN Global Compact Australia networking events, and any other relevant webinar and virtual events.

## Other Actions to Support the Global Compact

Actions	Measurement of Outcomes
<b>Human Rights</b>	
Elevating human rights	Our gender equality and disability inclusion strategic focus is at the centre of all that we do.
<b>Labour Rights</b>	
Advocacy for fair labour guidelines and engagement with workers in factory settings	WaterAid works to improve WASH in garment factories in Cambodia, supporting the roll out of national guidelines; coordinating a working group and supporting improvements on OHS in the industry for minimum access to water,

	toilets and hand washing in factories for workers, along with facilitating sector coordination for WASH and factory industry sector to improve policies for workers.
<b>Environment</b>	
Increasing our climate resilience work	Climate Resilient WASH is a key focus area for WaterAid. We work with governments and partners across our country programs to advocate for rights to WASH in broader water resource management initiatives. This includes capacity building efforts around climate resilience and water security, increasing sector coordination among governments, as well as ensuring that marginalised communities are included in key decision making.
Campaign Work	We have campaigned for responsible environmental management, including regulating the use of water in agriculture and industry, to protect and preserve enough clean and safe water for communities' basic needs.
<b>Health</b>	
Progressing universal WASH in healthcare facilities	The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the vital importance of continued investment in WASH in HCFs. We work with governments and WASH stakeholders to prioritise long-term, sustainable WASH services in HCFs.
<b>Sustainability</b>	
A recognised approach to building systems for sustainable WASH	WaterAid works to strengthen the systems which enable WASH services and behaviours to be sustained long after our implementation. By supporting government-led WASH mechanisms for WASH coordination, planning, policy-making, financing and monitoring and encouraging regular reflection and sharing of learning we help to lay the foundations for lasting services. Our systems strengthening way of working has been <a href="#">recognised by UN-DESA</a> as an example of good practice to reach the SDGs.
Strengthening national WASH policies and systems.	We have supported the development and roll-out of national WASH monitoring systems in Papua New Guinea and Cambodia, which make data available for better decision-making. We have contributed to the development of government policies and strategies for universal water and sanitation in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste which set the direction and vision for government and non-government stakeholder collaboration.
<b>Anti-Corruption</b>	
Strengthening our anticorruption policy and payments procedures	We have strengthened our internal policies that include an anonymous fraud portal to report

	suspected cases of internal or partner fraud in order to show best-practice in-house.
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