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# The 2014 Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting: What does it tell us about how developing countries are tackling inequalities?

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Hon. Mr. Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Ethiopia



- 307 commitments were tabled by 43 developing countries
- But did any relate to eliminating inequalities?

**Yes!**



- 26 countries made a total of 46 commitments related to inequalities
- 60% of the 43 developing countries making commitments in 2014
- 15% of the 307 developing country commitments



# What kind of commitments?

- Priority to rural, remote or small communities
- Priority to the poor
- Priority to minorities and/or indigenous people
- Priority to peri-urban areas and/or the urban poor
- Addressing gender inequalities
- Addressing the needs of people with disabilities
- Identifying the underserved and tracking



## **34 commitments included targeting a particular group known to be under-served**

- **rural or remote areas** - 17 commitments in 11 countries
- **urban poor or peri-urban areas** - 9 commitments in 9 countries

## ***BUT* other un-served unlikely to be mentioned**

- **people with disabilities:** 2 countries (Nepal and Bangladesh)
- **minorities or indigenous peoples:** 2 countries (Paraguay and Vietnam)
- **gender:** 1 country (Senegal, which tabled a commitment to develop a gender strategy for the WASH sector)
- **prioritising the poor:** 3 countries (Vietnam, Bangladesh; Senegal)

# Some dealt with institutional and policy issues

- **equality as an objective:** 11 commitments, from 9 countries –many did not include specific details
- **poverty reduction strategy:** 7 commitments from 6 countries
- **systems to identify the un-served and track progress in providing access:** 6 commitments in 5 countries
- **research into vulnerable groups:** 5 commitments in 5 countries
  - Ghana - national study on equity and inclusion
  - Benin, Chad and Liberia - research into best practices for serving the urban poor





***BUT*** not all countries made commitments related to improving the enabling environment, some only committed to targeting certain groups

- Does this mean countries struggled to address underlying problems?



**GLAAS report showed that more than half of countries surveyed lack monitoring systems to track progress among disadvantaged groups**

- ***BUT*** only 9% of countries tabling commitments at the 2014 HLM included one related to improving monitoring systems to track progress among disadvantaged groups



# The UN has recognised water and sanitation as human rights

But only two countries Paraguay and Senegal mentioned human rights, stating government's recognition of the right, and intention to increase service delivery in this context.

- None of the commitments related to a government's intention to recognise the right in countries where this has not yet been done.



In conclusion....

Many developing countries responded to the challenge of formulating commitments to tackle inequalities

- *BUT* why was response neither universal nor systematic?
- do governments need more guidance and examples of best practice?