

UN WATER



The United Nations World Water Development Report 2026

# Water for All People: Equal Rights and Opportunities

23 March 2026

**Laura Imburgia**

UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme



The UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme is supported by the Italian Government

# UNESCO Water Family



**Intergovernmental  
Hydrological  
Programme**



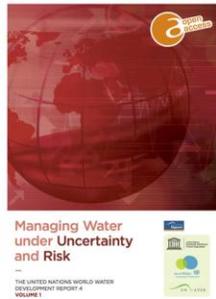
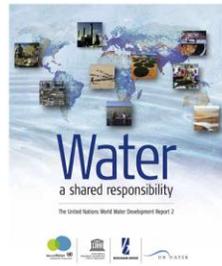
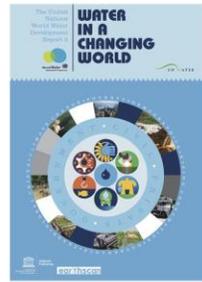
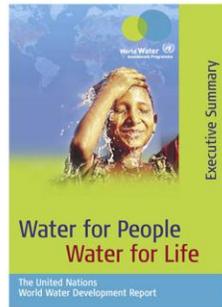
**World Water  
Assessment  
Programme**



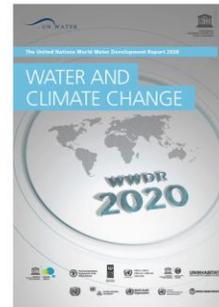
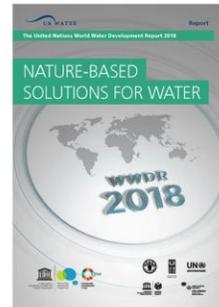
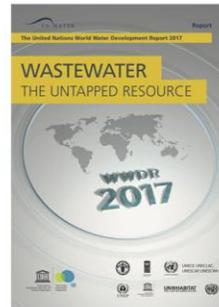
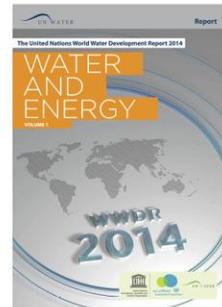
**Water-related  
centres under the  
auspices of UNESCO**



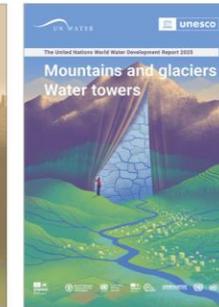
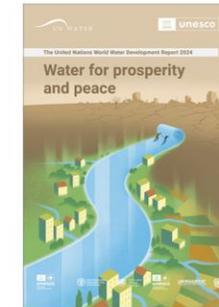
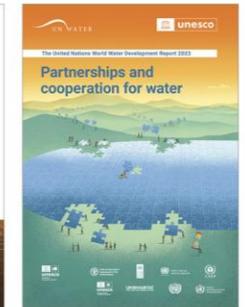
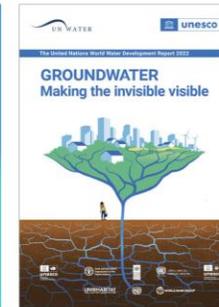
**UNESCO Chairs**



2003 - 2012



2014 - 2020



2021 - 2025



# UN World Water Development Report Series

## The UN flagship Report on global freshwater resources

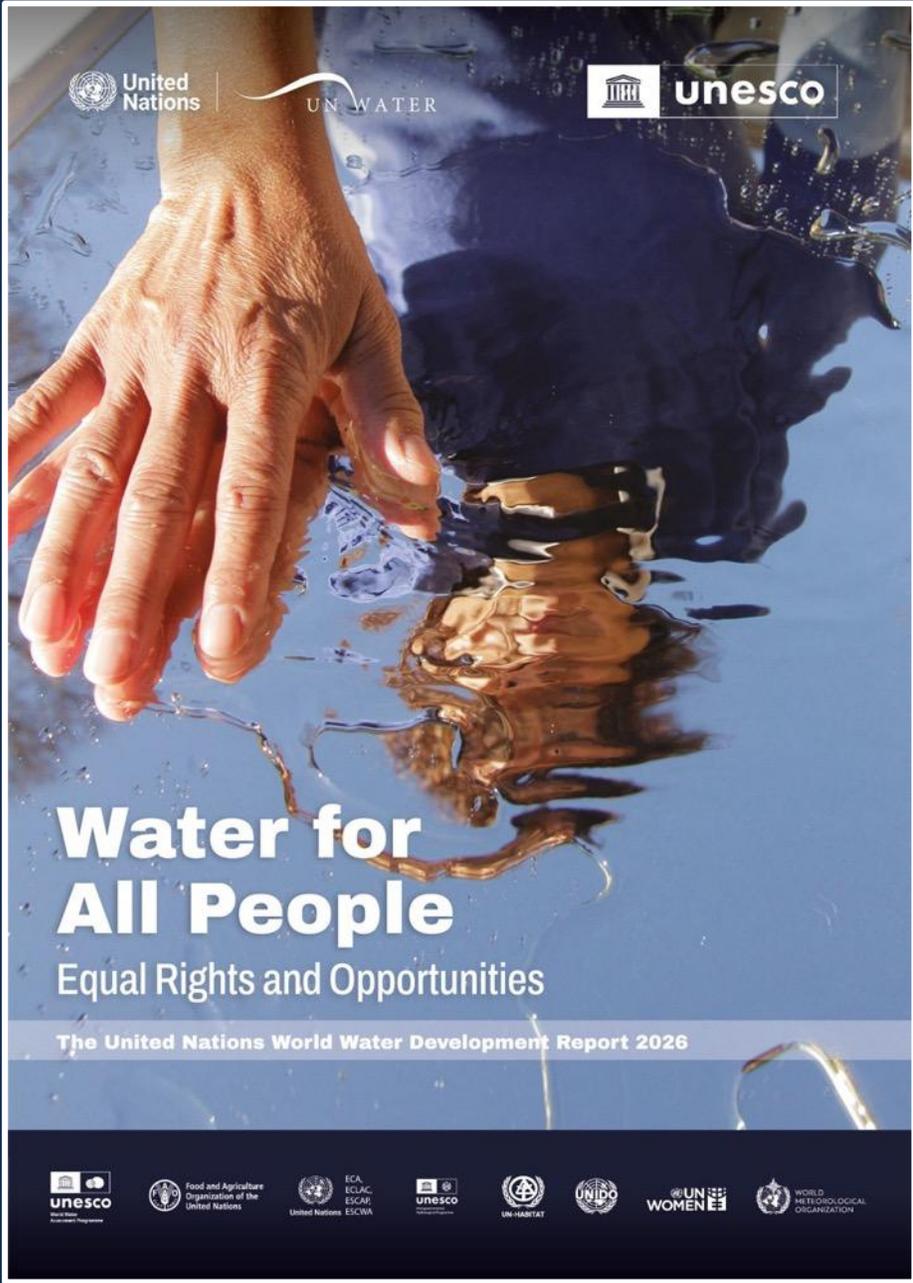


# WWAP component on water and gender equality

1. Methodologies and tools for sex-disaggregated water data
2. Field projects in water and gender integration
3. Capacity development
4. Advocacy and communication

Our programme







# The World's Water in Numbers

# Access to Water Supply and Sanitation

Progress towards all SDG 6 targets is off track – some severely

Figure P.1 Progress status of Sustainable Development Goal 6 targets, 2025



Source: United Nations (n.d.).



**Water and Gender Equality matters**

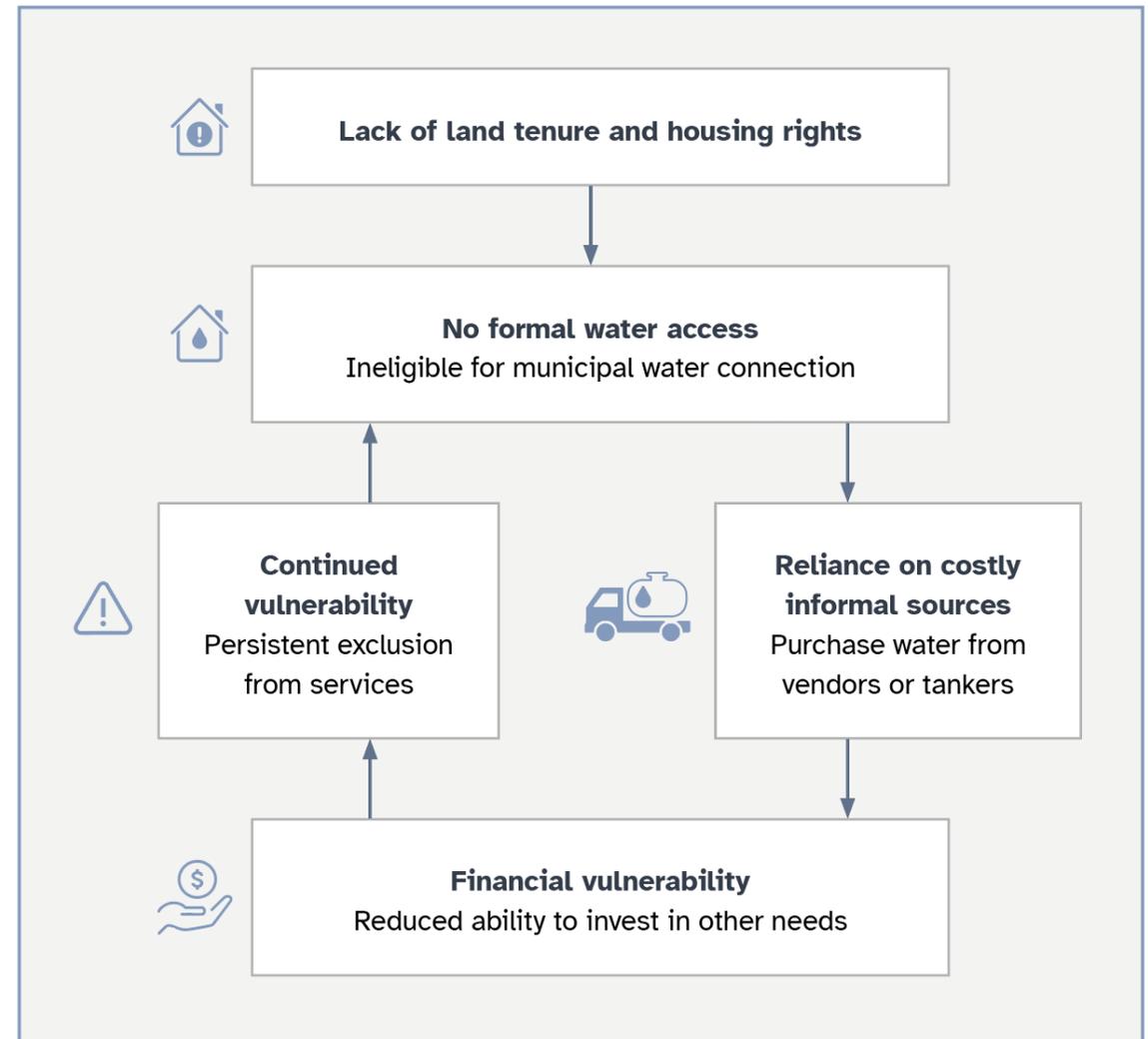


**The Report focuses on the key water use sectors**

# Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in human settlements

Women and girls have been traditionally responsible for water collection and water-related tasks at home

Figure 2.1 Lack of land tenure and housing rights and the drinking water, sanitation and hygiene insecurity cycle



Source: Authors.

# Food and agriculture

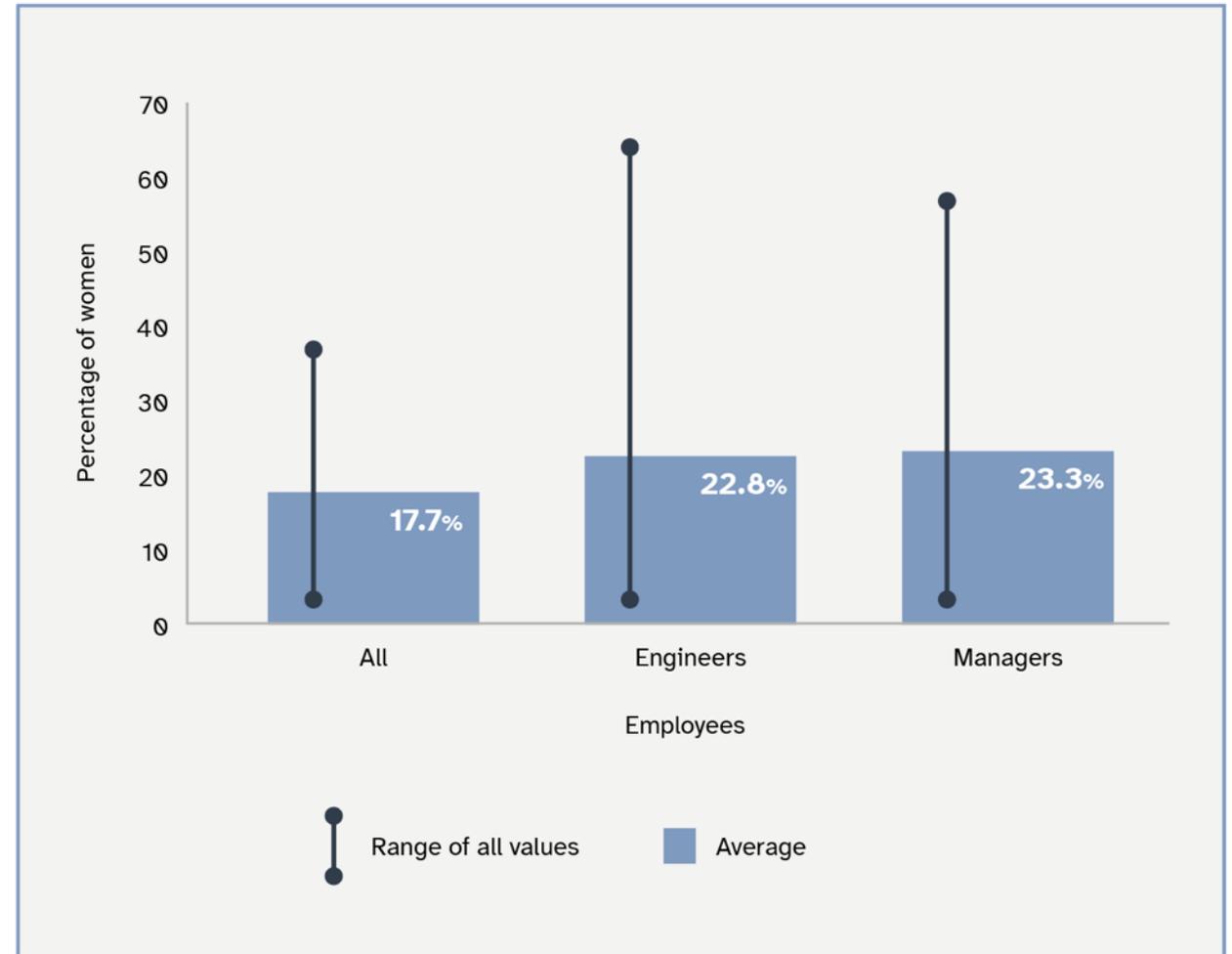
Land rights are critical  
in determining women's ability  
to access, use and manage  
water resources



# Industry, business and energy

Women are underrepresented at all levels in the water sectors

Figure 4.1 Share of women employed in water utilities at the global level, 2018–2019



Source: Adapted from World Bank (2019, fig. 2.1, p. 12).

# Climate change and hydrometeorological disasters

Women and men experience disaster risks differently due to gendered roles and capacities



# Ecosystems

Adopting gender-responsive approaches can foster more inclusive, resilient and innovative strategies to manage water-related ecosystems



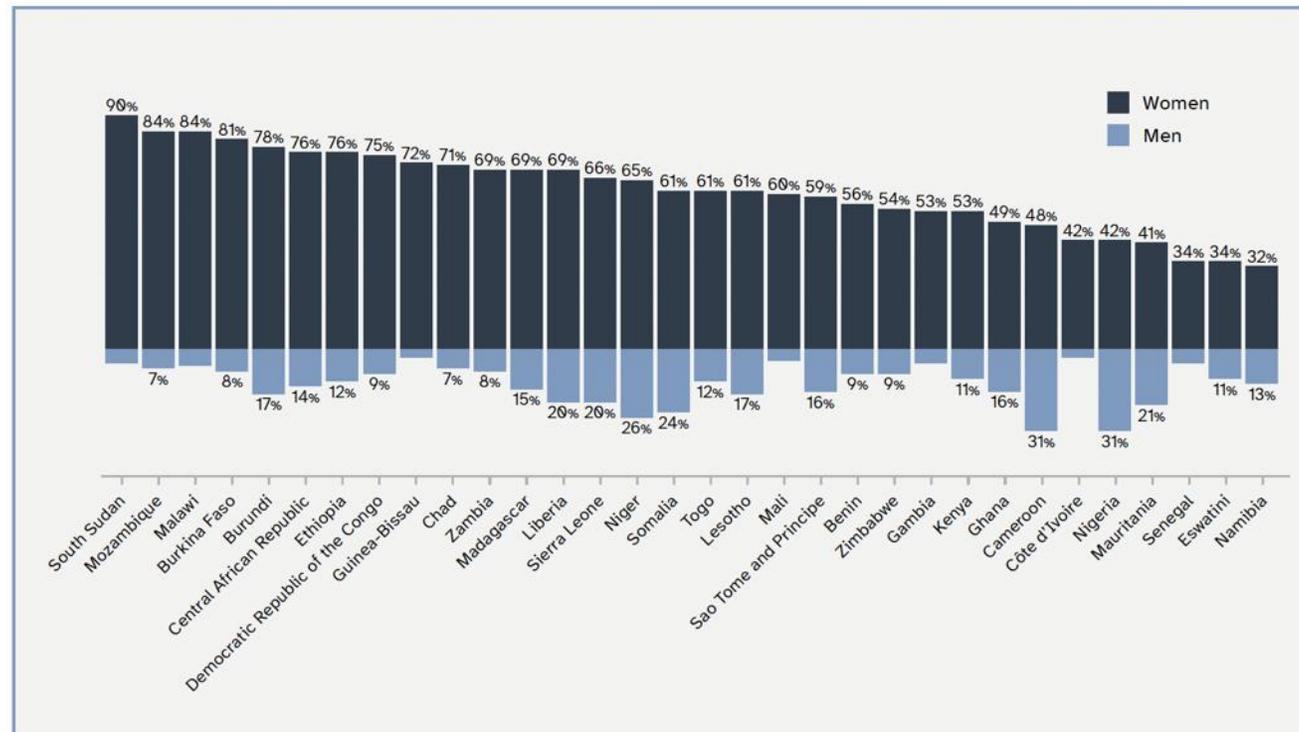


# Regional Perspectives

# Sub-Saharan Africa

Approximately 115 people in Africa die every hour from diseases linked to poor sanitation, poor hygiene and contaminated water

**Figure 7.1 Primary responsibility for water collection in rural African areas in those households where water has to be collected off the premises, by gender (percentage), 2015**



Source: World Bank (2024, fig. 1, based on World Bank and UNICEF data).



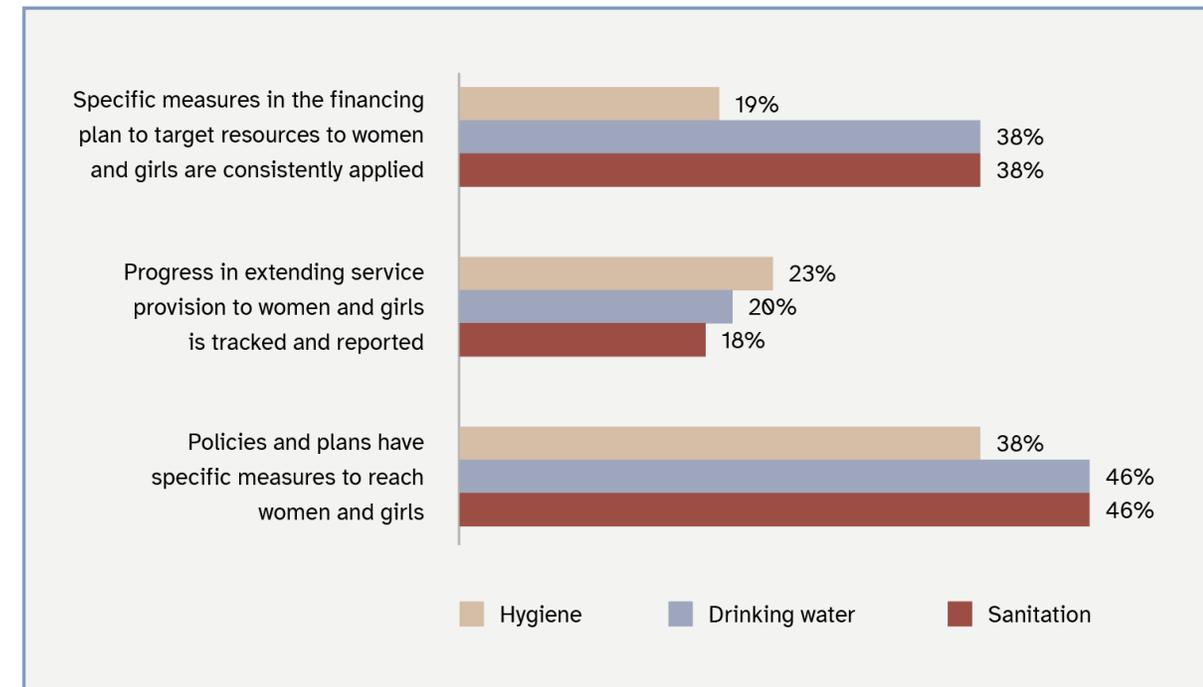
# Asia and the Pacific

As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable areas, women are highly affected by water-related disasters.

# Latin America and the Caribbean

Complex dynamics of power, tradition and policy-practice gaps affect women's participation in water governance across the region

**Figure 7.5 Proportion of Latin America and Caribbean countries implementing gender-specific drinking water, sanitation and hygiene measures, 2021**



Source: Authors, based on information from WHO (2022).



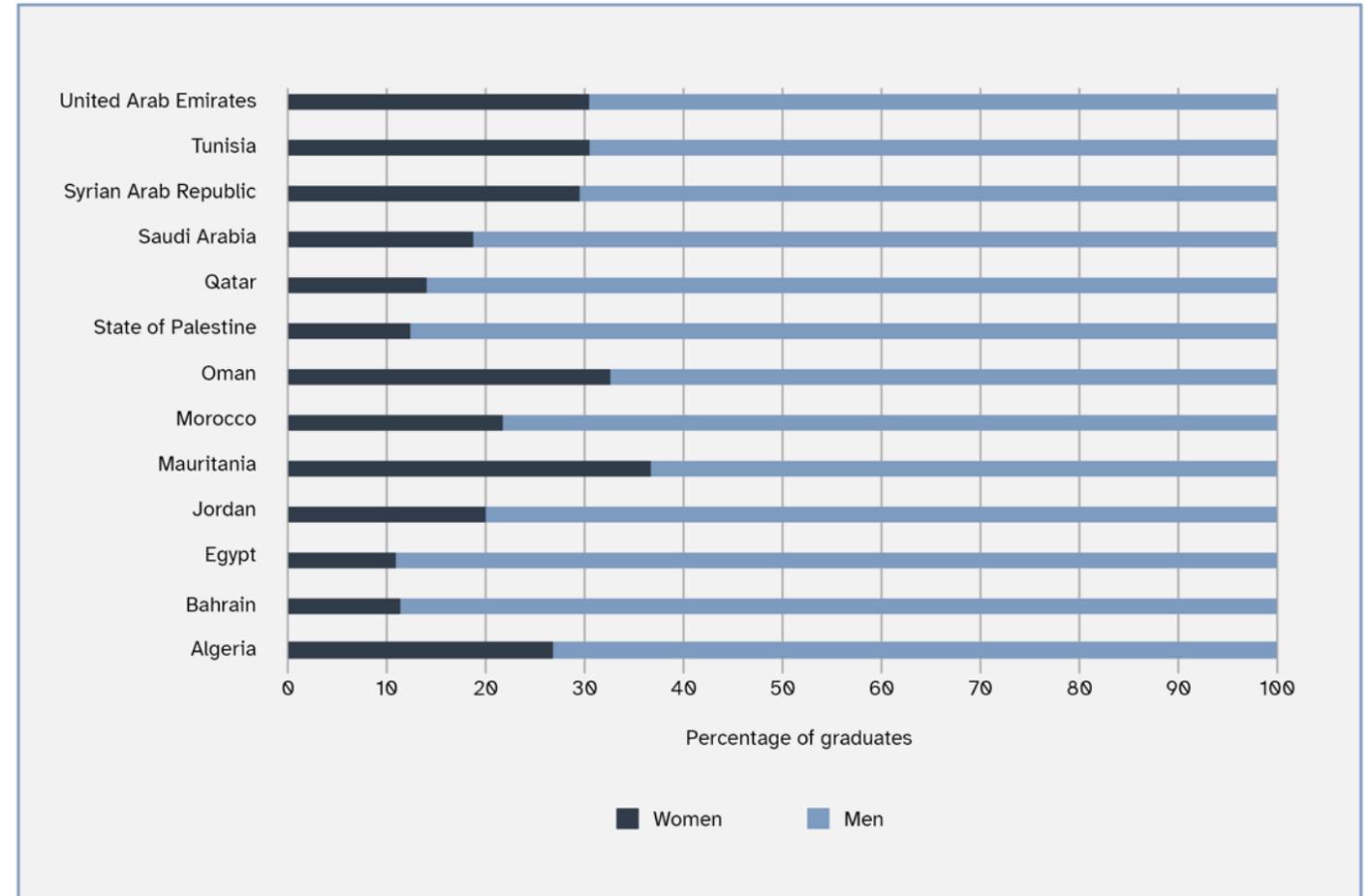
# Europe

Socio-economic and demographic factors can compound gender inequality in water governance

# Arab region

While training and capacity-building can help to empower women, national policies are also needed to translate education into action

**Figure 7.8** Average percentage of graduates from science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes in tertiary education, 2020–2024, by sex in the Arab region



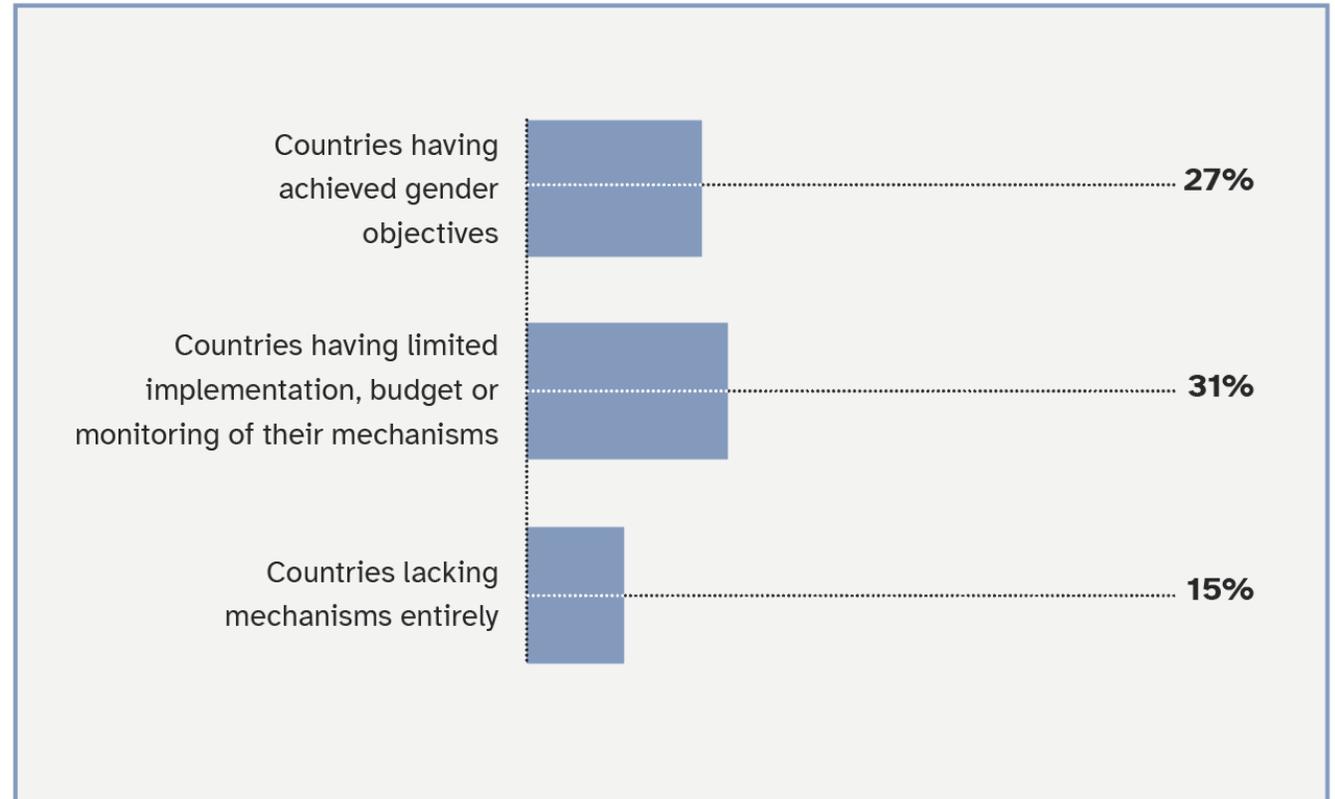
Source: Authors, based on data from UIS (n.d.).

# Response Options

# Governance

Effective governance calls for the full, equal and meaningful **access, participation and leadership** of women

**Figure 9.1** Implementation level of gender mainstreaming in water resources management by countries, 2023



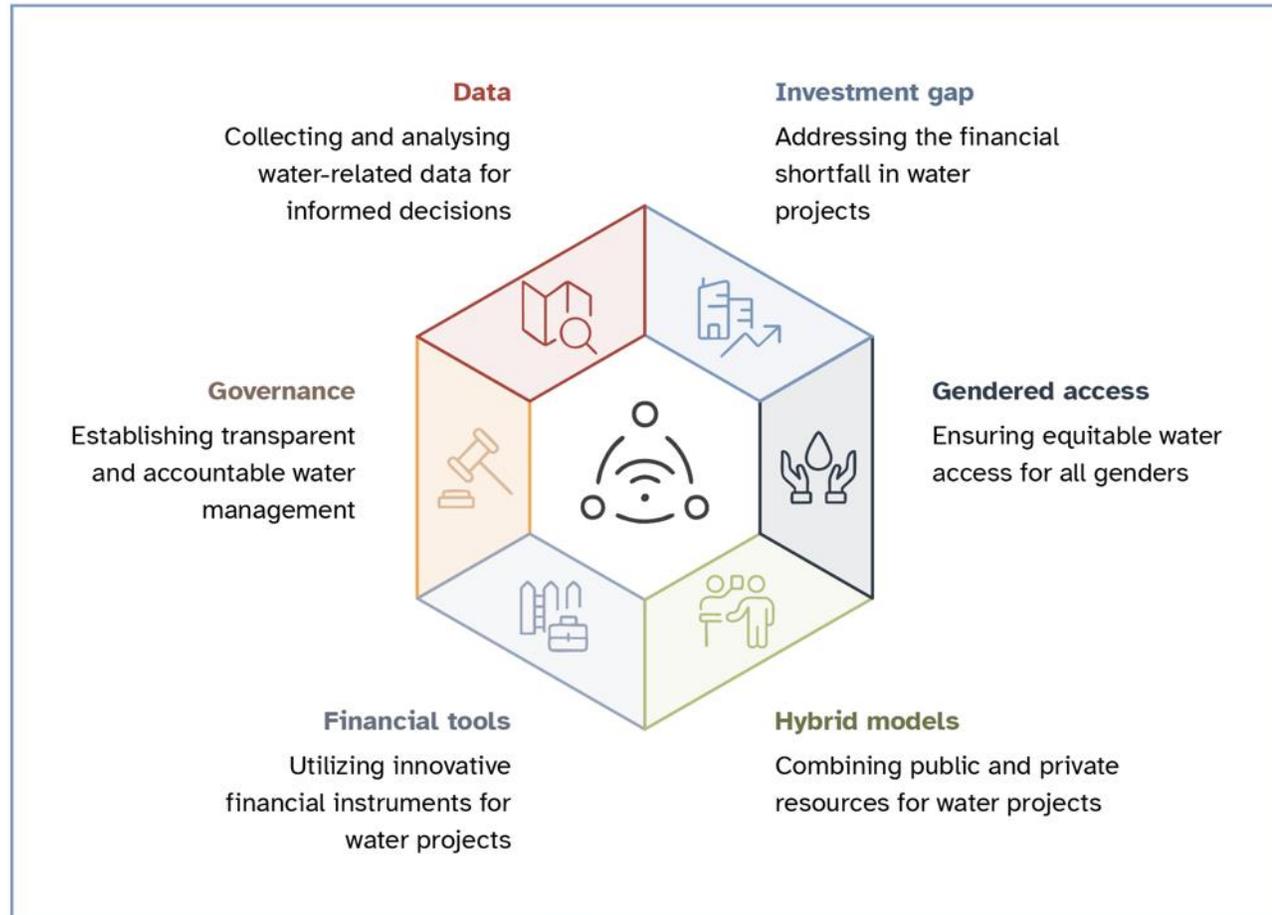
Source: Based on UNEP-DHI (n.d.).

# Data, education and capacity development

Case studies from several countries attest to the benefits of disaggregating data to acknowledge better WASH services provision



**Figure 10.1 Foundational components that make up gender-inclusive water financing**



Source: Authors.

# Financing and investment

There are stark gender gaps in water governance, leadership and financing



**When it comes to water, gender equality leads to enhanced opportunities for all**

# THANK YOU

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