

# UNICEF's Global Framework for Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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## The rationale for Urban WASH



The world is rapidly urbanising. In 1990, an estimated 2.3 billion people lived in urban areas. By 2018, the number had grown to 4.2 billion people, or 55 per cent of the global population. A third of these 4.2 billion people were children, and about 300 million of those children were living in slums – the worst form of informal settlement. The need for an increased focus on urban WASH is driven by this increasing number of vulnerable children and their families living in poor urban environments across the world.

Deep and profound inequalities within urban areas mean that many children living in slums and other impoverished urban settlements are being deprived of their right to water and sanitation, with serious implications on their survival, growth and development.

### Rationale for UNICEF engagement in urban WASH – key points

- Urban populations are expanding rapidly, with growing inequalities in access to WASH services.
- Global imperatives of human rights and universality of access to water and sanitation towards achieving the SDG agenda and other global commitments.
- Poor WASH services pose severe public health threats, especially in high density urban areas.
- Accountability of delivering on UNICEF's existing core commitments as set out in its Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and its Global Strategy for WASH (2016-2030).
- Humanitarian imperative of responding to WASH emergencies in urban areas – UNICEF is the global lead for WASH humanitarian response and provider of last resort.
- The impact of climate change, environmental hazards and natural disasters in urban areas is high, especially in informal settlements. Children in urban areas are particularly vulnerable to these impacts, which are intensified by overcrowding, lack of urban planning and vulnerable WASH infrastructures.

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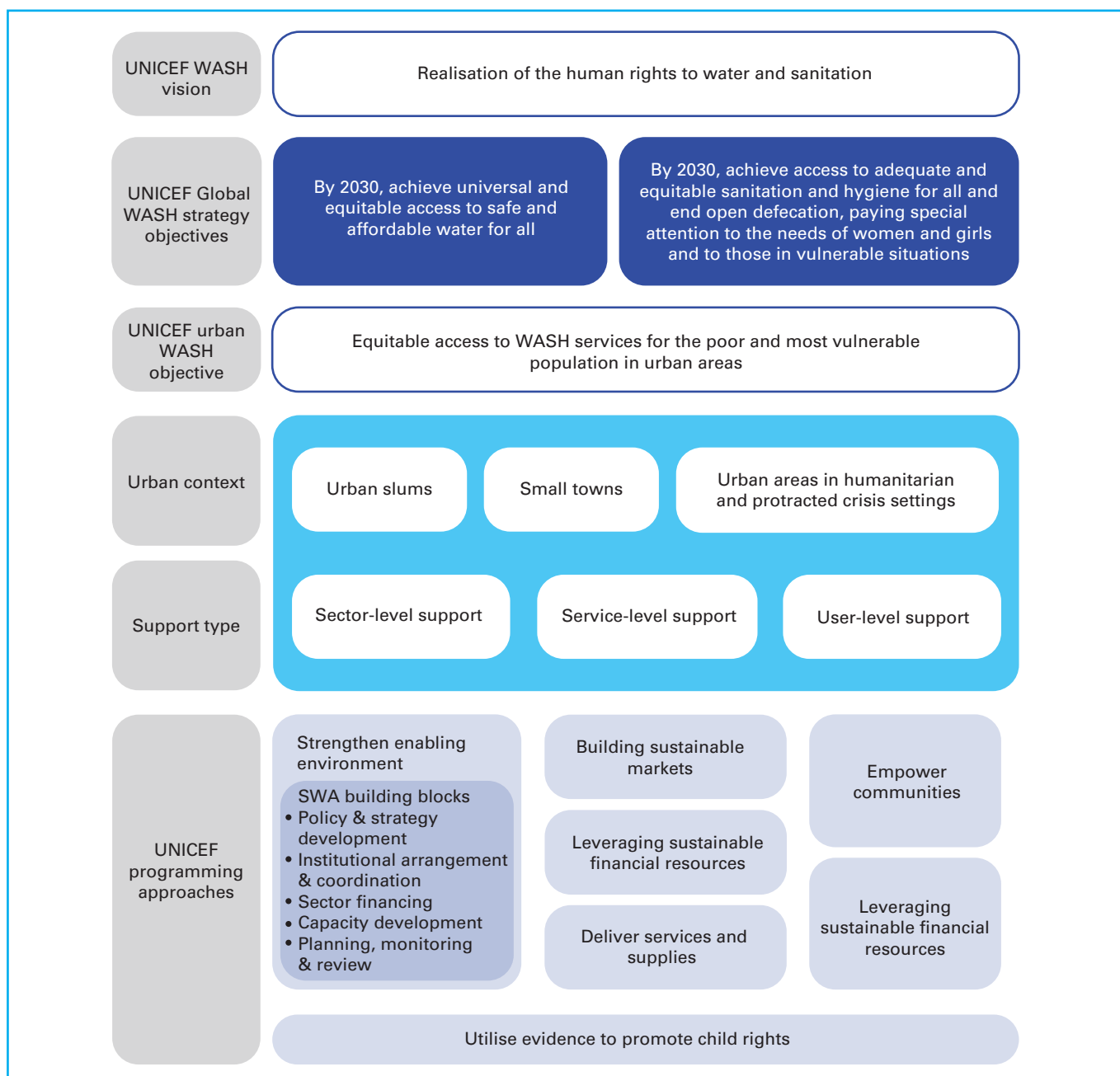
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UNICEF's Global Framework for Urban WASH creates a common vision for UNICEF's approach to urban WASH programming. As UNICEF increases its engagement in urban WASH, the framework will enable country, regional and global WASH teams to have a clear and shared sense of direction and purpose while maintain a focus on the marginalised urban children and their families. The development of the framework involved a review of experiences of 50 countries where UNICEF is involved in urban WASH programming and consultations with a wide range of partners and stakeholders of urban WASH.

The Framework is structured around three areas of support: sector-level, service-level and user-level support, with suggested entry points and activities for engagement. The Framework addresses three different urban contexts: urban slums, small towns and urban areas in humanitarian and protracted crisis settings, focusing on areas where UNICEF can add value, in line with the organisation's equity agenda.

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## UNICEF's Global Framework for Urban WASH



## Implementing the Framework

- UNICEF's Global Framework for Urban WASH is meant to be a flexible tool, and is designed to be used as a basis for regional and country offices to develop their own more localised, context-specific urban WASH framework and strategy.
- Increasing strategic engagement in urban WASH requires recognition at senior management level in country offices to allocate the necessary financial and human resources.
- Urban WASH can be introduced at any stage of the country programme cycle, using the Global Framework for Urban WASH as a guide to identify possible areas of intervention.

UNICEF's complete Global Framework for Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene and other resources are available at:  
<https://www.unicef.org/documents/global-framework-urban-water-sanitation-and-hygiene>