



## **AMCOW YOUTH AND GENDER INCLUSION (YoGI)**

STRATEGY FOR THE WATER AND SANITATION  
SECTOR IN AFRICA (2023-2030)





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# Foreword



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AMCOW President

The mission of African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) is to achieve equitable and sustainable water and sanitation management in Africa. To realize this, it is crucial to prioritize the inclusion of all individuals, and mainstream gender and youth in the water and sanitation sector. I am pleased to present the AMCOW Youth and Gender Inclusion (YoGI) Strategy 2023-2030.

This Strategy, adopted by the Governing Council of AMCOW during the 13th General Assembly held in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt, in June 2023 signifies our commitment to youth and gender. The Strategy aims to empower youth, promote gender equity, and ensure social inclusion in the management and provision of water and sanitation services delivery in Africa. This Strategy serves as an implementation tool of the AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030, the Africa Water Vision 2025 (as well as the yet to be developed post-2025 Africa Water Vision), the Africa Agenda 2063, and Sustainable Development Goal 6 on water and sanitation.

This Strategy provides a systematic approach to implementing youth and gender-responsive measures. The measures consider diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the gender roles of women, men, girls, and boys in society. It also recognizes the valuable contributions of these groups to ensure their active involvement in water and sanitation initiatives.

Within the water and sanitation sector, youth, women, persons with disabilities, marginalized, and vulnerable groups face diverse challenges due to political, economic, and gender-related differences. These differences create unequal access to water and sanitation facilities and services, influenced by cultural, social, physiological, and economic factors. Additionally, decision-making processes regarding water and sanitation investments are predominantly dominated by men, which leads to the underrepresentation of the views and needs of youth, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups. Community participation and management approaches have failed to address these issues adequately, mainly because communities are often seen as homogeneous entities. This undermines the sustainability of water and sanitation programs and projects. Further, lack of access to water and sanitation affects youth, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups and holds back progress on health, education, and economic development.

Further, the Youth and Gender Inclusion 2023-2030 Strategy aims to enhance the effectiveness of relevant agencies at country level to address diverse issues related to youth and gender. This strategy contributes to the realization of an inclusive society where everyone can reach their full potential. AMCOW is committed to promote the mainstreaming youth, women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups as important stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector. Ultimately, this Strategy aims to empower youth and women who have primary responsibilities for managing household water supply, sanitation, and health needs.

Furthermore, over the recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the global economy, with Africa being particularly affected. The pandemic has exacerbated existing poverty levels, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and led to declining service delivery and a dwindling resource base. This has led to increased vulnerability of already marginalized and vulnerable groups. Additionally, the growing climate change variation poses a threat to vulnerable and marginalized groups, undermining their access to water and sanitation services.

AMCOW is committed to support Member States, in collaboration with partners, to support governments' efforts in promoting equal access and service delivery in the water and sanitation sector. In line with the "Leave No One Behind" principle, I would like to invite political leaders and duty bearers to consider the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups when planning water and sanitation facilities.



# Acknowledgements

The Youth and Gender Inclusion (Yogi) Strategy 2023-2030 is a result of efforts and contributions from many organisations and stakeholders. We are particularly grateful to the Ministers of Water, senior government officials, civil society organizations, and all those who provided input in the development of this Strategy. Members of AMCOW's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were instrumental in the development of this strategy. We also valued the contribution from twenty-nine Member States across the five AMCOW regions. This includes those who contributed through the online survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews.

Contribution from the Youth and Gender Inclusion (Yogi) Strategy session, during the virtual Africa Water and Sanitation Week 2021 and the African Youth with Disabilities Caucus Meeting of the International Disability Alliance in Kenya, 2021 also enriched this Strategy.

We also acknowledge, with gratitude, the support from our partners including the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) for the financial support towards the process, as well as the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) – led by Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi, and Alex Manyasi – for the technical support, and Moreen Nkonge for coordinating copy editing and design.

The Strategy also benefited from a wider-range of dedicated individuals drawn from the following sectors and subsectors: the integrated water resources management (IWRM), the environment and climate change; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); youth; gender; Internally Displaced Person (IDPs), refugees, conflict and disaster-affected communities; social welfare with orphans and children's homes; pastoralism; prisons; people with a range of mobility, sight, hearing, and speech-related disabilities, mental health conditions, and psychosocial disabilities; and protection and human rights law.

We equally acknowledge the support from the Global Water Partnership through Litumelo Mater-Sievers, Climate Change, Water and Gender Transformation and Social Inclusion Expert, and other consultants who supported this work including Dr. Sarah House, Ms. Diana Bochaberi Nyamweya, and Neville Okwaro.

The development of the Strategy was facilitated by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) under the leadership and guidance of Dr. Rashid Mbaziira, the Executive Secretary. The preparation was coordinated by Emmanuel Chimezie Uguru, Comfort Kanshio, Nelson Gomonda, Thomas Banda, Dr. Azzika Tanko, Obinna Anah, Patrice Leumeni and Genevieve Osuorji.

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# Contents



FOREWORD	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	VIII
Executive Summary	XI

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

3

1.1.	Lessons from the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa (2011) and the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in Water and Sanitation (2013)	5
1.2.	Basic Concepts on Youth and Gender in the Water and Sanitation sector	6
1.2.1.	Youth	6
1.2.2.	Gender	7
1.3.	Vision, Strategic Objectives, Goal and Enabling Principles	8
	Vision	
	Strategic Objectives	
	Goal	
	Enabling Principles	
1.4.	International and Regional Commitments on Youth and Gender Inclusion in Water and Sanitation	10
1.5.	The 'Leave No One Behind' Priority	12

## Chapter 2: Theory of Change

15

2.1.1.	Enabling Environment for Success Factors	19
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## Chapter 3: Pillars, Objectives, Outcomes, Actions and Cross-cutting Priorities

21

3.1.	Pillar One - Institutional Strengthening, Governance and Leadership	21
3.2.	Pillar Two - Advocacy and Engagement	22
3.3.	Pillar Three – Networks, Partnerships and Collaboration	24
3.4.	Pillar Four – Building Capacity, Commitment and Experience	25
3.5.	Pillar Five - Economic Empowerment, Technology, and Innovation	27
	Cross-cutting Priority I: Prioritizing People most at risk of being Left Behind	
	Cross-cutting Priority II: Sustainability and Climate Resilience of YoGI Actions	
	Cross-cutting Priority III: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Knowledge Management and Communication	

## Chapter 4: Implementation Framework, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL), and Communication

33

4.1.	Institutional Responsibilities and Arrangements	35
4.2.	Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) and Communication	37
4.2.1.	Monitoring	37
4.2.2.	Evaluation	38
4.2.3.	Learning and Communication	38

## Chapter 5: Financing and Budget Arrangements

43







# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AMCOW</b>	African Ministers' Council on Water
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUC</b>	African Union Commission
<b>AYC</b>	African Youth Charter
<b>CNA</b>	Capacity Needs Assessment
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EQND</b>	Equality and Non-discrimination
<b>EXCO</b>	Executive Committee
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>GADN</b>	Gender and Development Network
<b>GLAAS</b>	Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water
<b>GSF</b>	Global Sanitation Fund
<b>HI</b>	Humanity and Inclusion
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Steering Committee (humanitarian)
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communications technology
<b>IDA</b>	International Disability Alliance
<b>IWA</b>	International Water Association
<b>IWRM</b>	Integrated Water Resource Management
<b>JMP</b>	Joint Monitoring Program
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>KPI</b>	Key performance indicator
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>MHH</b>	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
<b>MHM</b>	Menstrual Hygiene Management
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>OPD</b>	Organization of People with Disabilities
<b>OYE</b>	Office of the Youth Envoy (African Union)
<b>PWDs</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>RBO</b>	River Basin Organization
<b>REC</b>	Regional Economic Community
<b>RWSN</b>	Rural Water and Sanitation Network
<b>SADC</b>	Southern Africa Development Community
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SWA</b>	Sanitation and Water for All
<b>TAC</b>	Technical Advisory Committee
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TEC</b>	Technical Expert Committee
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN's Refugee Agency)
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WASSMO</b>	Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting System
<b>WEF Nexus</b>	Water, Environment, and Food Nexus
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WWAP</b>	World Water Assessment Programme
<b>WSSCC</b>	Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council
<b>YCA</b>	Youth Connekt Africa
<b>YoGI</b>	Youth and Gender Inclusion
<b>YoU-CAN</b>	Youth UNESCO Climate Action Network
<b>YPARD</b>	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development
<b>YWP</b>	Young Water Professional







# Executive Summary

This Youth and Gender Inclusion (YoGI) Strategy for 2023-2030 is the realization of Cross-Cutting Priority IV of the African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) Strategy (2018-2030) on, "Strengthening Gender Equality and Youth Empowerment in Water and Sanitation". The strategy "recognizes the invaluable role of Africa's women and youth in the water and sanitation sector." It aims to empower, enable equitable access and eliminate the major obstacles to inclusion of youth and women as it acknowledges their contributions in the water and sanitation sector. These contributions include "their leadership, capacity for creativity and innovation, dedication, and energy, and ability to raise awareness and change behavior." Global and regional commitments also call for equitable access as well as the reduction of inequalities in services for populations and groups that include young people, women, people with disabilities (PWDs) and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector.

Aspiration 6 of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 aims to have "an Africa where development is people driven, relying upon the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children." The 2009 Summit of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government in Sharm El Sheikh committed to "promote programming that addresses the role and interests of youth and women, given that the burden of poor water and sanitation falls disproportionately on women and children." The Africa Water Vision for 2025 commits to "an Africa where there is an adequate number of motivated and highly skilled water professionals, and there is political will, public awareness and commitment among all for sustainable water-resources management, including the mainstreaming of gender issues and youth concerns and the use of participatory approaches." And the global commitment on this agenda are Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Leave no One Behind Priority (LNOB).

This current strategy envisions an Africa where all can equally enjoy their rights, access, and opportunities, as well as the shared responsibilities that contribute to the equitable development and management of sustainable water and sanitation services. The strategy also aims to address the structural barriers that hinder access and equality in the water and sanitation sector as part of the global efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals 5 on Gender Equality and Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation.

Development of this YoGI Strategy is driven by AMCOW's desire to enhance capacity and advocacy that supports the greater engagement and participation of youth, women, people with disabilities, and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups in national, sub-regional and regional institutional programs and services. It also aims to increase their involvement in decision-making as well as boost consideration of their perspectives and capabilities in addressing their needs. The strategy seeks to address the barriers and root causes of inequality in the water and sanitation sector by working towards transformational outcomes that mitigate, if not eliminate, the major constraints hindering youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other disadvantaged groups. It also aims to ensure that water and sanitation institutions across Africa fulfil their commitments towards universal and equitable access to water and sanitation services.

**This current strategy envisions an Africa where all can equally enjoy their rights, access, and opportunities, as well as the shared responsibilities that contribute to the equitable development and management of sustainable water and sanitation services.**

This YoGI Strategy is informed by the findings from the Gender Policy (2011) and the Youth Policy (2013), which identified gaps based on an evaluation of AMCOW policies and strategies on gender and youth mainstreaming in Africa's water and sanitation sectors. The findings also undergird the Theory of Change (ToC) which looks to strengthen strategies and maximize results by identifying the actions and interventions that AMCOW has to undertake, the presumed pathways to achieving the intended goals and the expected progress indicators.

## The strategy's five pillars and cross-cutting priorities are:



### Pillar One:

#### **Institutional strengthening, governance and leadership**

Participatory approaches are not new to the water sector as seen in the Dublin Statement which advocate for "full public consultation and involvement of users in the planning and implementation of water projects." In reality however, individuals or groups from indigenous communities, women, and youth groups are often excluded, considered 'irrelevant', or blocked from participating in relevant decision-making processes for a variety of reasons. The process of enabling a multi-stakeholder approach to water governance and leadership means recognizing the value of various stakeholders and actively incorporating them into water resources management.



### Pillar Two:

#### **Advocacy and engagement**

Advocacy and engagement interventions should secure positive results in terms of government and private sector responsiveness, policy changes, and the inclusion of marginalized communities in decision-making processes. Advocacy and engagement complement other approaches because they tackle the root causes of discrimination and inequality in the water and sanitation sector. This way, they work towards realization of the required long-term changes. Advocacy and engagement also understand people (youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other disadvantaged groups) to be agents of transformation in their own communities who can change power structures and challenge unjust practices, including formal and informal systems of discrimination and inequality.



### Pillar Three:

#### **Networks, partnerships and collaboration**

Partnerships and collaborations that establish alliances between organizations commit themselves to sharing the risks, costs and benefits involved in working together to develop and implement specific interventions to identified challenges in the water and sanitation sector. Such networks and partnerships are necessary given the many ways that society interacts with water, which overlap with various responsibilities and interests, distributed among numerous stakeholders. Collaboration calls for establishment of a coordination mechanism to transform the underlying norms, institutional processes, and incentives that tend to drive exclusion over time. Implementation of this strategy requires the adoption of supportive regulations and resources, as well as the development of capable public and private sector institutions and structures.





Inequities afflicting the world's poor, disadvantaged and marginalized people are manifested in several different ways. Building capacity and commitment in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and integrated water resources management (IWRM) is essential to achieve this strategy's goal to assure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. AMCOW in collaboration with partners will provide support to build the capacity and experience of youth, women, people with disabilities and those from marginalized and vulnerable groups. This will also revitalize their confidence and competence to participate in decision-making processes in the water and sanitation sector.



The ownership and control of resources is highly unequal which contributes directly to the exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups as well as the differentiation of income and livelihood opportunities. From an economic perspective, benefits from improved WASH include reduced health care costs for individuals and society, and greater productivity and involvement in the workplace. Technology and innovations in the water and sanitation sector provide opportunities for members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women and people with disabilities. However, these actions will only lead to the targeted outcomes if they are accompanied by the creation of equal opportunities, awareness-raising, as well as educational and capacity development programs, to disseminate available knowledge and to stimulate the uptake of new and existing technologies.

AMCOW and relevant stakeholders jointly conducted a Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) in the development of this strategy. The assessment showed the need to foster change and ensure inclusion through implementation of three cross-cutting priority actions:

- I. Prioritizing people who are most at risk of being left behind. This goes a step further than mainstreaming to help prevent people from being left behind. This action will seek to understand which groups of people are most likely to be left behind and then prioritize them as well as their direct support.
- II. Sustainability and climate resilience of YoGI actions. The poor and the disadvantaged are likely to be the most impacted by climate change and its related effects arising from the low sustainability of water and sanitation-related infrastructure and services. The success of this strategy is dependent on the adaptation capabilities of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, in terms of institutional, financial and technical resources.
- III. Monitoring, evaluation & learning (MEL), knowledge management and communication. These functions in water and sanitation sector processes and systems need strengthening in order to influence and motivate the more effective integration of YoGI-related considerations and their progress. This includes improving collection of gender and disability-disaggregated data, as well as conducting qualitative self-assessments of progress with supporting evidence.

These pillars and cross-cutting priorities are the result of mapping key provisions for youth and gender inclusion in global and continental normative frameworks in water and sanitation, including the AMCOW Strategy (2018-2030), Africa Water Vision 2025, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several different actors in partnership with AMCOW at the regional and national level will be responsible for implementing, funding and executing this strategy. A monitoring, evaluation and learning framework will guide the implementation results of the YoGI strategy through the development of gender-specific toolkits and gender-related indicators. The strategy will be funded through various mechanisms and will be accompanied by capacity development for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) with a view to enhancing financing and budgeting processes that support gender responsiveness at the organizational-level within member states.

**Dr. Rashid Mbaziira,**  
Executive Secretary,  
African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW)



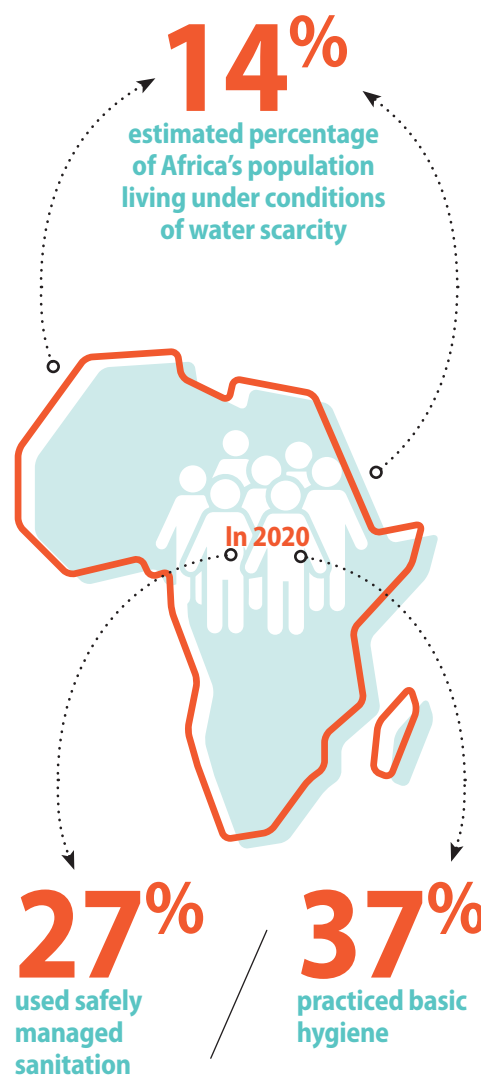


# 1.0 / Introduction and Background

Access to water and sanitation is widely recognized as being central to human existence and therefore a human rights issue. Africa has a combined population of over one billion people, representing about 16% of the global population with water resources estimated to be nearly four billion cubic meters, or nearly 9% of the world's freshwater resources. However, significant inequalities exist in accessing these resources for youth, women, people with disabilities, and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups within the continent. These inequalities occur between urban and rural areas, among sub-national regions as well as between rich and poor countries. An estimated 14% of Africa's population (about 160 million people) currently live under conditions of water scarcity due in part to the uneven distribution of water resources, as well as inequalities in access to clean and potable water services. Yet, water is necessary for a variety of sanitation and hygiene related uses, including the use of safely managed sanitation, maintenance and operation of sanitation facilities, personal hygiene such as hand-washing, and menstrual hygiene management.

Lack of access to sanitation services or their inadequate provision is devastating to public health. Infectious diseases that spread through unsafe water, improperly disposed human waste and poor hygiene practices have a profound effect on high rates of infant mortality, malnutrition and chronic illness in the general population. In 2020, only 27% of Africa's population used safely managed sanitation while 37% practiced basic hygiene. Poor sanitation results in a vicious cycle of bad health, environmental degradation, malnutrition, reduced productivity and income losses for members of disadvantaged groups which deleteriously impacts their health and safety, self-esteem, education as well as their well-being. While their role as users is acknowledged, these groups are not involved in managing and developing sectoral resources due to various constraints which limit their integration into decision-making processes within the water and sanitation sector.

This Youth and Gender Inclusion (YoGI) Strategy aims to support the African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) to address the barriers that constrain the inclusion of members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women, people with disabilities and other members of marginalized and vulnerable groups into Africa's water and sanitation sector. AMCOW is a working group of the Specialized Technical Committee that advises the African Union (AU) on water and sanitation. The organization was established in 2002 and is headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria. AMCOW provides political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development, and the maintenance of water and sanitation ecosystems.





This strategy supports Cross-Cutting Priority IV of the AMCOW Strategy (2018-2030) on, “Strengthening Gender Equality and Youth Empowerment in Water and Sanitation.” The strategy “recognizes the invaluable role of Africa’s women and youth in the water and sanitation sector.” Its development is driven by AMCOW’s desire to enhance capacity development and the greater engagement and participation of women, girls, youth and people who are most at risk of being left behind ensuring their involvement in decision-making, taking due consideration of their perspectives, capabilities and needs at the national, sub-regional, regional and local levels, as well as in programs and services. The strategy increases focus and strategic approach on youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups on issues related to water and sanitation.

Increasing gender equality and youth engagement in the water and sanitation sector is crucial, given global and continental commitments. At the continental level the Youth and Gender Inclusion (YoGI) Strategy supports the Africa Water Vision 2025 on “Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socioeconomic Development” . The vision supports “... equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socioeconomic development, regional cooperation and the environment ...”. It includes the mainstreaming of gender issues and youth concerns as well as the use of participatory approaches in water. It also supports Aspiration 6 of the African Union’s “Agenda 2063: Africa We Want ” which targets “... an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.” Agenda 2063 aims to strengthen the standing of African women by ensuring gender equality and parity in all spheres of life, including political, economic and social, as well as creating opportunities for self-realization among Africa’s young people which includes access in all aspects.

Global commitments include the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG ) 5 which addresses gender equality, women’s empowerment, elimination of gender discrimination and establishment of a society where everyone equally enjoys their rights and opportunities, as well as shares responsibilities equitably. Goal 6 of the SDGs aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. And attaining the SDG priority – Leave No One Behind (LNOB) – calls for engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including youth, women, people with disabilities as well as other marginalized and vulnerable groups.

By elevating youth and gender inclusion as a priority, AMCOW recognizes the invaluable role that women and girls, youth, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups play in the water and sanitation sector. This is both in relation to integrated water resources management (IWRM) and greater access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). AMCOW acknowledges the unique contributions that young people make as change agents and rights’ holders, especially in their capacity for creativity and innovation, their dedication, energy, and ability to raise awareness as well as influence behavioral changes among their peers and networks. In addition, it also recognizes the key role that women and girls play in the provision and management of water resources as well as the maintenance of sanitation services which benefit their families and society as a whole.

This strategy aims to support African water and sanitation institutions in fulfilling their commitments and mandate to ensure human rights-based access to water and sanitation for all. Hygiene knowledge and safe facilities are life-saving, cost-effective health interventions. In 2020, 39% of Africa’s population used safely managed drinking water, 27% used safely managed sanitation and 37% practiced basic hygiene. Discrimination, exclusion, marginalization, entrenched power asymmetries and material inequalities are among the main obstacles to achieving the basic human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as realizing the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda. Universal access can only become a reality when African governments, private-sector service providers and other stakeholders adopt a human rights-based approach to ensure that water and sanitation services are safe, available, accessible, affordable, and culturally acceptable. As well, access to services should be monitored by evaluating the experiences of youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups.

This strategy also supports the SDG priority of leave no one behind which states, “... universal targets can only be considered achieved when met for all sub-groups within the population,” in addition to specifying that “indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location or other characteristics.” However, attainment of the SDG targets and priorities by 2030 will require a twelve-fold increase in current rates of progress on safely managed drinking water, a twenty-fold increase in safely managed sanitation and a 42-fold increase in basic hygiene services. Supporting access and participation in decision-making for youth, women, people with disabilities as well as other marginalized and vulnerable groups in water and sanitation, will increase the rate of attainment for SDG targets.

## 1.1. Lessons from the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in the Water Sector in Africa (2011) and the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in Water and Sanitation (2013)

The AMCOW Gender Policy (2011) was developed to support the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) process and forms a key part of the organization's broader efforts to support gender mainstreaming within its organizational structure as well as in the continent's water and sanitation sector. The strategy formulated at the same time intended to catalyze improved gender responsive water governance through: improved and gender-sensitive government policies, planning systems and financial frameworks, including social delivery in the water sector; strengthening the capacities of women and men to participate in policy planning, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of water sector programs and projects; and by promoting greater availability and use of gender relevant data to achieve these stated goals.

The AMCOW Youth Policy (2013) supported the participation of young people in achieving improved access to water and sanitation services as well as integrated water resources management. The policy recognizes the invaluable role that Africa's youth play in promoting water resources management and greater access to water and sanitation. As these gender and youth policies and strategies were developed before the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is critical to update them in line with the post-2015 agenda and to increase focus on the intersectionality of youth and gender by integrating broader issues related to social inclusion in water and sanitation.

An evaluation of the two policies commended AMCOW for its continued commitment to inclusion of young people and support of gender equality. Stakeholders who participated in the consultation activities during development of this strategy recommended several important actions that would translate into tangible benefits for youth, women, people with disabilities, and members of the marginalized and vulnerable groups on the continent. Gaps in the implementation of these previous strategies, provided useful pointers on what is needed to strengthen actions and outcomes with this new YoGI Strategy.

- During preparation of the previous strategies, respondents stated that there must be strong commitment from senior leaders to improve the engagement of members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women and PWDs. They added that there is a link between political commitments and operational implementation of the strategy, and it needs significant strengthening in terms of governance and leadership in the water and sanitation sector.
- Discussions with other partners on additional actions to undertake, Include advocacy and engagement for the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector.
- Establishing partnerships, collaborations and linkages with existing groups and networks that center members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women and PWDs.
- The strategy requires a Theory of Change as a pre-condition for transformational outcomes.
- AMCOW needs to ensure that the strategy also builds on existing and achievable political, policy and legal commitments and interventions that also create clear linkages with member states, AMCOW organs and regional economic communities (RECs).
- Supporting economic empowerment for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups as well as using technology and innovation to increase their access to water and sanitation.

## 1.2. Basic Concepts on Youth and Gender in the Water and Sanitation sector

### 1.2.1. Youth

Definitions of youth vary across countries and institutions. The African Youth Charter (AYC) adopted in 2006, refers to youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years. This is therefore the age range for youth that is adopted by AMCOW in this strategy. UNICEF defines adolescence as the period between 10-19 years which overlaps with the definition provided in the AYC. Today, there are 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10-24 years. This is the largest generation of young people historically, and close to 90% of them live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population. Despite being a significant constituency, young people are not consulted during decision-making for strategy and policy design in the water and sanitation sector. Youth are constantly under-represented at all levels of WASH decision-making, including at the household level. This means that most WASH decision-making structures and processes are dominated by able-bodied men, resulting in service delivery that is insensitive to the needs of young people and other marginalized and vulnerable groups within the community and broader society.

Generally, girls are more involved in household activities than boys, which places them at a higher risk of experiencing WASH-related illnesses. For instance, fetching water is a task that is primarily done by girls, which exposes them to crime, assault, and psychosocial stress. Moreover, the social stigma associated with menstruation, combined with limited access to menstruation materials, unsafe toilets, and insufficient water access, frequently results in girls missing school more often than boys. The low coverage of basic WASH services and facilities as well as their inconsistent availability, accessibility, and functionality further compounds these issues. Inadequate WASH services and facilities within households, schools, and health centers contribute (directly or indirectly) to health and educational outcomes among young people, especially in those areas affected by climate change or prolonged and protracted conflict. Overall, women, girls, and other socially excluded groups are rarely consulted and engaged by local actors. This results in incongruent policies and political commitments which limit action at the grassroots level.





Young people are not just beneficiaries of WASH services, they are also agents of change as they have opportunities to engage with decision-makers and voice their opinions and priorities. Youth of different genders, ages and social backgrounds have demonstrated that they have significant contributions to offer. In turn, they are the primary beneficiaries of expanded engagement in the water and sanitation sector across Africa. The sector would benefit from their capacities, energy, skills, drive, ambition, adaptability and interests in innovation. Young people are more likely to drive for a sustainable future as they have the courage and vision to: demand quality services and accountability within the sector; contribute ideas; advocate for policy changes; promote cooperation; influence their peers and communities; and take active roles in ensuring action-oriented strategies are established. They also engage in awareness-creation as they reach and engage vulnerable populations, drive peacebuilding and learning processes as well as disseminate best practices within the sector. As leaders in the utilization of ICT and social media, they can positively influence others as well as volunteer and act as focal points for the water and sanitation sector in schools, universities, organizations, and communities. Further, integrating young people into governance processes can improve the access to and quality of WASH services. These efforts must advocate for transformative approaches and greater inclusivity to realize improved WASH services within communities.

### 1.2.2. Gender

Gendered inequalities and roles in the water and sanitation sector mean that women are disproportionately affected in comparison to men. Socially and culturally induced gendered roles assign most WASH management activities, such as fetching, storing and treating water, and cleaning sanitation facilities to women and girls. For instance, in rural Africa more than 30% of women's energy is used in fetching water. It is also estimated that 40 billion of mostly women hours, are spent annually in fetching water within Africa. Women in many parts of the world play "triple roles" i.e., reproductive work such as childcare; productive work that generates income; and community management work. The roles that women play in the community exacerbate gender inequalities and leave more women in poverty, with lower educational levels and higher health risks.

Additionally, the absence of proper sanitation facilities and services deprives women, people with disabilities, marginalized and vulnerable groups of their dignity. They are forced to use facilities at night because of privacy concerns which makes them vulnerable and exposes them to the risk of physical attack. Women and girls also lack access to accurate information about menstruation. Further, they encounter challenges in accessing clean and adequate sanitation facilities and products that are necessary for good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in public, work and school life. Lack of good knowledge on hygiene and appropriate facilities prevents effective menstrual hygiene management and can lead to serious health problems. Insufficient WASH services perpetuate inequalities as women, girls, older people and those with disabilities are excluded from full participation in public spaces, workplaces and educational institutions. A gendered perspective that focuses on the issues, needs, and impacts arising from the different social roles and power relations among women and men in society would transform the water and sanitation sector. This however requires gender mainstreaming, which means integrating the concerns and experiences of women, girls, men and boys into all stages of WASH program cycles including the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. Taking consideration of the practical and strategic needs of women and girls, men and boys in policies, programs, institutions, and organizations in the water and sanitation sector means that there should be a focus on ensuring that all have equal access to opportunities that would allow them to be part of decision-making processes in the sector.

Gender mainstreaming in institutional practices includes the adoption of labor policies that would enable women to have more employment opportunities and the recognition of women as key stakeholders or primary participants in climate adaptation, as only 16% of national water resource plans have done so to date. Gender transformation is also necessary as this goes a step further in addressing the underlying causes of gender-based inequalities and transforming harmful gender roles, norms and power relations, including working to minimize the risks girls and women face when collecting water from remote locations.

In rural Africa more than

**30%**

of women's energy is used in fetching water.



**40bn**

of mostly women hours, are spent annually in fetching water within Africa.

### 1.3. Vision, Strategic Objectives, Goal and Enabling Principles

#### - Vision

The vision for this strategy is to get all women and men, girls and boys of all ages and capabilities across Africa, engaged in contributing to the equitable development and management of sustainable water and sanitation services that are accessible to all. This strategy further aims to ensure that the contributions of all are valued, and that they are able to manage their water and sanitation with dignity.

#### - Strategic Objectives

To revitalize existing commitments and enhance capacities, the AMCOW Secretariat, member state governments and other stakeholders should elevate youth and gender inclusion as a priority. The strategic objectives are:

1

##### **Strengthen the commitment and capacities** of the AMCOW

Secretariat, governments and other stakeholders among the member states to elevate youth and gender inclusion as a priority, recognizing the invaluable roles that women and girls, youth, people with disabilities, marginalized and vulnerable groups play in water and sanitation institutions, programs and services;

2

**Build the capacities of youth** from diverse backgrounds and increase opportunities to enable them to contribute their energy, commitment, expertise and vision in the governance, advocacy, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of water and sanitation institutions, programs and services;

3

##### **Address unequal gender norms** by

empowering women and girls to increase their engagement in the water and sanitation institutions and sector, enabling them to gain from their skills and knowledge and increasing their opportunities in decision-making, project processes and services. This would also involve promoting positive masculinities among men and boys;

4

##### **Increase the understanding of and eliminate the discrimination and different barriers** faced by

people with disabilities of different genders and ages, as well as other marginalized and vulnerable groups. Further, to empower them to engage with and benefit equitably from water and sanitation services, ensuring that no harm is done in the process, and no one is left behind.

#### - Goal

Address structural barriers by empowering youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups to increase their engagement in the water and sanitation institutions and sector.

## - Enabling Principles

While human rights to water and sanitation, like other economic, social and cultural rights, should be progressively realized over time, there are certain obligations that are of an immediate nature. One important aspect of such immediate obligations is the elimination of discrimination. The following enabling principles will support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups including youth, women, people with disabilities, other members of the marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector:

- **The principle of non-discrimination and equality** recognizes that people face different barriers and have different needs. People therefore require differentiated forms of support and treatment, whether this is because of their own inherent characteristics or is the result of discriminatory practices;
- **To value diversity** within institutions and communities. Further, to value the diverse skills, experiences and perspectives that different people bring;
- **Make every effort to understand how discrimination and inequality** of opportunity and access to employment and resources can lead to barriers to participation and access to sustainable water and sanitation. Work to reduce these barriers to improve gender equality and non-discrimination in the water and sanitation sector, institutions, programs and services;
- **Work to ensure the dignity of all people**, including those who may be the most disadvantaged and face the most barriers to access safe water and sanitation services. Also, to make sure that no one, including the poorest and most marginalized and vulnerable people within the communities on the continent are inadvertently harmed by AMCOW's actions. This means understanding the risks related to water and sanitation that different people face and working to minimize these risks.





## 1.4. International and Regional Commitments on Youth and Gender Inclusion in Water and Sanitation

Youth and gender inclusion in the water and sanitation sector has been emphasized in global and continental instruments and protocols. African member states have made commitments to support equality among women and men and to use a gendered perspective in all programs and projects, including those related to water and sanitation. However, the performance of member states has differed based on their different national priorities, strategies, financial resources and budget allocations. The importance of integrating youth and gender perspective in all policies, programs and projects related to water and sanitation is enshrined in several key conventions and policy statements at the international and regional level, as highlighted here:

The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-1990) was finalized with consultations in New Delhi, India in 1990. While these consultations were limited in terms of gender issues, they incorporated a clear call for an increase in women's decision-making and management of water resources.

The Dublin Statement (1992) endorsed by over 100 countries, recognizes that women play a central part in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water resources. It acknowledges the pivotal role of women as providers and users of water as well as guardians of the living environment. The statement advocates for the reflection of this reality in institutional arrangements for the development and management of water resources. Gender considerations are also intrinsic to the three other principles of the Dublin Statement: i) Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource that is essential to sustaining life, development, and the environment; ii) Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy makers at all levels; and iii) Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.

The United Nations Rio Summit (1992) on climate change and environmental sustainability recognized the role that gender inequality plays in the effects of climate change. Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration recognizes women's participation as vital in environmental preservation and management for sustainable development.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) highlighted environmental issues as a critical area of concern in a statement on "... gender inequalities in the management and safeguarding of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment." Delegates agreed on three strategic objectives: i) To actively involve women in environmental decision-making at all levels; ii) To integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development; and iii) To strengthen or establish mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) urged governments to support gender-sensitive WASH infrastructure and services. The Johannesburg Plan of



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**2002:** The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) urged governments to support gender-sensitive WASH infrastructure and services.

Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, paragraph 25(a), includes an agreement by governments to, "... support capacity building for water and sanitation infrastructure and services development, ensuring that such infrastructure and services meet the needs of the poor and are gender-sensitive."

Sustainable Development Goals (2015) – The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has 17 Goals and was adopted by all UN member states in 2015, providing a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity, for people and the planet, now and into the future. Among these goals is SDG 5 which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by addressing gender-based discrimination, and the building of a society in which all people equally enjoy their rights and opportunities and share responsibilities. Goal 5 also has a set of indicators and targets to effectively guide its implementation by member states and to monitor the achievement of each target. Goal 6 aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The African Water Vision (2025) calls for the "equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socioeconomic development, regional cooperation, and the environment." This vision targets the mainstreaming of gender in water resources management and calls on women to take up key positions and functions in decision-making on water issues. It also targets stakeholder involvement in water resources management, especially by women and youth. The vision encourages 30% of national water policies to be gender-mainstreamed by the end of 2005 and calls for 100% of national water policies to be gender-sensitive by 2015.

United Nations Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief (2006) – The UN Task Force on Gender and Water (GWTF) alongside other related UN agencies released a policy brief on "Gender, Water and Sanitation" as part of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" (2005-2015). Governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector players, major donors and international organizations agreed to: i) Engage women leaders, especially scientists and ministers in the environmental and water sectors, as role models to promote gender mainstreaming at all levels of water management; ii) Promote gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation sector (linking gender goals that promote gender equality and women's empowerment); iii) Collect and share useful practices as well as compile norms and guidelines for gender mainstreaming; iv) Invest in capacity building in the water sector, with a greater focus on people with special needs; v) Use media to disseminate information on gender issues in the water sector; vi) Strengthen the capacity of officers in charge of gender (within donor agencies); vii) Create a framework for knowledge sharing among water and gender professionals.

African Union's Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) (2018) – This strategy is a framework document that aims to strengthen women's agency in Africa. It looks to ensure that women's voices are amplified, and their concerns are fully addressed through effective implementation of legislation and proper financing of gender equality work, among other measures. The strategy guides implementation of the AU's GEWE commitments and is to be used in the design of transformational programs for African women and girls on the continent and in the diaspora.

AMCOW Policy and Strategy to Mainstream Gender in the Water Sector in Africa (2011) – The policy and strategy are essential not only to support water ministers in implementing international gender and water commitments, specifically those made during PANAFCON, but also to achieve gender equality in the water and sanitation sector.

**2006: United Nations Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief (2006) – The UN Task Force on Gender and Water (GWTF) alongside other related UN agencies released a policy brief on "Gender, Water and Sanitation" as part of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" (2005-2015).**

**Governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector players, major donors and international organizations agreed to:**

- i) Engage women leaders, especially scientists and ministers in the environmental and water sectors, as role models to promote gender mainstreaming at all levels of water management;
- ii) Promote gender mainstreaming in the water and sanitation sector (linking gender goals that promote gender equality and women's empowerment);
- iii) Collect and share useful practices as well as compile norms and guidelines for gender mainstreaming;
- iv) Invest in capacity building in the water sector, with a greater focus on people with special needs;
- v) Use media to disseminate information on gender issues in the water sector;
- vi) Strengthen the capacity of officers in charge of gender (within donor agencies);
- vii) Create a framework for knowledge sharing among water and gender professionals.



The African Youth Charter (2006) recognizes the youth as partners and assets in sustainable development who are essential for Africa's peace and prosperity. Young people have a unique contribution to make to current and future development. Article 11 states that, "every young person shall have the right to participate in all spheres of society."

The AMCOW Policy and Strategy to Mainstream Youth in the Water Sector in Africa (2013) serves as the framework for addressing youth-related issues and to promote the active engagement of young people in the water and sanitation sector.

## 1.5. The 'Leave No One Behind' Priority

The imperative to leave no one behind is reflected across the 2030 Agenda, including in SDG 6 on water and sanitation for all. This requires member states to identify and target measures for populations that have comparatively lower levels of access to water and sanitation services, such as ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples who are at risk of being left behind. Discrimination and inequalities against women, girls and other minorities, including people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, low-income populations, migrants and refugees, denies them their human right to access safe drinking water and sanitation. There is also a significant proportion of unserved and underserved urban residents in vulnerable situations who are not counted ('below the radar') in current methods used for estimating service coverage. The various ways that inequalities and discrimination occur include social discrimination which entails the exclusion of specific groups or individuals from access to services due to their nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, political inclinations or other conditions, even though adequate WASH services exist. For instance, people with disabilities often face difficulties in accessing water access points and sanitation facilities as these are typically not designed to consider their needs. This in a world where close to one billion people (15% of the world's population) experience some form of disability. Economic marginalization occurs when specific groups may not be able to afford access to WASH services even though adequate services exist. This form of marginalization is directly linked to legal status, the right to work and freedom of movement.

Multiple broader and overlapping factors affect disadvantaged individuals and communities with special needs, not just those related to gender inequality alone. Health status is also a factor as people with physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments are disproportionately represented among those who may lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Other factors including age, class, religion, economic and social status can also lead to discrimination. These do not necessarily constitute an exhaustive list of specifically disadvantaged groups or individuals in vulnerable situations, but it is important to note that some people may suffer from multiple forms of discrimination and inequalities. The level and number of barriers each individual faces, however, depends on multiple and overlapping factors. For instance, the patterns through which indigenous peoples are deprived of access to water supply and sanitation services are often a combination of characteristics and intersectional disadvantages. Another instance is women who live in rural areas and older women from particular groups may have limited access to resources and reduced decision-making powers on their water and sanitation issues due to their age, gender and socioeconomic status.

The priority to 'leave no one behind' is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development which aims to ensure that all people worldwide will benefit from socioeconomic development and achieve the full realization of their human rights, without discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, language, religion, political (or other) opinions, national or social origin, property, disability, residency status (including citizenship, residency, immigration, refugee, statelessness, etc.) or any other social, economic or political position. Achieving this 2030 Agenda and its promise to 'leave no one behind' requires a people centered focus on international human rights, as well as an integrated approach to the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in partnership with all stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector. The SDG framework accommodates intersectionality which supports this current strategy and AMCOW's vision to ensure the inclusion of minority groups into the water and sanitation sector.

To eliminate discrimination and ensure equality in access to water supply and sanitation services, AMCOW and its member states in partnership with relevant stakeholders needs to review and strengthen national laws and policies in order to promote universal access, address issues of water supply and sanitation services, create affordability in water and sanitation service provision including water tariff inequities among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, as well as solve access to water and sanitation services. The benefits of improved water and sanitation services include increased school attendance, greater privacy and safety, especially for women, girls, children and older people, and a greater sense of dignity for all. To succeed, governments must prioritize actions through measures that target their underserved populations and set up WASH services. These actions must integrate equity measures in policies and plans, monitor progress to extend WASH services and apply financial measures to target resources to those who are most in need.









## 2.0 / Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a schematic representation of a process that explains how a given intervention or set of interventions are expected to lead to specific development changes, drawing on causal analysis based on available evidence. A sound theory of change helps clarify the complicated path to change for programs or strategies aimed at broad, large-scale goals. The theory of change in the YoGI Strategy (2023-2030), outlines the process through which change will be achieved as envisioned in the cross-cutting Priority IV of the AMCOW Strategy (2018-2030) which articulates the long-term goal of “strengthening gender equality and youth empowerment in the water and sanitation sector.” This priority is consistent with Aspiration 6 of the AU’s Agenda 2063 which targets “... an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.” Priority IV also aligns with the Africa Water Vision 2025 on, “Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socioeconomic Development.” Further, it supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 which addresses gender equality and women’s empowerment. This would result in a society where all people equally enjoy their rights and opportunities and share societal responsibilities. And Goal 6 aims to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The ToC process hinges on defining all the necessary and sufficient conditions required to bring about the targeted long term changes among youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups in Africa’s water and sanitation sector. This will help strengthen actions and maximize results by identifying the work to be undertaken by AMCOW, the expected indicators of progress and the presumed or possible pathways to achieve the desired goals, while also reflecting beliefs, working assumptions and hypotheses that are part of the change process. The ToC provides a pathway for change through a consultative process that reflects the understanding of all relevant stakeholders, based on evidence. It graphically represents the change process as it is understood by AMCOW and relevant stakeholders. The ToC also offers a flexible, evolving tool that can be revisited during implementation of the strategy, thereby promoting continuous learning by outlining the contextual or environmental factors that will support or hinder progress toward the realization of targeted outcomes. It provides an overview of the strategic direction of the policy by linking ‘Outcomes and Activities’ to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ the desired change is expected to come about.

### African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063 targets

targets an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children

### There are typically three important types of assumptions to consider:

Assertions about the connections between long-term, intermediate and short-term outcomes;

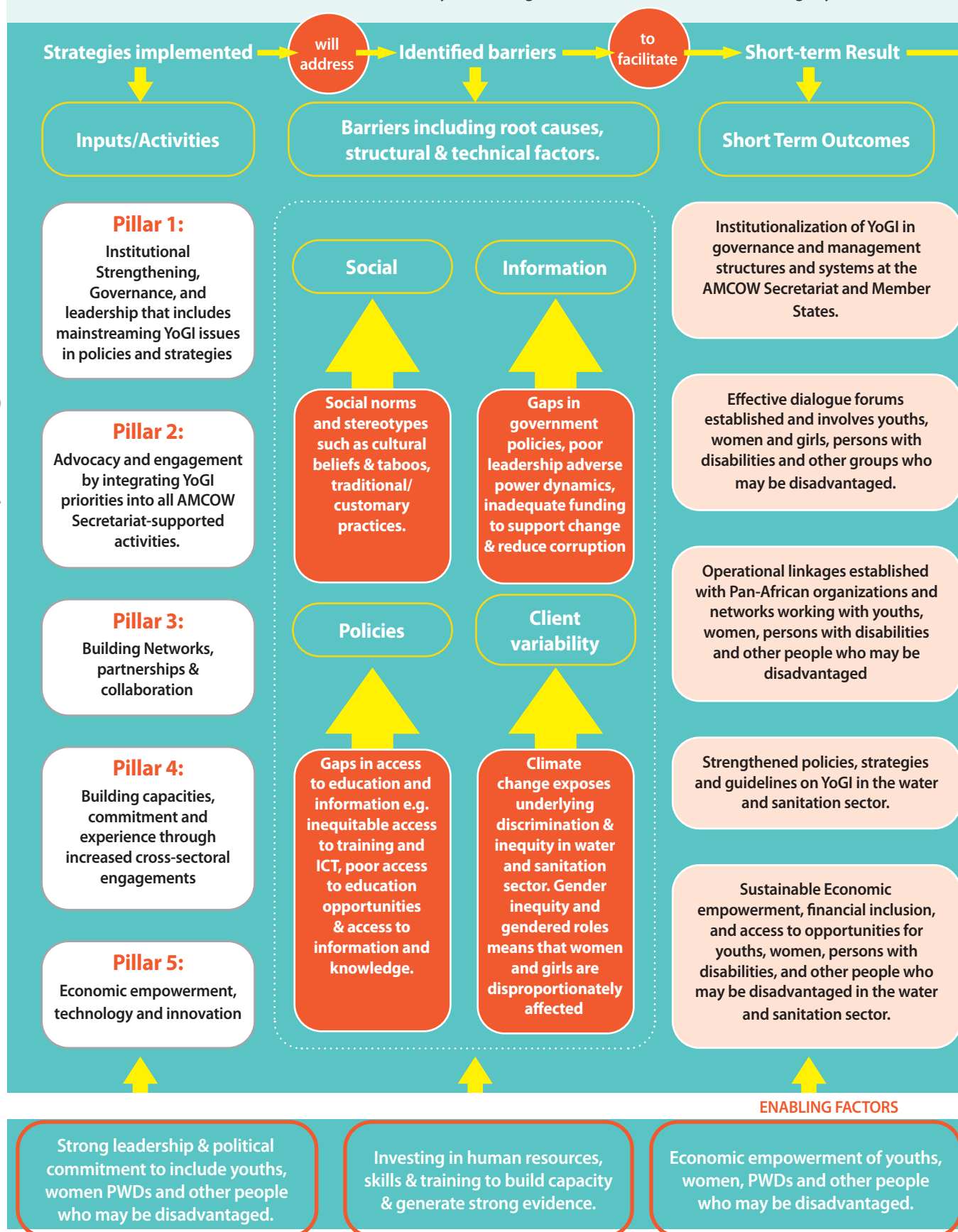
Substantiation of claims that all essential pre-conditions for success have been identified; and

Justifications supporting the links between planned activities and expected outcomes.



Every youth, woman, man, girl, and boy across Africa, including people who may be most disadvantaged, have equitable opportunity to participate in the development and management of, and have access to sustainable water and sanitation services and its dividends. Their contributions are valued, and they can manage, their water and sanitation with dignity.

# YoGI Theory of Change







By reflecting and representing assumptions and expectations about how change will occur, this theory of change offers a basis for measurement, experimentation, and learning. The ToC helps in testing assumptions and building understanding on the ways the strategy is implemented and adapted. Implementation is always a complex process as the operating environment is fluid and unpredictable and may influence activities in unknown ways. The ToC will therefore serve as a compass that remains pointed to AMCOW goals and strategic objectives. It will guide responses and adaptations as well as clarify opportunities for meaningful measurement of the outcomes. The ToC addresses power differences in access to water and sanitation between girls and boys, and women and men. It further promotes equity and inclusion in pursuit of this strategy's vision, objectives, and goal as it shows where to invest time, resources and financial support. The ToC also shows the means to measure this strategy's outcomes.

The theory of change articulates AMCOW's vision of a continent where all people have access to sustainable water and sanitation services, including those from marginalized and vulnerable groups. It embeds their participation in decision-making processes by establishing leadership opportunities for them and also advocates for the breaking of gender and social norms. The ToC supports the establishment of partnerships, collaborations, linkages and networks with other continental organizations in the water and sanitation sector. It seeks to build their capacities and support economic and financial empowerment and innovation. The inclusion of youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector will result in more people living in hygienic conditions that improve their health, dignity and living standards. Access to safe water and sanitation services will positively impact people's health and dignity especially for women, girls and members of other vulnerable groups. It will also contribute to gender equality in various ways. For example, if girls and women spend less time fetching water and cleaning sanitation facilities, rates of absenteeism from school for girls would decline while menstrual health management and hygiene would improve. Finally, access to safe water and sanitation services also contributes to sustainable economic growth and job creation in the provision of WASH services as well as the reduction of time spent away from work due to illness.

## Barriers to Equality in Water and Sanitation Services

The barriers highlighted below demonstrate the difficulties that women, girls, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups face in accessing safe water and sanitation services, or participating in water and sanitation institutions and programs across Africa. These formal and informal barriers result in discrimination and inequality within the sector.

**1. Social norms and stereotypes:** These include cultural beliefs, taboos, traditions, customary practices, and stereotypes, especially those related to the management and use of toilets. Other related barriers are religious restrictions, the devaluation and neglect of young women, the unequal distribution of roles/responsibilities/activities among men and women, and low self-confidence among women which curtails their engagement in community activities, especially those that involve men.

**2. Gaps in access to information and education:** These gaps include inequitable access to training and information and communication technologies (ICTs); lack of educational opportunities and access to information and knowledge; limited sharing of information due to the diversity of African languages; and inadequate WASH and MHM services in schools. The lack of MHM facilities in schools results in increased absenteeism for girls, which leads to lower self-esteem, higher economic costs and curtailed future opportunities. Conversely, improved access to WASH services in schools and at home enhances access to quality education and results in better educational outcomes.

**3. Lack of access to safe WASH facilities:** This can expose people to increased risks based on gender identity, legal status, age and class. As women and girls largely shoulder the burden of carrying water over long distances to households, they face additional risks of attack or abuse.

**4. Economic factors:** These include poverty and economic barriers; lack of access to or control over finances; limited opportunities for employment and income generation for people from marginalized and disadvantaged groups; too many domestic responsibilities for women and girls; little knowledge on the benefits of working in the WASH sector; inclusion of women and youth without additional support, curtailing their effective participation.

**5. Challenges from the work environment:** Limited leadership and capacity building opportunities for members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women and PWDs who are excluded from decision-making processes; absence of gender equality at work; challenges in managing menstruation; bullying at the workplace and in professional training opportunities.

**6. Gaps in government policy and leadership:** Gaps in government policies or their implementation; lack of support and poor leadership; adverse power dynamics; negligence and gaps in governance structures; inadequate funding and insufficient incentives to support change; corruption.

**7. COVID-19 pandemic:** The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 threw the world into disarray. The social, economic and health impacts of the pandemic are likely to persist for many years. An estimated 90% of all reported COVID-19 cases occurred in urban areas which became the epicenters of the pandemic. The pandemic hit the world's most vulnerable people the hardest, especially women, girls, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups, as they live in densely populated areas with multiple overlapping challenges including inadequate housing, limited health facilities, overcrowded public transport, little or no waste management, and an overall absence of basic services. Inequalities in access to basic WASH services further worsened the situation creating more vulnerability among this population.

**8. Climate change:** Exposes underlying discriminatory tendencies and inequalities in the water and sanitation sector. Gendered inequalities and roles mean that climate change disproportionately impacts women and girls. Politically, socially, and economically marginalized people are also more vulnerable to climate change impacts because they are less likely to access the financial and social assets needed to cope. The poorest, the most marginalized and vulnerable bear a disproportionate burden as climate change is a fragility amplifier which intersects with socioeconomic and other stressors, while further exacerbating existing vulnerabilities.

### 2.1.1. Enabling Environment for Success Factors

By collaborating closely with governments, development and implementing partners including the African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank, UN agencies, Foundations and partners, AMCOW will use its convening powers to help develop robust enabling environments in the water and sanitation sector at the national and regional level. The council will help build a critical and effective water and sanitation sector that delivers results for those from disadvantaged groups including youth, women and PWDs. Such an enabling environment will require the strengthening of institutions that promote youth and women's leadership at all levels of government. AMCOW will contribute to enhancing an enabling environment at all levels, through five action areas, which correspond to the pillars agreed to by stakeholders in the continent's water and sanitation sector:

- Institutional strengthening, governance and leadership
- Advocacy and engagement
- Networks, partnerships and collaboration
- Building capacities, commitment and experience
- Economic empowerment, technology and innovation

These pillars sit within a broader political context which includes political leadership, decentralization and social norms which support or hinder the achievement of this strategy's goals. AMCOW will work with other parties to address these structural issues by emphasizing the development of an enabling environment that economically empowers and strengthens the capacity of government agencies, private sector actors, international, regional and national organizations. This would enable them to analyze the constraints within specific contexts, identify solutions and develop costed action plans to address the water and sanitation sector challenges. These processes will be conducted jointly with AMCOW, member states and other partners using existing collaboration and coordination mechanisms such as regional economic communities (RECs) as well as national and sub-national organizations. AMCOW will also need to build its own capacity to support the strengthened enabling environments for water and sanitation through dedicated staff, training packages and other tools.







## 3.0 / Pillars, Objectives, Outcomes, Actions and Cross-cutting Priorities

This section assesses the performance of each pillar with the strategy's objectives, outcomes and actions. Specific actions to realize the full potential of the AMCOW Youth and Gender Inclusion Strategy in the 2023-2030 period, are outlined here. These actions build on the strategy's core strengths and seek to scale its impact at the regional and national level. They align with the measures taken as part of the AMCOW Strategy (2018-2030), the African Union's Agenda 2063 and SDGs 5 and 6 to ensure responsive, collectively-owned and sustainable water and sanitation services. The five pillars were determined through engagements with stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector on key provisions for youth and gender inclusion within global and continental frameworks, as well as the AMCOW Strategy (2018-2030), AMCOW Gender Policy (2011) and the Youth Policy (2013). The gaps identified are also considered in determining this strategy's key priorities, in line with AMCOW's areas of comparative advantage.

### 3.1. Pillar One - Institutional Strengthening, Governance and Leadership

The use of multi-stakeholder approaches to governance and leadership in Africa's water and sanitation sector entails acknowledging the role of a diverse set of actors. Sustainable management and governance of water resources and sanitation facilities requires the incorporation of a diverse set of views. Women play a crucial role in securing, transporting, using, and managing domestic water. They are also active in promoting sanitary behavior at home and within their communities. Young people are key stakeholders in the water and sanitation development agenda and within their respective communities. However, their participation is limited in the sector's decision-making processes. Recognizing and incorporating youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups into decision-making and leadership roles is fundamental to achieving sustainable and equitable water resource management and governance. A gendered perspective in water resource governance and leadership in Africa is essential to ensure that women and girls, boys and men enjoy the fundamental human right of equal access to water. A McKinsey report established that by narrowing the gender gap, sub-Saharan Africa could add 12%, or an estimated US\$ 300 billion to annual gross domestic product (GDP) by 2025.

Strengthening governance and leadership in the water and sanitation sector will support actions and approaches that incorporate the diverse needs and concerns of these groups, and so lead to equitable access, use and management of water resources and sanitation in Africa. Supporting youth, women, people with disabilities and marginalized and vulnerable groups will also empower them in developing their capacity as leaders and champions in the water and sanitation sector. Stronger institutions will galvanize political leadership to support multi-stakeholder approaches, such as embracing gendered perspectives and the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups in decision-making and accountability processes in Africa's water and sanitation sector.





### Strategic Objective 1:

Strengthening institutions and governance to prioritize YoGI as well as to establish meaningful opportunities for youth, women and other marginalized and vulnerable groups to take up leadership roles and participate in decision-making processes in the water and sanitation sector.

**Outcome 1.1: Institutionalization of YoGI in governance and management structures and systems in the AMCOW Secretariat and among Member States.**

#### AMCOW strategic actions:

1. Establish mechanisms for youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups to be represented and participate in AMCOW high-level meetings and events. These include the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Regional Economic Community (REC) consultations.
2. Constitute a YoGI Advisory Body (National Coordinators) to include two or three representatives of youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable individuals, drawn from government ministries in each sub-region, to facilitate in-country and regional activities. They would also regularly monitor and provide feedback on the implementation of the YoGI Strategy.
3. Mainstream gender perspectives and youth inclusion in policies, strategies, guidelines and standard operating procedures to strengthen equality and equity, non-discrimination and inclusion in Africa's water and sanitation sector.
4. Encourage member states to develop a country-specific YoGI Strategy on water and sanitation. They would also provide regular progress reports to their respective ministers through the TAC members, to encourage increased attention and prioritization of the water and sanitation sector.
5. Promote youth and gender-responsive budgeting, including preferential procurement processes (e.g., mandating that 30% of public procurement should be spent on activities that benefit women, youth or people with disabilities, as Kenya and South Africa have already done).

**Outcome 1.2: Employment of staff with appropriate experience and expertise who are dedicated to coordinating implementation of the YoGI Strategy.**

#### AMCOW strategic actions:

1. Recruit or nominate dedicated staff to coordinate implementation of the YoGI Strategy.
2. Prioritize the employment of more youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups at the AMCOW Secretariat and within member states.
3. Establish a country-level YoGI Forum and/or Community of Practice that would be managed by National Coordinators to facilitate meaningful engagements and learning with representatives of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

## 3.2. Pillar Two - Advocacy and Engagement

Sustained advocacy will be required to break down the barriers that prevent members of marginalized and vulnerable groups including youth, women and PWDs from engaging in and contributing to an equitable water and sanitation sector. The most effective advocacy efforts involve direct engagement with the sector by members of marginalized and vulnerable groups as this can facilitate communication between people, as well as support efforts in negotiating, mediating, accompanying, empowering, demonstrating good practice and building alliances. Ensuring the active engagement of members of marginalized and vulnerable groups in water and sanitation service delivery is key to assuring sustainability, accountability, and the realization of this strategy's goal. Advocacy and engagement can help generate more resources for other pillars using approaches based on constructive engagement and dialogue, backed by evidence. This will require careful persuasion and



skilled negotiations to achieve win-win solutions for people from marginalized and vulnerable groups. For instance, AMCOW and member states can facilitate opportunities for regular dialogues to increase participation from representatives of these disadvantaged groups. This will give them a platform to express their opinions, priorities, and needs as well as to realize that the water and sanitation sector provides numerous entry points to engage in poverty reduction activities. This cuts across all levels, from community, to national, regional, and continental.

### **Strategic Objective 2:**

**Use advocacy to develop new avenues for engagement and break down the barriers preventing engagement of youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector.**

**Outcome 2.1: Establishment of effective dialogue forums that enable youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other disadvantaged groups to engage with leaders from the government, local authorities, private sector and the community, on water and sanitation issues.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Integrate YoGI priorities into all AMCOW Secretariat-supported advocacy, workshop and training-related activities.
2. Undertake continuous advocacy with governments and other stakeholders on issues concerning integration into the AMCOW Secretariat and national government activities.
3. Leverage opportunities for collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), RECs, the UN, World Bank and other international and regional institutions to support YoGI advocacy activities that will promote the inclusion of water and sanitation issues in secondary and tertiary school curricula.
4. Create or facilitate platforms that encourage dialogue and promote learning at all levels (national, sub-national, community) among youth, women and other disadvantaged populations, with leaders in government, the local authorities and private sector, on water and sanitation issues.

**Outcome 2.2: Increased engagement of youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of water and sanitation-related policies and strategies.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Create opportunities and empower members of disadvantaged populations to participate in the planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, design, implementation and monitoring of water and sanitation-related policies and strategies, at all levels in the sector.
2. Increase community engagement in decision-making processes in the water and sanitation sector, particularly for youth, women, PWDs and other disadvantaged populations.
3. Increase the awareness of AMCOW's work among stakeholders within and outside the water and sanitation sector. Incorporate their contributions for greater inclusivity and to improve and accelerate the sector's development.
4. Ensure that provisions for accessibility to events, workshop, trainings and forums, whether in-person or online, are available for people with different types of disabilities (e.g., communication aids for people with impaired speech or hearing).

### 3.3. Pillar Three – Networks, Partnerships and Collaboration

Networks, partnerships and collaboration are essential to achieving AMCOW's goal for the water and sanitation sector. These are fundamental elements needed to address the interconnected challenges of water and sanitation, as effective partnerships and collaborations provide opportunities to develop and deliver innovative solutions to issues affecting the sector. A range of networks exist across Africa related to youth, gender and different kinds of disabilities. Youth movements have also been engaged in the management of water and sanitation services. Their voices and insights greatly influence the values and perspectives that are considered in sectoral decision-making.

Mobilization of youth networks can be considered a way of safeguarding the rights of future generations to participate in water governance. For instance, the vibrant youth movement, 'Fridays for Future', has had a major influence on environmental policy through massive and consistent mobilizations, and is now a critical force for global change. Gender related networks that focus specifically on water resources, the environment and climate change globally and across Africa also exist. These also have sub-groups which focus on leaving no one behind. Some networks represent people who are especially marginalized, for example, people from indigenous groups, pastoralist communities and hunter-gatherers. AMCOW can leverage the work of these networks and determine areas of convergence that have the potential for collaboration and partnerships in water and sanitation.

#### **Strategic Objective 3:**

**Strengthen networks, partnerships, collaboration, and cross-sectoral engagements that promote increased involvement of youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the water and sanitation sector.**

**Outcome 3.1: Establishment of operational linkages with continental organizations and networks working with youth, gender, people with disabilities and marginalized groups.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Analyze structures within the AU to identify opportunities for engagement across sectors and to strengthen collaboration and coherence in efforts.
2. Establish and strengthen linkages with the AU's Office of the Youth Envoy and the Directorate of Gender to identify opportunities for collaboration.
3. Use AMCOW's strategic convening capacity, partnership and advisory roles with the AU and member states to expand large-scale outreach to meet the water and sanitation needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of people.
4. Provide technical support to water and sanitation-related ministries for establishment or strengthening of water and sanitation-related youth networks, including networks of people with disabilities and marginalized groups.
5. Link young water and sanitation professionals with youth groups in informal settlements for collaboration and mentorship opportunities.

**Outcome 3.2: Formation of stronger partnerships with organizations that are open to collaboration in water and sanitation-related sectors, and which have the necessary expertise to promote youth and gender inclusion in Africa.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Map a database of networks, organizations and platforms across Africa that have expertise in working with socially excluded and disadvantaged people.
2. Work and partner with regional, national or local networks of young people and women to advocate for water and sanitation advancement, amplify their voices and contribute to increasing their engagement in sector activities.



3. Build partnerships and focused engagements with civil society organizations, human rights agencies, organizations supporting women and people with disabilities, youth organizations and intergovernmental institutions that champion access to equitable water and sanitation in their work.
4. Identify and engage with key partners who have expertise in working on issues of inclusion.

### 3.4. Pillar Four – Building Capacity, Commitment and Experience

Integration of youth and gender inclusion issues into the water and sanitation sector will require capacity building of existing stakeholders at all levels. Building the capacity of young people, women and members of other disadvantaged groups in the water and sanitation sector, will also strengthen their confidence to engage at all levels within the sector. This will further support their participation in decision-making and empower them to develop innovative ideas that can be integrated into policy and translated into concrete actions. These disadvantaged groups of people often find it more difficult to gain experience within the sector due to pre-existing barriers. They have also had fewer opportunities to advance their education or careers. As such, pro-active efforts are needed to understand and remove formal and informal barriers so as to encourage and support them at all levels within the sector. Opportunities to acquire experience such as paid internships, secondments, peer-working, project funding, mentoring, and coaching are needed. Such opportunities also need to be effectively supported to be operational. Capacity building is also needed for organizations and people with disabilities, including their water and sanitation networks.

#### **Strategic Objective 4:**

**Build capacity, commitment and experience in the water and sanitation sector and its YoGI institutions, working with youth, women and girls, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups.**

**Outcome 4.1: Development of guidelines and tools on strengthening YoGI, equality and non-discrimination in the water and sanitation sector.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Increase cross-sectoral engagement to build capacity, strengthen commitment and understanding of YoGI within the water and sanitation sectors.
2. Increase opportunities for young people to gain experience and skills. Boost the employment of youths, women, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups in public sector employment and private water and sanitation projects.
3. Integrate the training and capacity building components of the YoGI Strategy into existing broader training and capacity building initiatives related to water and sanitation.
4. Build the capacity of relevant stakeholders within member states to develop sustainable social protection services to ensure access to water and sanitation for the most disadvantaged.
5. Document and disseminate good practices from pilot projects or successful large-scale programs.

**Outcome 4.2: Enhanced capacity of relevant stakeholders within member states on YoGI issues.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Integrate YoGI training and capacity building components into existing training and capacity building initiatives related to water and sanitation in member states.
2. Build the capacity of grassroots organizations that work directly with communities to advance YoGI issues related to water and sanitation.







3. Establish scholarship programs for young women and men who show the potential to become leaders in the water and sanitation sector.
4. Provided on-the-job, technical support to staff on the AMCOW Secretariat who are responsible for coordinating implementation of the YoGI Strategy (National Coordinators/Focal People).

### 3.5. Pillar Five - Economic Empowerment, Technology, and Innovation

The globalization of economic and technological developments is likely to change preferences among consumers and producers, which in turn will change labor demands. Economic empowerment is key to bolstering opportunities and breaking down the barriers that youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups face. Young people with their enthusiasm and energy can also help drive innovation and technologies into the future. Innovations in digital technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data are likely to change the labor market by eliminating existing jobs and creating new activities and jobs. This would promote labor-intensive approaches and the use of local resource-based technologies in delivering public and private investments in water and sanitation. Local infrastructure is a technical solution that can boost equality within communities and help them maintain assets as well as decent jobs and income for members of disadvantaged groups. For instance, community-led sanitation programs have the potential to pay increasing attention to age, gender and the disabilities of users within the community. It is therefore critical to ensure that members of these disadvantaged groups are economically empowered and are involved in the advancement of technology in the water and sanitation sector.

Insufficient access to financial resources or assets, such as land and housing, can also limit the participation of people from disadvantaged groups in sectoral decision-making. While poverty is generally a barrier to effective participation, youth, women, people with disabilities and other members of vulnerable and marginalized groups may have limited control of resources and financial decisions, even in households with sufficient economic resources.

Digital inequalities between higher income and lower income countries as well as between different genders, is an emerging area of research. A 2020 report found that, across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), women were 8% less likely than men to own a mobile phone and 20% less likely to use the internet on a mobile phone, which translates into 300 million fewer women than men who are able to use mobile internet. Evidence indicates that current technological changes may further segment the labor market and widen wage inequality. However, recognizing these existing technological inequalities is a step towards addressing them.

Economic empowerment and technological innovations are likely to result in improved WASH services for vulnerable and marginalized groups. These can also alter the balance of any cost-benefit analysis that accounts for changes in these groups' self-perceived social status and dignity. Empowerment and innovation could be especially valued among marginalized and disadvantaged groups. There are also opportunities to learn from the indigenous knowledge that is maintained by indigenous communities.

#### **Strategic Objective 5:**

**Increase opportunities for youth, women and other disadvantaged groups of people to develop entrepreneurship and innovation skills, including the development of improved technologies and processes for social and economic autonomy.**

**Outcome 5.1: Increased economic empowerment, financial inclusion and access to opportunities for youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups in water and sanitation.**

#### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Develop a continental strategy for mobilizing the private sector to open up opportunities for the increased engagement of members of disadvantaged groups to gain work experience and fund new innovative ideas.
2. Develop mechanisms to boost access to finance among youth, women and members of other disadvantaged groups. Empower them to get into business enterprises in the water and sanitation sector.

3. Encourage investments in the water and sanitation sector to support employment generation programs for hard-to-employ groups, unskilled and semi-skilled laborers, women, PWDs and those from disadvantaged groups.
4. Establish a system to connect businesses led by youth, women, and members of other disadvantaged groups, with other experienced businesses and successful entrepreneurs who would mentor and equip them with practical skills, advice, and support on how to run successful water and sanitation-focused businesses.
5. Support member states with large-scale WASH service providers to use commercial financing through cross-subsidization of services, and indirectly support youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.
6. Develop well-designed, public-private partnerships (PPPs) to improve access to WASH services among youth, women, and members of other disadvantaged groups.

#### **Outcome 5.2: Integration of opportunities for technology transfer into continental and regional events.**

##### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Design and launch regional and continental awards for innovations by youth, women, people with disabilities and those from other disadvantaged groups, to recognize their contributions in the water and sanitation sector.
2. Promote innovation in water and sanitation services, facilities and products through local indigenous and private sector knowledge systems. This would entail harnessing and disseminating the knowledge nationally and locally, including in indigenous languages.
3. Develop mechanisms and opportunities that involve youth, women and members of other disadvantaged groups to facilitate technology exchanges, knowledge transfers and innovation of products and services.

#### **Cross-cutting Priority I: Prioritizing People most at risk of being left behind**

While there are many people across Africa who face poverty, inequity or discrimination in their daily lives, some groups of people face more extreme vulnerabilities or marginalization and are more often overlooked or excluded. This cross-cutting priority, therefore, goes a step further than mainstreaming and aims to help prevent people from being left behind. This comes from understanding which groups of people are most likely to be left behind and then prioritizing and supporting them directly. People with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than people without disabilities. It is therefore critical that every social group is included in the design and implementation of this YoGI Strategy, so that their specific needs are taken into consideration.

There is also the risk of doing harm when working to reach and include vulnerable, marginalized, overlooked or excluded people. For instance, this may occur by shaming people who cannot afford water and sanitation services unlike other households, or by pushing extremely poor households to sell their already paltry assets.

##### **Strategic Objective I:**

**Assess those most at risk of being left behind and why. Develop deliberate actions to fast-track and prioritize approaches and solutions that promote their inclusion in water and sanitation, while also ensuring that no harm is done to them.**

**Outcome 1.1: Establishment of partnerships involving the water and sanitation sector, government agencies responsible for social welfare, and key actors with experience in working with people from marginalized groups.**

##### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Work with representatives of groups or networks across Africa to develop generalized guidance on good practices in working with vulnerable and marginalized populations. This would be done to encourage member states to develop their own guidance or standard operating procedures.



2. Support government and non-governmental budgets in ring-fencing support for people who are most at risk of being left behind, so that they can access and contribute to water and sanitation development.

**Outcome 1.2: Documentation of best practices based on case studies from member states that are shared with appropriate audiences.**

### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Regular reporting by member states on progress made in supporting those groups of people who are most at risk of being left behind, in accessing appropriate water and sanitation services.
2. Undertake country and sub-national assessments and analysis to identify people who are most at risk of being left behind and the challenges they face in water and sanitation management.

### **Cross-cutting Priority II: Sustainability and Climate Resilience of YoGI Actions**

Climate change affects ecosystems, societies and economies in a variety of ways. Water and sanitation are some of the primary channels through which these impacts are felt. There have been calls to enhance climate resilience in water governance and management by incorporating systemic risk and uncertainty, and building resilience in water-related decision-making. Despite contributing only 3% of historic global carbon emissions, Africa is already bearing a disproportionately high share of the impacts of climate change. In addition, the costs of water insecurity and climate change in Africa are estimated to range between 1.5% and 3% of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030, and are expected to reach 10% by 2100. This underscores the importance of integrating climate resilience into the water and sanitation sector across Africa. Climate change impacts are mostly felt through the variability of the water cycle as changes in precipitation patterns are expected to increase the intensity and frequency of flood and drought events in many regions.

Climate change is likely to increase seasonal variability, resulting in more erratic and uncertain water supply, thus exacerbating problems in already water-stressed areas and potentially generating water stress in places where it has not been a recurring phenomenon. These impacts will be especially felt by poor women and girls, who already experience inequalities in access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and the water resources that they depend on for their livelihoods. The magnitude of climate change impacts on women and girls will exacerbate gender inequalities and threaten their health, well-being, livelihoods and education. In times of drought, women and girls are likely to spend longer time periods collecting water from more distant sources, thereby putting girls' education at risk because of reduced school attendance. Women and girls are also disproportionately exposed to the risks of waterborne diseases during floods due to the lack of access to safe water, the disruption of water services and increased contamination of water resources. The poorest and most disadvantaged are typically the most affected by climate change and the impacts of unsustainable water and sanitation-related infrastructure and services. These may be people living in remote and drought affected areas, or low-income and high-density urban communities, or refugees and internally displaced people who have been affected by natural disasters or conflicts.

Population growth, economic development, changing consumption patterns, intensified agricultural production and expanding cities will all drive substantial increases in water demand. However, improved water management and sanitation facilities open up opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. It is important to utilize the energy, commitment, experiences and vision of young people to develop lasting solutions for the future. Several existing networks already involve youth in water, environmental and climate change related issues. Such opportunities should be utilized to magnify impact and to prevent duplication of effort. Water-related climate risks cascade through food, energy, urban, transportation and environmental systems with mutually reinforcing and conflicting influences. A cross-sectoral approach is therefore needed to not only address the potential impacts of climate change within a sector, but also the interactions between the sectors, sustainability and resilience.

### **Strategic Objective II:**

YoGI-related actions consider and integrate sustainability and climate change in water and sanitation projects and programs.

**Outcome 2.1: Integration of climate change preparedness and adaptation alongside YoGI components in AMCOW's policies, strategies, activities and programs.**

### AMCOW strategic actions:

1. Strengthen co-operation among member states for the adoption and implementation of climate change adaptation approaches, by integrating these issues alongside YoGI-related protocols, policies and guidance in the water, sanitation and environmental sectors.
2. Mainstream climate change adaptation alongside YoGI components in AMCOW's policies, strategies, activities and programs.
3. Document climate change adaptation approaches and strategies from international best practices and activities at the grassroots.
4. Encourage knowledge sharing among member states on best practices and climate change adaptation efforts through networks involving youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups.
5. Learn from indigenous communities and minority groups, including pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and subsistence farming communities, on the impacts of climate change and possible solutions to prevent environmental degradation.
6. Build the capacities of organizations and networks of youth, women, and members of other disadvantaged groups on climate change with a focus on water and sanitation.

**Outcome 2.2: Identification and mobilization of resources to address the effects of climate change on water and sanitation programming, through initiatives undertaken by youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups.**

### AMCOW strategic actions:

1. Strengthen resource mobilization efforts at the regional and national levels that address climate change and its effects on water and sanitation programming. These initiatives should be undertaken by youth, women, PWDs and members of other disadvantaged groups.
2. Mobilize resources at regional and country level to strengthen and expand AMCOW's work on YoGI. This should include non-traditional sources, such as financing opportunities from other sectors.
3. Encourage member states to increase financing for climate change initiatives in water and sanitation-related businesses led by youth, rural and older women, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups.
4. Convene a donor round-table at the national level to attract new resources to support YoGI activities in enhancing climate change adaptation.

### Cross-cutting Priority III: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, Knowledge Management and Communication

Monitoring and evaluation processes and systems need to be strengthened to influence and motivate the effective integration of YoGI-related considerations. This calls for the increased collection of more data that are disaggregated in terms of gender and disability, as well as the conducting of qualitative self-assessments on progress made with supporting evidence. Data that reflect gender issues account for varied roles, responsibilities, relations, and expectations and are critical for identifying and addressing gender-based inequities. For example, a gender issue frequently discussed in WASH is water collection, which is primarily the burden of women globally. Many of the world's poorest and most disadvantaged individuals are not recognized or counted, and they are seldom considered part of formal systems. Unsurprisingly, they have difficulties in accessing basic water and sanitation services. Having appropriate spatial references for the data is necessary if inequities are to be fully understood, as the people in the most disadvantaged situations are often 'hidden' in aggregated statistics. This specifically refers to integration into the Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting (WASSMO) system for regular reporting to AMCOW.



Mapping current knowledge will help guide the community of practice and the policy and research teams working to strengthen WASH service delivery systems. Dedicated and regular learning and sharing opportunities are needed to communicate challenges and solutions to widen the learning impacts. These need to be designed using different media and mechanisms for different target groups, for example, focusing on social media and ICT would help engage and reach youth. Other mechanisms are needed to maintain the interest of different target groups in the sector's priority areas as well as to promote stakeholder engagement and expand their influence.

### **Strategic Objective III:**

**Strengthen the existing monitoring, evaluation, learning, knowledge management and communication systems to more effectively integrate YoGI results.**

**Outcome 3.1: Establishment of mechanisms that enable youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups, to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of AMCOW's YoGI commitments.**

### **AMCOW strategic actions:**

1. Develop a toolkit for gender indicators and a self-assessment scoring system for tracking implementation of the YoGI Strategy within AMCOW and in member states through the WASSMO reporting system. Gender indicators and self-assessment scoring scales will measure progress towards gender transformation as well as the engagement levels among members of disadvantaged groups.
2. Assist member states to strengthen how they gather disaggregated data by gender and other equity-related factors as well as use robust gender and social inclusion-related analyses to inform policy targeting and funding decisions. To support this, member states can consider using existing indicators already established by different continental and global bodies, such as the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) indicators and approach for collection of gender-disaggregated data.
3. Support and conduct research and development to explore existing YoGI challenges including gaps and barriers to reach members of disadvantaged groups including youth, women and PWDs on water and sanitation in their contexts, and identify implementation actions.
4. Support the development or strengthening of a community-based monitoring system and tools. This includes tools such as a community register which integrates information on households that are likely to require support in accessing and maintaining water and sanitation facilities.
5. Support processes to analyze sex-and disability-disaggregated data as well as data based on wealth quintiles and geographical variations. This is to facilitate policy making and better targeting of resources.
6. Strengthen statistical capacity for data collection and analysis as well as use of YoGI-related data at national and sub-national levels.

**Outcome 3.2: Establishment of regular dissemination activities on the implementation progress of the YoGI Strategy, that include the sharing of examples on best practices and gaps.**

1. Government ministries to report to AMCOW annually through the WASSMO system, on progress made towards the YoGI Strategy indicators, including the YoGI self-assessment system.
2. Hold an annual event for YoGI-related representatives as well as water and sanitation stakeholders to review progress, share knowledge and experiences, and to discuss good practices and challenges.
3. Undertake advocacy to ensure timely, accurate and high-quality reporting of disaggregated water and sanitation data that reflect the true condition of young people, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized groups.







## 4.0 / Implementation Framework, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL), & Communication

The AMCOW Governing Council will approve the YoGI Strategy while the Secretariat will provide broad policy guidelines on the implementation, coordination, monitoring and reporting of the results to the AMCOW Secretariat and member states. Implementation of the YoGI Strategy will require the strengthening of institutional arrangements including having dedicated staff and experts at the AMCOW Secretariat. Experts may be staff members of the Secretariat or contracted consultants who are available as required. The YoGI Strategy will take advantage of existing AMCOW structures to enhance coherence and coordination as well as promote knowledge and learning on issues affecting youth, women, people with disabilities, and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups in Africa's water and sanitation sector. This could mean, for instance, using AMCOW's varied structures and resources to implement strategic actions, activities and initiatives at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels. AMCOW's monitoring framework will support the monitoring process when needed and will provide a single report to inform the reports that AMCOW submits to the AU Commission (AUC). At the country and sub-regional levels, ministries and units responsible for water already exist in RECs and River Basin Organizations (RBOs). These could be the hubs around which YoGI mainstreaming issues are handled and reports submitted to the secretariat using the established monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

**The institutional structure of AMCOW is made up of political and technical organs at the regional and sub-regional levels, working together to achieve the council's objectives.**

**The Governing Council** serves as the principal inter-governmental body on water issues and is composed of all 55 African Ministers responsible for water affairs on the continent.

**The Executive Committee (EXCO)** consists of the President of the Council and 15 other members, i.e., three members who are elected from each of the five African sub-regions on a rotational basis. Members are selected by the sub-regions and the process should include youth, women, PWDs and those from other marginalized groups in line with the YoGI Strategy.

**The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** consists of 25 technical experts, five from each of the five African sub-regions, who serve on a rotational basis. The sub-regions decide which countries and experts are to become members of the committee. Sub-regional committees consist of a ministerial committee and technical experts responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place for sub-regional coordination on AMCOW matters as well as providing inputs for the TAC deliberations. This process should include members of disadvantaged groups as per the YoGI Strategy.

**The AMCOW Secretariat** is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the council as well as implementing follow-up actions to the council's decisions. Within the secretariat, the strategy unit provides the knowledge base on youth and gender inclusion for informed deliberations and decision-making of the council. The implementation framework provides an innovative means of leveraging existing resources while improving the coordination of interventions on youth and gender inclusion. The table below represents a timeline for the implementation of the YoGI Strategy.

**Table 1:** Timeline for implementation of the YoGI Strategy (2023-2030)

Action		Target date for completion
1	Approval of the YoGI Strategy by member states	June 2023
2	Establishment of a Technical Expert Committee (TEC), nomination of YoGI National Coordinator(s) and formalization of national structures to operationalize the YoGI Strategy	November 2023
3	Development of AMCOW YoGI coordination and action plan, including financing for the YoGI Strategy	December 2023
4	Call to action and orientation of YoGI Strategy with member states	December 2023
5	YoGI Action Plans from member states reported to AMCOW Secretariat	June 2024
6	First annual progress report from member states and AMCOW Secretariat	December 2024
7	Annual progress reports from member states and AMCOW Secretariat	December, each year
8	First externally facilitated review on progress of implementation of YoGI Strategy	December 2025
9	Second externally facilitated review on progress of implementation of YoGI Strategy	December 2028
10	End of implementation of the YoGI Strategy	December 2030
11	End-term evaluation on implementation of the YoGI Strategy	March 2031





## 4.1. Institutional Responsibilities and Arrangements

The balanced allocation of roles and responsibilities of key institutions and stakeholders implementing the YoGI Strategy will ensure the generation of sustainable benefits for maximum impact. The strategy will be implemented in collaboration with key institutions and stakeholders according to their specific institutional and social mandates. A brief overview of the key institutions follows:

**Table 2:** Key responsibilities of stakeholders

Stakeholders	Key responsibilities
<b>AMCOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide overall leadership and endorsement of YoGI-related actions in the work of the water and sanitation sector.</li> </ul>
<b>AMCOW Secretariat/ YoGI Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spearhead and coordinate the implementation of the YoGI Strategy at AMCOW Secretariat and member state levels.</li> <li>• Promote and establish the partnerships required to operationalise the Strategy at all levels.</li> <li>• Provide strategic and technical oversight toward strengthening the YoGI-related components that contributes to water and sanitation sector development.</li> <li>• Facilitate resource mobilization mechanisms for implementation of the YoGI Strategy.</li> <li>• Manage a consolidated fund for the YoGI Strategy.</li> <li>• Monitor the progress of the YoGI Strategy and share lessons learned.</li> </ul>
<b>AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee and Technical Expert Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strategic guidance to AMCOW Secretariat on the latest YoGI-related best practices for integration into development of advocacy efforts across Africa.</li> <li>• Provide technical inputs to facilitate the implementation of YoGI-related components in the water and sanitation sector work.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for funding and collaboration across sectors at continental, regional and member state levels.</li> <li>• Support implementation of the YoGI Strategy at the continental level.</li> </ul>
<b>National Coordination Structure / Water and sanitation- related ministries in member states</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate the implementation of YoGI programs, policies, and projects related to youth and gender inclusion in national water and sanitation sector.</li> <li>• Create awareness on the AMCOW YoGI Strategy and encourage action at national and sub-national level with all stakeholders.</li> <li>• Develop a national YoGI, leave-no one behind or equality and non-discrimination strategy for the water and sanitation sector.</li> <li>• Provide technical advice on how to improve the YoGI-related actions.</li> <li>• Facilitate fundraising initiatives for implementation of the YoGI Strategy.</li> <li>• Monitor progress of the YoGI Strategy and share lessons learned.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for youth, women, PWDs and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups for experience and employment.</li> </ul>
<b>Ministries responsible for youth, women, older people, children and people who are most vulnerable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with the water and sanitation ministries and identify collaborative opportunities to support members of marginalized and vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Strengthen knowledge and capacity development efforts of water and sanitation ministries, to consider and support the most vulnerable and marginalized populations with adequate and accessible water and sanitation services.</li> <li>• Assist the water and sanitation sector to understand how to work with vulnerable populations without harming them further.</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Key responsibilities of stakeholders

Stakeholders	Key responsibilities
<b>United Nations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the latest YoGI-related best practice developments across Africa and share with AMCOW for integration into their advocacy efforts.</li> <li>Provide technical support to strengthen the implementation of YoGI-strategy in the water and sanitation sector in Africa.</li> <li>Facilitate funding of YoGI activities in the water and sanitation sector, especially those focusing on people who are most likely to be left behind.</li> <li>Ensure YoGI priority actions are fully integrated into all UN-funded programs in water and sanitation.</li> <li>Advocate for water and sanitation priorities are integrated in UN-funded programs in other sectors, which focus on the most disadvantaged populations.</li> <li>Avail opportunities to expand YoGI-related actions, through existing UN-supported programs and activities.</li> <li>Support capacity-building and knowledge acquisition opportunities to boost YoGI impacts across Africa.</li> </ul>
<b>Bilateral and Multi-lateral donors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund YoGI-related activities in the water and sanitation sector, focusing especially on groups of people who are most likely to be left behind.</li> <li>Require YoGI to be integrated into all donor-funded programs.</li> <li>Require water and sanitation to be integrated into programs that donors fund in other sectors and focus on serving the most disadvantaged populations.</li> <li>Support capacity-building opportunities related to YoGI.</li> </ul>
<b>Civil society organizations (NGOs, FBOs, CBOs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the latest YoGI-related good practice developments across Africa, share these with the AMCOW Secretariat and member states.</li> <li>Provide recommendations on how to strengthen the YoGI-impacts in the water and sanitation sector.</li> <li>Advocate for funding for YoGI-related activities in the water and sanitation sector, focusing especially on those groups of people who are most likely to be left behind.</li> <li>Require YoGI to be fully integrated into all the programs the organizations fund and implement that are related to water and sanitation.</li> <li>Support capacity-building opportunities related to YoGI.</li> <li>Provide employment opportunities for youth, women, PWDs and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Private sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research the specific needs of women and girls, PWDs, older people and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups, to develop relevant products and services.</li> <li>Provide these products and services, including those targeting poorer households.</li> <li>Provide employment opportunities for youth, women, PWDs and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth networks and experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage youth networks to increase engagement in water and sanitation-related institutions, programs and services.</li> <li>Advocate on behalf of youth to influence water and sanitation program decisions at sub-national, national and AMCOW Secretariat levels.</li> <li>Advocate for increased opportunities among youth for training and employment.</li> </ul>



**Table 2:** Key responsibilities of stakeholders

Stakeholders	Key responsibilities
<b>Gender networks and experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage gender networks to increase engagement in water and sanitation-related institutions, programs and services.</li> <li>• Advocate on behalf of women and girls to influence decisions at sub-national, national and AMCOW Secretariat levels.</li> <li>• Advocate for training and employment opportunities for women and girls.</li> <li>• Advocate and support training for men and boys to better support women in the water and sanitation sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Marginalized groups, networks and experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage networks representing groups of people who are most likely to be excluded and left behind to increase their engagement in water and sanitation-related institutions, programs and services.</li> <li>• Advocate for influence in decision-making at sub-national, national and AMCOW Secretariat levels. Ensure that programs target and are designed appropriately for those groups of people who are most likely to be left behind.</li> <li>• Advocate for increased training and employment opportunities for PWDs and others who are most likely to be excluded and left behind.</li> <li>• Support the water and sanitation sector to understand how to work with vulnerable populations without harming them further.</li> </ul>

## 4.2. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) and Communication

### 4.2.1. Monitoring

AMCOW will develop a two-year action plan that will be updated annually, with clear activities and targets. The YoGI Coordinator will develop monitoring and reporting systems to be utilized by the National Coordinators in tracking YoGI progress. This would be undertaken twice a year and results will be assessed against the YoGI Strategy's objectives using self-assessment or scoring against set indicators. Monitoring and evaluation processes and systems are required to influence and motivate an effective integration of YoGI-related considerations and progress at national level. These accountability mechanisms are crucial for improving gender equality and youth empowerment in the water and sanitation sector. Beyond the disaggregation of data collection and analysis by sex; reporting of data that reflect gender issues are also important to gender statistics. Gender statistics "adequately reflect the differences and inequalities in the situation of women and men in all areas of life which include but also extend beyond sex-disaggregated data."

Disaggregation of data by gender will require the development of additional gender-specific and gender-related indicators for use at the Secretariat and member state level. Further, reporting on evidence-based actions will require increasing the collection of more gender and disability-disaggregated data as well as qualitative self-assessment of progress with supporting evidence. These processes will require the development of toolkits to support the monitoring process and accelerate the implementation process aimed at strengthening gender-sensitive and inclusive data analysis in water and sanitation.

More specifically, the integration of gender statistics into the WASSMO system for regular reporting to AMCOW is needed. To achieve gender equality, sex-disaggregated data are needed to understand the varied, gendered experiences in the water and sanitation sector beyond access to water and sanitation facilities alone. Monitoring of WASH and gender, therefore, needs to account for intersectionality, and recognize that meaningful categories for comparison and assessment over time may differ at global and national levels. The toolkits developed will be guided by sources that include but are not limited to: the Women for Water Initiative; the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) gender-responsive indicators and toolkit; the UN-Women Expert Group Meeting on Gender Equality and WASH; the JMP/GLAAS gender review of WASH monitoring with Emory University; and UN-WWAP UNESCO Toolkit as part of the project on gender-sensitive water monitoring, assessment and reporting.

The agreed indicators will be included into the WASSMO reporting system and reported annually, or periodically, based on consultations and consensus among stakeholders. Member states will input data into the WASSMO reporting system and AMCOW will analyze the data against the strategic objectives and outcomes. AMCOW will prepare a summary progress report

which will then be disseminated back to member states and other stakeholders. Capacity building will help member states to overcome challenges related to collection of data that are disaggregated by gender and other factors as well as to conduct robust analysis related to youth and gender inclusion which would inform policy and funding decisions.

AMCOW will ensure that the YoGI Strategy informs every intervention and is integrated into its events and activities. Lessons learned will be recorded and will inform the development of the following year's action plan. The AMCOW YoGI Coordinator and the National Coordinators will submit an annual report which will provide updates on the implementation of their respective strategy remit areas, progress achieved and the following year's implementation plans. A summary of the strategy's implementation will be included in the AMCOW annual report.

#### 4.2.2. Evaluation

An externally facilitated review of the YoGI Strategy will be conducted in 2025 and 2028 respectively, to assess implementation experience, challenges and achievements. An evaluation report with clear, summarized results, including recommendations for improvements and adjustments to the strategy if needed, will be prepared by the Technical Expert Committee and presented to the AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee. A report on the implementation status, progress and recommendations from the review will be prepared and submitted to the AMCOW Governing Council and member states. At the end of the YoGI Strategy period, AMCOW's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will commission an external evaluation on the strategy to assess the success of its implementation and the achievement of its goals. Lessons learned will be documented for the future.

#### 4.2.3. Learning and Communication

Dedicated and regular learning and sharing opportunities are needed to communicate challenges and solutions, so as to widen the impacts of lessons learned on youth and gender inclusion in water and sanitation. These need to be designed using different media and mechanisms that target different groups, for example, social media and ICT tools can be used to engage young people. Other mechanisms are needed to maintain stakeholders' engagement and the interests of different target groups in the priority areas, sectors, and areas of interest within the sector. At the end of each year, progress against the action plan will be reviewed and lessons learned will be used to inform a new rolling two-year action plan. AMCOW will facilitate peer learning among member states and partners as well as take part in existing networks currently engaged in monitoring on water and sanitation. These include the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-water (GLAAS) and other global and regional reporting frameworks. Data from these sources will be triangulated with the water and sanitation sector monitoring and reporting (WASSMO) system through conventional monitoring and evaluation techniques, as well as emerging and innovative methodologies. To spur cross-sectoral learning across the member states and other stakeholders, AMCOW will make use of the following initiatives:

**1. Africa Water Week:** This forum brings together players and actors in the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors from different parts of the world. Africa Water Week is an important platform for knowledge sharing. AMCOW will use this platform to report on the progress made in implementation of the YoGI Strategy and present the following year's implementation plan to stakeholders for their input. Targeted efforts will be made to ensure representation from youth, women, people with different kinds of disabilities and those from other marginalized and disadvantaged groups are in the discussions.

**2. AfricaSan:** This forum was born from the recognition that Africa's sanitation sector had been neglected for many years and not given the same weight as water. AfricaSan brings together technical experts and governments to exchange lessons, identify approaches and technologies and move sanitation further up the development agenda. AMCOW and member states will use this forum to share knowledge on YoGI, as well as to present best practices from different countries. AMCOW will also organize discussion forums on youth, women, PWDs and other disadvantaged groups on the strategic actions taken. Feedback from these groups will be used to improve the YoGI strategy.

**3. YoGI Community of Practice:** AMCOW will establish a YoGI Community of Practice to share knowledge on YoGI. This community will hold virtual discussions at least once every three months. The Community of Practice will be organized by the AMCOW YoGI Coordinator(s) and Focal Points. They will share the discussion topics in advance, receive presentations, set the agenda and ensure that they give feedback on follow-up actions.

**4. Social media:** The AMCOW YoGI Coordinator(s) and Focal Points who are mandated to ensure seamless implementation of the strategy, will work hand-in-hand with the AMCOW Communication and Visibility office to develop snippets of the YoGI work and activities. These snippets will be posted regularly on AMCOW's social media channels. AMCOW will also facilitate discussions on social media where youth, women, PWDs and members of marginalized groups can interact with the Focal Points and AMCOW leaders on the YoGI strategy implementation progress as well as how they can be engaged at national, sub-national and grassroots level.

**5. Awards and competitions:** Opportunities for learning and sharing can be established through awards and competitions on best practices in integrating YoGI into water and sanitation institutions and programs.

**6. Other network and advocacy events:** These events will highlight YoGI issues and promote the sharing of information.















## 5.0 / Financing and Budget Arrangements

A central element of national planning, priority setting and budgeting is understanding the costs and benefits of reaching different population groups, especially vulnerable ones. However, specific evidence on certain sub-population groups is rare as most studies present aggregated costs and benefits for the general population. Investments in sanitation and hygiene increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, rising on average from 0.1% to 0.25% of GDP in the 2021 and 2022. Data from GLAAS also indicate that annual funding for WASH has increased. However, severe gaps remain in funding WASH strategies and implementation plans as well as to reach national targets. The African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates that Africa needs US\$11 billion per year to achieve SDG 6 on universal access to potable water and sanitation. Besides the apparent lack of financial resources to meet this goal, limited capacity, weak institutions, the non-implementation of commitments and weak policies are persistent challenges. At the same time, Africa is urbanizing rapidly, the continent's urban population is expected to increase from 345 million in 2014 to 1.3 billion people by 2050. Africa is the only region, where urbanization is not accompanied by a sufficient rate of economic growth. It is also estimated that Africa loses 5% of its annual GDP due to poor access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Another 5% to 25% of GDP is lost to droughts and floods while 2% is lost due to regular power outages.

Financing for strategic actions and activities related to the YoGI Strategy and their integration into the water and sanitation sector will have to be increased. Insufficient funding and lack of effective financing mechanisms present barriers to achieving the WASH targets for disadvantaged and marginalized groups. A certain proportion of the investment gap can be overcome through increased system efficiency. This can significantly reduce overall costs by using already available finances more efficiently. There are potential opportunities through re-prioritizing existing funding resources and designing more substantial YoGI-related components, as well as seeking new opportunities. These might be realized through co-financing with other institutions with similar and overlapping goals. There may also be opportunities for financing from the private sector, including corporate social responsibility initiatives. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is particularly helpful in mobilizing investments through commercial and blended finance from other sources, including the private sector. However, national governments would have to dramatically increase the amounts of public funding made available for the expansion of WASH services.

National governments should allocate and attract substantial investments through tools like budgets, loans, grants and equity from domestic and international financing institutions. Financial mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships (PPPs), and the use of innovative instruments such as guarantees, blended financing, and bonds should be promoted. These investments are crucial for developing and implementing the institutional components of YoGI Strategy. AMCOW can draw sustainable and innovative financing from various sources, including the private sector and micro-finance schemes, to contribute to improved water and sanitation in Africa. Project preparation plays a critical role in maximizing investments within the sector. The lack of project readiness for investment is one of the limiting factors in attracting additional financing.



Africa is urbanizing rapidly, the continent's urban population is expected to increase from

**345 million**

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**1.3 billion**

people by 2050.

YoGI initiatives should also be integrated into existing AMCOW events and activities as well as member state activities across ministries and sectors. There are also opportunities for co-financing efforts with other institutions at the global and continental level. For example, AMCOW could seek collaboration opportunities with the WWAP building on their expertise in capacity development in water and gender inclusion, as well as in policy assessments and evaluations. This could be targeted for their next biannual capacity development program (2023-2025) when they expand into Eastern Africa and French-speaking African countries.

The AU already has a range of programs, initiatives and funds that could be approached for collaboration opportunities, or for new sources of funding. Opportunities also exist to integrate efforts into existing networks, which have a focus on a range of different sectors. AfDB initiatives and programs on water and sanitation, Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, may also provide opportunities to implement strategic actions in line with the YoGI Strategy.

Funds could also be sourced from various multi-lateral and bilateral donors, through direct applications. Other sources of funding include integration of activities into new and existing programs and activities, with support from civil society organizations, including NGOs, FBOs and CBOs. In addition, there may be opportunities to source funding from the private sector, e.g., through corporate social responsibility initiatives, or from trusts and philanthropies. The private sector can also be encouraged to cross-subsidize products and services, with reduced prices for the poorest and most disadvantaged households.

The YoGI Strategy also advocates for AMCOW to build capacity on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) at regional and national level, as well as to undertake a gender budget audit of its expenditure with a view to enhancing GRB within the organization. This would enable AMCOW to cost and advocate for resources targeting youth, women, PWDs and other marginalized and vulnerable groups. The audit process would cast a spotlight on expenditures in line with the proposed strategic actions of the five pillars and ensure that the budgeting process is gender-sensitive. This exercise would go hand in hand with the results framework as it would require gender and sex disaggregated data to verify that the expenditure is indeed supporting gender equality. The gender budget audit would determine the extent of targeted youth and gender inclusion interventions and provide guidance on how mainstream budgets can be made gender-responsive.

Figure II: Financing of the YoGI Strategy







# the implementation of YoGI Strategy

## Bilateral and Multi-lateral Donors

## Philanthropy

### Intergration into Pan-African Investment Programmes such as:

- Africa 50-Pan-African Investment programme
- Continental Africa investment programme that includes water, climate and investment in gender

### African Development Bank Initiatives

- African Water Facility
- The Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust
- Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative



### Integration into activities being implemented across sectors:

- Health
- IWR and WASH
- Disability
- Climate change
- Education
- Food and Agriculture
- Youth Empowerment
- Gender and women empowerment

### The Private sector

- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Cross subsidies for services to reduce costs for marginalised and vulnerable groups
- Financing water and sanitation projects

### Existing awards and opportunities for youth such as:

- Peace First Challenge
- Young Water Solutions

### Integration into existing networks such as: Climate change, IWR and WASH, Youth, Gender and Women empowerment and disability

## ANNEX I: Logical Framework for Youth and Gender Inclusion in Africa's Water and Sanitation Sector

<b>Vision</b>	This strategy is built on the vision that all women, men, girls and boys of all ages and capabilities across Africa, contribute to the equitable development and management of sustainable water and sanitation services, and have access to the same. All their contributions are valued, and they are able to manage their water and sanitation with dignity.				
<b>Impact</b>	Strengthened gender equality and youth empowerment in Africa's water and sanitation sector.				
<b>Pillars</b>	1. Institutional strengthening, governance and leadership	2. Advocacy and engagement	3. Networks, partnerships and collaboration	4. Building capacity, commitment and experience	5. Economic empowerment, technology, and innovation
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>1.1.</b> Institutionalization of YoGI in governance and management structures and systems in the AMCOW Secretariat and member states.	<b>2.1.</b> Establishment of effective dialogue forums that enable youth, women and girls, people with disabilities and representatives of marginalized and vulnerable groups to engage with leaders in government, the local authorities, private sector and the community on water and sanitation issues.	<b>3.1.</b> Establishment of operational linkages with continental organizations and networks working with youth, gender, people with disabilities and marginalized and vulnerable groups	<b>4.1.</b> Development of guidelines and tools on strengthening YoGI, equality and non-discrimination in the water and sanitation sector.	<b>5.1.</b> Increased economic empowerment, financial inclusion and access to opportunities for youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in water and sanitation.
	<b>1.2.</b> Employment of staff with appropriate experience and expertise who are dedicated to coordinating implementation of the YoGI Strategy.	<b>2.2.</b> Increased engagement of youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other marginalized and vulnerable groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of water and sanitation-related policies and strategies.	<b>3.2.</b> Formation of stronger partnerships with organizations that are open to collaborating in water and sanitation-related sectors, and which have the required expertise to promote youth and gender inclusion in Africa.	<b>4.2.</b> Enhanced capacity of relevant stakeholders in member states on YoGI issues to equip them with knowledge to address its needs and interests.	<b>5.2.</b> Integration of technology transfer opportunities into continental or regional events.



<b>Outputs</b>	<b>1.1.1</b> Established mechanisms for youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized and vulnerable groups that enable their representation and participation in AMCOW high-level meetings and events, including the TAC and REC consultations.	<b>2.1.1.</b> Integrated YoGI priorities into all advocacy, workshop and training-related activities supported by AMCOW.	<b>3.1.1.</b> Meetings convened on water and sanitation that result in partnership and advisory roles with the AU and member states for marginalized and vulnerable groups.	<b>4.1.1.</b> Training and capacity building components of the YoGI Strategy integrated into existing broader training and capacity building initiatives related to water and sanitation.	<b>5.1.1.</b> Investments in the water and sanitation sector that support employment generation programs for harder-to-employ groups, unskilled and semi-skilled labor, women, people with disabilities and people from marginalized and vulnerable groups.
	<b>1.1.2.</b> Youth and gender perspectives mainstreamed into policies, strategies, guidelines and standard operating procedures.	<b>2.2.1.</b> Accessibility to events, workshops, trainings and forums, whether in-person or online for people with different types of disabilities (e.g., communication aids for people with impaired hearing).	<b>3.2.1.</b> A database of networks, organizations and platforms across Africa with expertise in working with people who may be socially excluded and vulnerable.	<b>4.2.1.</b> AMCOW Secretariat staff trained on YoGI.	<b>5.2.1.</b> Regional and continental awards for innovations by youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other disadvantaged groups, lauding their contributions in the water and sanitation sector.
	<b>1.2.1.</b> Recruited or nominated qualified staff to coordinate implementation of the YoGI Strategy.				

<b>Activities</b>	<b>1.1.1.</b> Constitute a YoGI Advisory Body (National Coordinators) to include two or three representatives (youth, women, PWDs and marginalized individuals) from government ministries in each sub-region, to facilitate in-country and regional activities, and to regularly monitor and provide feedback on the implementation of the YoGI Strategy.	<b>2.1.1.</b> Integrate YoGI priorities into all AMCOW Secretariat-supported advocacy, workshop and training-related activities.	<b>3.1.1.</b> Undertake analysis of the structures within the AU, to identify engagement opportunities across areas of sectoral responsibility, for enhanced collaboration and coherence in efforts.	<b>4.1.1.</b> Increase cross-sectoral engagement to build capacities, commitment and understanding of YoGI within the water and sanitation-related sectors.	<b>5.1.1.</b> Develop a continental strategy for engaging with the private sector to open up opportunities for increased engagement of youth, women and people with disabilities and marginalized groups to gain work experience and fund new innovative ideas.
	<b>1.1.2.</b> Establish mechanisms for youth, women and people with disabilities and marginalized and vulnerable groups to be represented and participate in AMCOW high-level meetings and events, including TAC and REC consultations.	<b>2.1.2.</b> Undertake continuous advocacy with governments and other stakeholders on issues concerning integration into AMCOW Secretariat and national government activities.	<b>3.1.2.</b> Establish/ strengthen linkages with the African Union Office of the Youth Envoy, and Directorate of Gender and identify areas for collaboration and coherence.	<b>4.1.2.</b> Increase opportunities for youth to gain experience and skills, and support employment of youth, women, people with disabilities, and members of marginalized groups in government agencies and private water and sanitation projects.	<b>5.1.2.</b> Develop mechanisms for access to finance for youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other disadvantaged groups and empower them to get into water and sanitation.



	<p><b>1.1.3.</b> Mainstream gender perspectives and youth inclusion in policies, strategies, guidelines and standard operating procedures to strengthen YoGI, equality and equity, non-discrimination and inclusion, and doing no harm in Africa's water and sanitation sector.</p>	<p><b>2.1.3.</b> Leverage opportunities for collaboration with AUC, RECs, the UN, World Bank and other international and regional institutions to support YoGI advocacy activities that will promote the inclusion of water and sanitation in secondary and tertiary school curricula.</p>	<p><b>3.1.3.</b> Use AMCOW's strategic convening capacity, partnership and advisory roles with the AU and member states, to expand large-scale outreach to the water and sanitation needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of people.</p>	<p><b>4.1.3.</b> Integrate training and capacity building components of the YoGI Strategy into existing broader training and capacity building initiatives related to water and sanitation.</p>	<p><b>5.1.3.</b> Encourage investments in the water and sanitation sector. Encourage the sector to support employment generation programs for the harder-to-employ groups, unskilled and semi-skilled labor, women, people with disabilities and people from particularly disadvantaged groups.</p>
	<p><b>1.1.4.</b> Promote youth and gender-responsive budgeting, including preferential procurement processes (such as 40% to be spent on activities that benefit women, youth or people with disabilities, as Kenya and South Africa are already doing).</p>	<p><b>2.1.4.</b> Create/facilitate platforms that encourage dialogue and promote learning at all levels (national, sub-national, community) on water and sanitation issues among youth, women and girls, people with disabilities and members of marginalized groups, leaders in government, local authorities and the private sector.</p>	<p><b>3.1.4.</b> Provide technical support to water and sanitation-related ministries for establishment and strengthening of water and sanitation-related youth networks, including networks of people with disabilities and marginalized groups.</p>	<p><b>4.1.4.</b> Build the capacity of relevant stakeholders within member states to develop sustainable social protection services to ensure access to water and sanitation for people who are most disadvantaged.</p>	<p><b>5.1.4.</b> Establish a system to connect businesses led by youth, women, people with disabilities and people from other disadvantaged groups, with other experienced businesses and successful entrepreneurs who would mentor them and provide them with practical skills, advice, and support on how to run successful water and sanitation-focused businesses.</p>

	1.2.1. Recruit or nominate dedicated staff to coordinate implementation of the YoGI Strategy.		3.1.5. Link young water and sanitation professionals with youth groups in informal settlements to offer opportunities for mentoring and encouragement.	4.1.5. Document and disseminate good practices from pilot or successful larger-scale programs.	5.1.5. Support member states with large WASH service providers to use commercial financing and indirectly support youth, women, people with disabilities and members of other vulnerable and marginalized groups through cross-subsidization of services.
	1.2.2. Prioritize the employment of more youth, women, people with disabilities and members of marginalized groups at the AMCOW Secretariat and member states, to be more representative of the populations it is supporting.	2.2.1. Create opportunities and empower youth, women and other disadvantaged populations to participate in the planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, design, implementation and monitoring of water and sanitation-related policies and strategies at all levels in the sector.	3.2.1. Map a database of networks, organizations and platforms across Africa with expertise in working with people who may be disadvantaged and socially excluded.	4.2.1. Integrate training and capacity building components on YoGI into existing broader training and capacity building initiatives related to water and sanitation in member states.	5.1.6. Support well-designed public-private partnerships (PPPs) which can improve access to WASH services for youth, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.
	1.2.3. Establish a YoGI Forum and/or Community of Practice to be managed by the respective National Coordinators to facilitate impactful engagements and learning with representatives of country-level youth, women, people with disabilities and other marginalized and disadvantaged groups.	2.2.2. Increase community engagement in decision-making processes in water and sanitation, particularly for women, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged populations.	3.2.2. Work and partner with networks of young people and women who regionally, nationally or locally advocate for water and sanitation advancement, amplify their voices and contribute to increasing their engagement in sector activities.	4.2.2. Build the capacity of grassroots organizations working directly with communities to advance YoGI issues related to water and sanitation.	5.2.1. Design and launch regional and continental awards lauding innovations by youth, women, people with disabilities and people from other disadvantaged groups and their contributions in the water and sanitation sector.

		<p><b>2.2.3.</b> Increase awareness of AMCOW work among stakeholders within and outside the water and sanitation sector, and incorporate their contributions in YoGI to improve and accelerate sector development.</p>	<p><b>3.2.3.</b> Build partnerships and focused engagements with civil society organizations, human rights agencies, organizations supporting women's networks, organizations of people with disabilities, youth organizations and intergovernmental institutions who champion equitable access to water and sanitation in their work.</p>	<p><b>4.2.3.</b> Establish scholarship programs for females and young males with the potential to become senior sector leaders, for training in water and sanitation sector-relevant courses.</p>	<p><b>5.2.2.</b> Promote innovation of water and sanitation services, facilities and products through local indigenous and private sector knowledge systems, by harnessing and disseminating the knowledge nationally and locally, including in indigenous languages.</p>
			<p><b>3.2.4.</b> Identify and engage key partners, who have expertise in working on inclusion issues and formation of partnerships.</p>	<p><b>4.2.4.</b> AMCOW Secretariat staff responsible for coordination of implementation of the YoGI Strategy (Coordinators/Focal People) will be provided with on-the-job, technical support.</p>	<p><b>5.2.3.</b> Develop mechanisms and opportunities involving youth to facilitate technology exchanges, transfer and innovation of water and sanitation knowledge, products and services.</p>



## ANNEX II: Glossary of Terms

<b>Gender Analysis</b>	A systematic approach, usually based on social science methodologies, used to examine problems, situations, projects, programs, and policies to identify gender issues and impacts. There are a number of tools available for conducting gender analyses. Gender analysis of a development program involves identifying the gender issues of the larger context (i.e., structural factors); specific sites; and the issues and differential impacts of program objectives, strategies, and implementation methods. Gender analysis must be done at all stages of the development process. It entails asking how a particular activity, decision, or plan will affect men differently from women in areas such as access and value of labor, property access and ownership, access to information and services, and social status.
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Refers to the absence of discrimination, on the basis of a person's sex, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services. Gender equality refers to the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations imposed by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued, and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Inequality, discrimination, and differential treatment on the basis of sex can be structural (i.e., it is practiced by public or social institutions and maintained by administrative rules and laws and involves the distribution of income, access to resources, and participation in decision-making).
<b>Gender Equity</b>	Gender equity refers to fairness in the treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities (e.g., equal treatment before the law, equal access to social provisions, education, equal pay for work of the same value). In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women. Specific measurements and monitoring are employed to ensure that, at a minimum, programs, policies, and projects implemented do not leave women worse off than men in their peer groups and families, and that measures are taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages.
<b>Gender Audit</b>	A Gender Audit is an internal assessment of an organization and/or institution's status on gender equality. It identifies and assesses staff perceptions of gender awareness, gender sensitivity, how gender issues are addressed in their policies, programming, activities, and internal organizational processes.
<b>Gender Sensitivity and Gender Awareness</b>	The ability to recognize gender issues and especially the ability to recognize women's different perceptions and interests due to their different social location and gender roles. Gender sensitivity is considered the beginning stage of gender awareness. The latter is more analytical, more critical, and more "questioning" of gender disparities. Gender awareness is the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not very evident on the surface or are "hidden" (i.e., not part of the general or commonly accepted explanation of what and where the problem lies).

<b>Gender Roles</b>	Communities and societies create social norms on behavior, values, and attitudes that are deemed appropriate for men and women, and the relations between them. These roles are assigned by social rather than biological criteria. For example, childbearing is a female sex role because men cannot bear children. Although both men and women can rear children, these duties are socially assigned.
<b>Gender Relations</b>	A term that emphasizes the relationship between men and women as demonstrated by their respective roles in power sharing, decision-making, the division of labor, returns to labor, both within the household and in the society at large.
<b>Gender Role Stereotypes</b>	The portrayal, in media or books or conversations, of socially assigned gender roles as "normal" and "natural."
<b>Gender Division of Labor</b>	An overall societal pattern where women are allocated one set of gender roles and men are allocated another. An unequal gender division of labor refers to situations in which there is an unequal division of the rewards of labor by sex, i.e., discrimination. The most obvious pattern in the gender division of labor is that women are mostly confined to unpaid domestic work and unpaid food production, whereas men dominate in cash crop production and wage employment.
<b>Sex or Gender Disaggregated Data</b>	Information differentiated on the basis of what is related to women and their roles, and to men and their roles. More correctly termed sex-disaggregated when collected and analyzed for men and women.
<b>Gender Monitoring</b>	The consistent collection, storage and maintenance of quantitative and qualitative data (information) that are sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive. These data should be measured against policies and/or program gender targets that are set before program implementation.
<b>Gender Blindness</b>	Person, policy, or institution that does not recognize gender as an essential determinant of the life choices available to people in society.
<b>Gender Responsiveness</b>	Gender responsiveness is the creation of projects, programs, and policies that are sensitive to the unique and common needs of women and men, and which respond to those needs.
<b>Gender Inclusive Language</b>	This is language that challenges the assumption/traditions that masculine nouns, pronouns and adjectives include both male and female. An example of gender-inclusive language is 'staff-hours' instead of 'man-hours'. Gender exclusive language acts as both a cause and effect of the invisibility of women's contribution.
<b>Gender Perspective</b>	Gender perspective is a way of analyzing and interpreting situations from a viewpoint that takes into consideration gender construction in society (for women and men) and searches for solutions to overcome these gaps.
<b>Gender Sensitivity</b>	Gender sensitivity refers to perceptiveness and responsiveness concerning the differences in gender roles, responsibilities, challenges and opportunities.

<b>Policy approaches in Gender Equality</b>	Over the years, a number of policy approaches have been adopted in efforts to address inequalities. The gender management system draws on several aspects of the equity, anti-poverty and empowerment approaches. It takes these approaches a step further by advocating for a system-wide, gender mainstreaming strategy, which engages the entire state machinery in partnership with non-state stakeholders.
<b>Gender Sensitive Policies</b>	<p>Government policies may fall into one of the three possible types: gender neutral, gender-specific or gender aware/redistributive/transformational. These can be distinguished as follows (adapted from Kabeer, 1994):</p> <p>Gender Neutral Policies are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom, if ever have the same effect on women as they do men, even if at first they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Policies which may appear to be gender neutral are often gender blind.</p> <p>Gender Specific Policies take into account gender differentials. They specifically target women or men but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact.</p> <p>Gender Aware/Transformational Policies seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies involve altering the existing balance of power between women and men, boys and girls by not just addressing practical needs, but strategic gender interests as well.</p>
<b>Gender Assessments/ Evaluations</b>	After monitoring, it is essential to evaluate sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data in order to assess the status of gender equality and to consider the potential causes of its progress or failure.







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