1. **Why is WSSCC evolving into the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund?**

Since 1990, WSSCC’s work has significantly contributed to the achievement of sanitation and hygiene services for millions of people left behind. Through our Global Sanitation Fund, our grants have resulted in 28 million people living in open defecation free environments, 20 million people having access to an improved sanitation facility, and 28 million people having access to a handwashing facility. We are proud of our work. But with only a decade left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we are acutely aware of the remaining sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health gap and what needs to be done.

Globally, more than 1 in 2 people do not have access to safely managed sanitation services, nearly 9% of the world’s population still practices open defecation and more than 1 in 3 people do not have basic handwashing facilities at home. 1 in 3 schools and 1 in 5 health care facilities do not have basic sanitation services. On any given day, 300 million women and girls menstruate but often they do not have the means to manage their menstrual health safely.

The development architecture has also changed in recent years, with greater government leadership and in-country partnerships driving national strategies and implementation. And while many governments recognize the health, education, gender and economic benefits of investing in sanitation and hygiene, national budgets are not yet matching aspiration. There is a huge financing gap and the situation is unacceptable.

The extent of this gap in achieving adequate levels of sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health globally for everyone, particularly for those left behind, requires a new mechanism to accelerate efforts. This new strategic period 2021-2025 provides an opportune moment for us to do even more for the sector we serve.

SDG targets must be pursued for the good of all, but particularly and urgently to prepare nations to better respond to outbreaks or pandemics of infectious disease. All these factors have contributed to the WSSCC’s Steering Committee’s decision to evolve WSSCC into a new Sanitation and Hygiene Fund. A Fund that will have a new operating model and one that will provide governments with catalytic funding to finally tackle sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health-related inequality.

2. **Why is WSSCC well placed to do this?**

Over the past three decades, WSSCC has amassed significant knowledge and expertise about sanitation and hygiene programming and helped empower households and communities to change behaviours at the heart of their development. We have also been committed to bringing to the fore the unacceptable fact that millions of menstruators do not have information, products or facilities to take charge of their periods.

WSSCC has consistently focused on how to make sure that the concept of “leaving no one behind” translates into a living principle for how sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health is programmed and how everyone can have access through equality and non-discrimination. Ten years ago, WSSCC added the Global Sanitation Fund to its portfolio, and through this grant support it has enabled 28 million people to live in open defecation free environments, 20 million people to access an improved sanitation facility, and 28 million people to have access to a handwashing facility.
Reflecting on the urgency to tackle the global sanitation and hygiene crisis and recognizing the magnitude and importance of the task WSSCC’s Steering Committee, in 2019, endorsed a vision for WSSCC to break with business as usual and to bring transformational solutions to the crisis. To that end, in May 2020, the Steering Committee decided to evolve WSSCC into the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund, a scalable and global Fund to effectively tackle the sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health crisis, thereby filling a gaping void at the international level.

We now look to a future where sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health will attract significant funding, over and above that realized under the Global Sanitation Fund. This requires a new Fund – one that builds on our tremendous learning and through its fund management infrastructure to manage can maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of international development assistance and national investment.

3. What is the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund’s niche?

Our strategy is based on the vision outlined by the SDG 6.2 target: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

The Fund recognizes that massive inequalities exist between those who have access to sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) and those who do not – with marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disproportionally affected. Therefore the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund will focus on those left behind and least able to respond. This extends to primarily low-income countries with the highest sanitation and hygiene burden, and therein populations often described as marginalized and hardest to reach. The aim is to make catalytic investments in costed national plans and strategies for sanitation, hygiene and MHH for all. The Fund will place an emphasis on achieving at least basic sanitation and hygiene through non-sewered sanitation systems and hygiene solutions to realize four strategic objectives.

4. What are the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund’s strategic objectives?

The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund has four strategic objectives:

1. To scale up household sanitation and hygiene services
2. To address gaps in menstrual health and hygiene while promoting the empowerment of women and girls
3. To increase sustainable water, sanitation, hygiene, and menstrual health and hygiene services in schools and health care facilities; and
4. To support innovation towards safely managed sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health and hygiene

Our objectives are underpinned by the following enablers:

- strong partnerships in collaboration with key partner organizations and influential individuals, including private sector;
- multi-stakeholder processes, incorporating voices of key populations, in the planning, development and implementation of programmes;
- harnessing societal engagement and securing political commitment for improved sanitation and hygiene, and menstrual health and hygiene;
- ensuring country-level oversight and accountability is integrated into national systems;
- the monitoring and evaluation of all funded programmes, with evidence and data to strengthen investment effectiveness, sustainability, value for money and course correction; and
- resource mobilization.
5. **Who will benefit from the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund under the new strategy?**

The Fund recognizes that massive inequalities exist between those who have access to sanitation, hygiene and MHH and those who do not – with marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women and girls, disproportionately affected. The Fund will invest in reducing inequalities by specifically targeting those countries with the highest burden, yet who are least able to respond. Within countries, the Fund will encourage programmes and interventions, including at policy level, that invest in harder to reach and left behind populations.

The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund will support primarily low-income and select lower-middle-income countries, targeting nearly 1 billion people who currently do not have access to even basic sanitation services. The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund’s (SHF) Eligibility and Transition Policy sets out how the Fund will use established criteria to determine which countries are eligible to receive an allocation and apply for funding. The purpose of the Eligibility and Transition Policy is to ensure that the available donor resources are allocated to and invested in those countries that have both the highest burden of below basic sanitation and the least financial means to respond. To ensure that investments made under the Fund are sustainable, the policy also outlines how the Fund supports countries to prepare for a successful transition from Fund funding once they are no longer eligible for Fund support. Under the policy, all low-income countries are eligible, regardless of their sanitation burden.

6. **What will happen to WSSCC and the current Global Sanitation Fund?**

WSSCC is a UN-hosted entity and falls under the legal and administrative frameworks of UNOPS. The name WSSCC will cease to exist as of 31 December 2020, when the organization will become the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund. The Fund will have a new structure and operating model. During 2020, WSSCC’s Global Sanitation Fund contracts will come to an end. Countries currently in the Global Sanitation Fund’s portfolio will be invited to transition to the new Sanitation and Hygiene Fund’s operating model. The Fund will be hosted by UNOPS and our restructured Secretariat will continue to be based in Geneva, Switzerland though with a lighter footprint.

Importantly, we are taking our learning with us into the Fund. This includes the findings of programme outcome surveys, evaluations, applied research, audits and technical support to advance local solutions. During 2020, we will also publish further learnings from a decade of Global Sanitation Fund implementation – what has worked well and why, including rich lessons about how to operationalize leaving no-one behind and equality and non-discrimination approaches, and the innovative ways we have progressed menstrual health and hygiene programming through advocacy and training.
7. What is the difference between the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund and the current Global Sanitation Fund?

The Global Sanitation Fund, which is a key part of WSSCC’s 2017-2020 strategy, was a pooled fund designed to support sanitation and hygiene at the community level and focused primarily on improving sanitation in homes, particularly in rural settings. Considering the ongoing global sanitation and hygiene crisis, this kind of incremental action is no longer enough.

At the core of the new architecture is a funding model designed to be an efficient and effective mechanism that can operate at scale and deliver impact. The model is based on the following principles:

- Accountability and transparency
- Country-led, community-owned
- Serving those left behind, with a focus on women and girls
- Efficiency and value-for-money
- Collaborative
- Adaptive and resilient
- Innovative
- Sustainable

The operating model (shown below) is supported by a suite of policies that define how funding is to be invested. These policies include (and will be publicly available soon):

- **Eligibility and Transition** – which countries can receive funding support and how they will transition from this eligibility;
- **Allocation and Prioritization** – how the available funding will be distributed across eligible countries;
- **Co-Financing** – how the work of the Fund aims to leverage domestic public resources and how it will help prepare countries to transition from eligibility; and
- **Fragility** – how the Fund will work in fragile contexts.

Clear proposal and application guidelines are currently being developed alongside technical briefs on learning from a decade of WSSCC investments and learning in the sector to help governments decide on best implementation approaches in their context.
8. **How does the Fund ensure coherence, efficiency and strategic partnerships to avoid duplication with other initiatives and actors?**

Conceptualization and design of the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund has considered the global water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) architecture, who is doing what, why, where and how with a key driver being to avoid duplications of roles and efforts.

The Fund has a new operating model that is country and partnership focused. Importantly, the Fund is not designed to do everything, but rather is undertaking a catalytic role. It will draw on the skills, talents and competitive advantage of partners, particularly those that work closely with governments in support of national strategies, for example, UN agencies, development banks and major NGOs. This will include availing technical advisory services and leveraging the role partners play in progressing commitments and mutual accountability through different platforms, notably Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) at the global, regional and country level. Under the Fund, opportunities will exist for the formalization of strategic partnership agreements so that relationships, synergy and contributions are clear.

9. **How does the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund ensure sustainability?**

The Fund will support governments to develop and implement robust and costed national sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health strategies and plans. Country-led committees will determine key needs and submit funding requests to the Fund, which are then reviewed independently by a team of global experts to ensure the Fund’s catalytic investments are well targeted, sustainable, technically sound and reflect value for money. A co-financing requirement further ensures sustainable and long-term government commitments to sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health. Sustainability of investments will be further reinforced by the Fund’s transition policy, which ensures that countries will be supported at decreasing levels once they reach a certain income level, triggering plans for future scenarios without funding support. The aim of the Fund is to play a catalytic role in securing a robust national sector.

10. **How will the Fund stimulate and support innovation?**

The Fund recognizes that the sanitation, hygiene and MHH sector is dynamic and its success is in part dependent on innovations brought through programme, process, technology and product innovation; hence there is a strategic objective dedicated to driving and harnessing innovation.

For example, the Fund will catalyze innovations in technologies and other sanitation, hygiene and MHH solutions that are cost-effective, sustainable and climate-resilient. The Fund will play an active role in supporting governments to incentivize innovations for technological solutions that move households up the sanitation ladder in the quickest, simplest and most efficient manner and with the intention and potential of at-scale replication. Such measures may include recent learning about safe abandonment as a safely managed sanitation technique; technological solutions adapted to extreme weather conditions such as heavy rains and floods as well as to geological challenges including collapsing and rocky soils; or advances in the sanitation economy to scale up initiatives to transform waste into economic resources.

The Fund will also play an interlocutor role to promote local platforms that enable connections between large and small companies, innovators and investors and will work with partners to scale-up market-based sanitation and hygiene services to deliver quality and value for money products and services. To help governments create a healthy market for sanitation and hygiene products and services, the Fund will support growth in demand for safe sanitation, hygiene and MHH while ensuring that a sustainable supply of affordable and appropriately designed products and services are available to meet it. The Fund will also support supply chain strengthening for sanitation and hygiene products, including menstrual materials.
11. What about COVID-19?

If the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything, it is the vital importance of sanitation and hygiene. Handwashing with soap is not only key to preventing the spread of disease – it is essential for public health and securing health equity. However, 1 in 3 people do not have basic handwashing facilities at home and 1 in 3 schools and 1 in 5 health care facilities do not even have basic sanitation and hygiene services.

The people most at risk because of inadequate sanitation and hygiene are populations who are already vulnerable: those living in low-income countries, in remote rural areas, in overcrowded slums, in environments already damaged by climate change, and in refugee camps. It includes women and girls, the elderly, the disabled, hospital workers, sanitation workers, and frontline workers. A situation where everyone can attain a high level of health is dependent on families being able to act, supported by affordable and accessible public health services. Yet sadly, for billions living in poverty, these services remain out of reach. Therefore, equitable public health needs to go together with poverty reduction, strong stewardship, and accountability.

With our partners, we ask that injections of government and international emergency aid to stop coronavirus also help to build the foundations of public health for all, not some. The large volume of pledges and donations must translate to a commitment to tackle systemic problems preventing health for all, including creating safe and sustainable health systems and access to safe sanitation and hygiene.

Through our existing grants, we are also supporting our partners to work on COVID-19 prevention, containment and response.

12. What will be the role of WSSCC members?

WSSCC has built a vibrant and diverse global community of over 5,000 members from civil society, local and national government, UN agencies, academia, and other development sectors, all committed to working to make water, sanitation, and hygiene a priority.

We recognize that our members are an asset to the plight of those left behind without adequate sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health. Their collective knowledge, experience, social and political connections generate tremendous power to affect change.

Over the coming months, we will be engaging with our membership base to help them understand how they can be most effective in support of national progress and accountability and global advocacy.
13. What happens next and how can I find out more?

With the ongoing support of WSSCC’s existing and longstanding donors and our Executive Chair, Hind Khatib-Othman, former Managing Director at the Gavi Alliance, we are working to secure the foundations for the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund.

With the Steering Committee’s recent approval of our Strategy 2021-2025, associated policies and operational model, we are ready to put in place full preparations for the launch of the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund. This process includes putting in place a new governance and organizational structure and by mid-2020, we will also share our first Sanitation and Hygiene Fund Investment Case.

We are also gaining advice of key people in government and the international development community, partner organizations and private sector through our transition Advisory Group, chaired by Elhadj As Sy, Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation and former Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Hind Khatib-Othman, Executive Chair and Sue Coates, Executive Director a.i., are speaking to many interested parties. We would welcome a conversation with you!

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