

Sanitation and Water for All: A Global Framework for Action

*Summary by the Co-Chairs of the High Level Meeting on
April 23rd 2010*

INTRODUCTION

Sanitation and water underpin all aspects of human and economic development. Yet some 2.5 billion people lack access to basic sanitation, and nearly 0.9 billion lack access to clean water. Investments are especially low in the countries where access is the lowest.

A High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All initiative was hosted by UNICEF at the World Bank on April 23rd 2010, just ahead of the World Bank Spring Meetings. The meeting purpose was to stimulate dialogue between ministers of finance and leaders in the sanitation and water sector to increase shared understanding on how social and economic development are promoted by investments in sanitation and water. The meeting brought together ministers and high level representatives of developing countries, donor countries, multilateral institutions, and civil society (see Annex 1).

Annex 2 contains the meeting agenda. Following opening statements by UNSGAB, UNICEF, the World Bank and USA, the importance and challenges facing the sector were presented by WHO based on the findings of the 2010 GLAAS report and Thailand presented its impressive sanitation coverage achieved as a result of national political prioritisation. A statement from sanitation and water ministers, prepared in dialogue between 19 countries on April 22, indicated challenges for developing countries and donor partners from the ministers' perspectives. Ministers of Finance and others debated the implications and actions needed.

STATEMENT FROM WATER MINISTERS

The Honorable Minister Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environment Affairs in South Africa, presented a statement (full statement in Annex 3) adopted by 16 ministers of sanitation and water from Africa and Asia, at a preparatory meeting to the High Level Meeting. In the statement the Minister's committed themselves to:

- **Advocating and providing the evidence of the benefits** of investing in water and sanitation so that this sector is prioritized in national budgets.
- **Developing credible national plans** for meeting the water and sanitation MDG targets and ensuring sustainable service delivery. This includes improving planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes, and to advocate for peer reviews of sector plans.
- **Providing strong sector leadership** and ensuring coordination for implementing national plans, including ensuring clear roles and responsibilities within the sector, which also provides for donor coordination and civil society participation.
- **Identifying and addressing the institutional capacity gaps** for implementing national plans.
- **Undertake annual monitoring** and review of progress against national plans with the participation of all the key sector stakeholders. In the interests of strengthening the accuracy and depth of global sector knowledge, ministers committed to continue to

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support national monitoring and preparatory activities for GLAAS report, Joint Monitoring Program activities and, where applicable, Country Status Overviews.

Ministers called on the donor community to:

- **Reach a target of over 50% of sector aid to low income countries** by 2013.
- **Increase the percentage of sector aid allocated to basic services to 27%** of the total sector aid by 2013.
- **Increase investment for meeting the water and sanitation MDG targets** so that no credible national water and sanitation plan goes unimplemented due to a lack of funds.
- **Provide catalytic funding for technical assistance** to help address institutional capacity issues and develop national plans, thereby enabling the poorest countries to effectively utilize the increased investment in the sector.
- **Monitor and report on the implementation of the Paris Declaration Principles and Accra Agenda for Action** towards improving aid effectiveness in the water and sanitation sector.
- **Enter into partnerships or compacts based on mutual accountability** between donors to developing country governments and developing country governments to their citizens.

AGREED JOINT ACTIONS

During the discussion (and drawing on preparatory activities in country and stakeholder dialogue) participants identified joint actions that countries and all sector stakeholders should take in three key areas to improve access: increase political prioritization, promote evidence-based decision making, and support strong national processes. There was broad support for the Sanitation and Water for All global partnership to catalyze collective action to reach international targets.

The following summary provides the Co-Chairs' assessment of the main points of general agreement and shared resolve.

UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL SANITATION AND WATER CHALLENGE

1. **Progress is slow towards the MDGs and increasing service access.** 884 million people do not use improved sources of drinking water; 2.5 billion do not have access to improved sanitation. At the current rate of progress the internationally agreed goal on sanitation will not be met until 2049.
2. **Sanitation requires a particular focus.** Sanitation is one of the most off-track of all the MDG targets and is particularly badly off-track in Africa. Improved sanitation underpins progress on many of the other MDG targets particularly, child and maternal health, hunger and education as well as overall poverty reduction.
3. **The impact of neglecting investment in sanitation and water has been underestimated.** Inadequate sanitation and water supplies result in diarrhoeal and other infectious diseases and compounds the effects of malnutrition. Ill-health is the single-most common trigger for a downward slide into poverty. Women are disproportionately affected by lack of access. The country level economic impact of neglecting investment is often in excess of 5% GDP.
4. **Investments in sanitation and water make good economic and social sense.** The annual economic benefits of achieving universal access to safe sanitation and water are estimated at US \$171 billion. Investments in sanitation and water deliver economic returns of over 5 times on investment, with an annual rate of return of over 20%. They improve health, reduce health care costs, bring tangible environmental benefits, boost

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productivity and increase the return on investments in education and tourism. Sector investments are socially beneficial, contribute towards peace and security and support a stable political climate.

5. **Least served populations are not receiving sufficient support for sanitation and water.** Over the past 3 years only 42% of development aid commitments in sanitation and water reached the least developed or low income countries. A high proportion of sector aid is not spent on basic services (aid for basic services has declined from 27% to 16% over the last 5 years) and does not reach poor. Finance for sanitation and water, including aid flows, needs to be better targeted towards the poorest, the most vulnerable and the most off-track countries.
6. **Participants recognized three key barriers to achieving universal access to sanitation and water.** They are: insufficient political prioritization which limits leadership and financial commitments, lack of evidence-based decision making, and lack of capacity to develop and implement national plans and strategies.

Participants were in general support of the following joint actions to address this challenge:

A. INCREASE POLITICAL PRIORITIZATION

1. **Increase the political prioritisation for sustainable access to sanitation and drinking water.** The importance of the sector needs to be reflected by stronger leadership, resolution of key challenges and increased attention to resource allocation at all levels and by all parties. Commitment levels to sanitation and water should be reviewed, in order to identify areas where they could be increased above existing levels.
2. **Develop stronger intersectoral linkages.** Progress in sanitation and water underpins many of the other MDGs, particularly relating to child and maternal health, education and general economic productivity. The meeting recognized the value of adopting approaches that strengthen these inter-sectoral linkages and engaging in a dialogue around the synergies for MDG achievement with other related sector initiatives, such as the International Health Partnership and the Education for All Fast Track Initiative.
3. **Promote specific budget lines for sanitation and hygiene.** Participants agreed to review their financial statements and budgets, with a view to ensuring specific and traceable budget lines specifically for sanitation and hygiene.
4. **Implement previous commitments.** Participants will strive to work with leaders to implement key relevant sector declarations taking particular account of the Paris and Accra commitments to improve aid-effectiveness. In addition to national commitments, these declarations include the AMCOW eThekweni Declaration; the AU Sharm El Sheikh commitments, the commitments made at SACOSAN Delhi, EASAN Manila, Latinosan Iguacu, and other regional sanitation and water meetings, and the "Stronger G8-Africa Partnership on Water and Sanitation" agreed at L'Aquila in 2009.
5. **Bring the High Level Meeting messages to the attention of leaders and the media.** All stakeholders undertake to bring the High Level Meeting messages to the attention of their Heads of States and decision-makers in their organizations. The dialogue between sector ministers and ministers of finance needs to be continued.

B. PROMOTE EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING

1. **Improve sector analysis and sharing what works.** Sector improvements need to be based on evidence of achievement. This implies strengthening the production of quality information and analyses, and continuing to support processes to encourage cross-country and cross-regional learning.

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2. **Improve sector monitoring.** In the interests of more informed decision-making, participants will encourage strengthened national sector monitoring¹, improvements to the accuracy and effectiveness of global monitoring processes and increased collaboration between these processes².
3. **Better understand and take more account of consumer demand.** Civil society has a special role in articulating perspectives from the poorest of the poor. Strengthening the education and engagement of citizens in water management can assist service providers in understanding demand, help hold service providers to account and improve sector governance.

C. STRENGTHEN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

1. **Strengthen sector leadership and coordination:** Through country-led processes, all participants agreed to work to establish strong, accountable leadership with clear roles and responsibilities for all involved stakeholders. Developing countries, external support agencies, the UN and civil society organizations renewed their commitment to proactive sector coordination. Participants noted that it may be helpful to designate lead agencies to coordinate their stakeholder groups in the sanitation and water sector in each country, and to assist in harmonization and dialogue with lead government agencies.
2. **Develop national planning frameworks, so that one clear national plan is in place for the sector:** Developing countries agreed to strengthen policies, plans, capacities, financing strategies and planning and monitoring processes, such that one credible, current, national sector plan is in place, including specific and adequate attention to sanitation.
3. **Improve the effectiveness of aid and public sector management.** The need was recognised to increase the fiscal space for sanitation and water investments through improved public expenditure management and scaling up of investments, also recognising the potential of public-private partnerships. Harmonization and alignment of aid with recipient country processes are fundamental to achieving full and coordinated use of existing domestic and external funding.
4. **Develop a new technical assistance mechanism to support national plans and strategies.** Participants agreed that support should be given to establishing a mechanism through which governments and external aid agencies collaborate to build national capacities to implement national programs and prepare the ground for downstream large-scale investments. This mechanism would focus on the most-off-track countries where there are no in-country sector and development assistance frameworks in place and would act upon demand.
5. **Resources, from all sources, should be mobilized to support credible plans and strategies.** As developing countries commit and take positive steps forward, donors will seek to support these plans and strategies. Participants agreed to re-double efforts to increase efficiencies, unlock additional financial flows and explore new financing mechanisms, from both traditional and new sources, to support these plans and strategies.
6. **Collectively improve targeting of resources to the poor and vulnerable:** More needs to be done to improve targeting of resources: internationally, nationally and at project level. Participants agreed that targeting should reflect the greater needs of low-income countries; an increased focus on off-track countries; greater focus on basic

¹ See Paris /Accra declarations, principles and recommendations on national monitoring frameworks from World Water Week, 2009 developed by WHO, GTZ, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, BMZ, WSP, UNSGAB, SDC, AFD, MAEE, SIWI.

² Such as: AICD, CSO, GLAAS, JMP and many other global and regional monitoring initiatives.

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services; higher priority given to sanitation and hygiene; and a further increased focus on service improvement for the poor and for women.

Moving forward in these areas of action, participants saw a positive role for Sanitation and Water for All to strengthen political will and international sector efforts. Participants committed themselves to the following actions:

ADVANCE A GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

- 1. Redouble efforts to reach national and internationally-agreed goals and collectively increase focus in off-track countries.** Participants will act collectively, with the urgency required, to achieve national and international goals on sanitation and water by 2015 and beyond. The Sanitation and Water for All partnership will give special focus to off-track regions and states and to the unserved poor.
- 2. Support the Sanitation and Water for All partnership to catalyze collective action in the three agreed areas for action.** Sanitation and Water for All dialogue should focus on agreed future areas of action (increase sector prioritization, improve evidence-based decision making, and strengthening the implementation of national plans and strategies), making these priorities in existing country and regional processes and instruments.
- 3. Develop workplans and strategies to ensure that the agreed objectives are achieved.** These will include the development of the appropriate catalytic financial and technical support for those countries that are most off-track and the consideration of specific outcome and financial targets that could be helpful in stimulating progress towards the MDGs and beyond.
- 4. Intensify efforts to improve collaboration and aid-effectiveness.** Sanitation and Water for All presents the possibility of a real advance in the architecture of global debate, accountability and transparency in the sanitation and water sector. Sanitation and Water for All should be a global vehicle to strengthen the dialogue between developing countries, donors, multi-lateral agencies, civil society and other development partners. This will require further efforts by all agencies to strengthen sector collaboration and work in a complementary manner. Aid can be made more effective by: avoiding fragmentation, duplication and overlap; increasing transparency and accountability; and integrating donor efforts through agreements on the "division of labour".
- 5. Participate in future Sanitation and Water for All partnership activities.** Support joint activities, including participating in Sanitation and Water for All working groups, such as the Aid Effectiveness and Financial Management group and the group supporting Country Processes, which are pursuing ideas to help guide the partnership's future operations. Support the Sanitation and Water for All secretariat, encourage sector agencies to join the membership, and support the establishment of a Sanitation and Water for All Steering Committee and assist in planning for the 2nd High Level Meeting in 2011.
- 6. Link Sanitation and Water for All efforts to other initiatives.** Close linkages should be made with other important global and regional initiatives, such as: the G8, AMCOW, the African Development Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI), EU Water Initiative, UN-Water, the UN MDG Summit planned for September 2010 and the global effort to realize "Sustainable Sanitation – The 5 Year Drive to 2015".
- 7. Monitor the impact of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.** Support efforts to monitor Sanitation and Water for All to ensure that its efforts result in strengthened mutual accountability, increased aid effectiveness, and higher levels of aid to the most off-track countries.

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ANNEX 1: Attendees

Participants:

- **Ministers and Delegates** (Finance/Water/Sanitation) from countries in Africa and Asia: Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, and Timor-Leste, .
- **Development Partners** from: Austria, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States. Together the allocations from partners in dialogue with Sanitation and Water for All amount to approximately 88% of the development aid provided to the sanitation and water sector between 2006 and 2008.
- **International Finance Agencies:** Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.
- **UN Bodies:** UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNSGAB, WHO, WSSCC, and UN-Water
- **Civil Society:** ANEW, End-Water-Poverty, FAN-SA, and WaterAid.

Those intending to participate, but due to travel³ and other unforeseen constraints were not able to attend:

- African Development Bank, Denmark, Sweden, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Observers:

- Australia, Canada, Malawi

Draft Participant List is attached

³ International travel was severely disrupted days before the meeting by volcanic ash.

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ANNEX 2: High Level Meeting Agenda

**First annual High Level Meeting of Sanitation and Water for All
April 23, 2010**

Hosted by UNICEF

Co-Chaired by

*HRH Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, Chair, UNSGAB
Mr Saad Houry, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF

Held at the World Bank

** HRH Prince Willem-Alexander graciously agreed to chair the High Level Meeting at short notice when Minister Trevor Manuel was unable to travel due to disruptions associated with the Eyjafjallajökull volcanic eruption*

AGENDA

2:00	Welcoming remarks by Meeting Chair: HRH Prince Willem-Alexander, Chair of the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB)
	Welcome from Meeting Host, UNICEF: Mr. Saad Houry, Deputy Executive Director
	Welcome from the World Bank: Ms. Katherine Sierra, Vice President, Sustainable Development
	Remarks by the Honourable Maria Otero, Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State
2:30	Presentation: Making Sanitation a National Priority, Mr. Suwaj Siriwatta, Deputy Director General of the Department of Health, Thailand
	Presentation: The Global Challenge, Dr. Maria Neira, WHO (by video link)
	Statement from Sanitation and Water Sector Ministers
3:00	Summary of presentations and introduction to the discussion by the Chair Discussion: Concrete Steps to Progress: A. Addressing political prioritisation B. Evidence-based decision making C. Support to national processes and planning Facilitated by Jamal Saghir, Director, Energy, Water and Transport, World Bank
4:25	Closing Remarks and Summary by Meeting Chair
4:30	END

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Statement of Water Ministers

We, the Ministers of Water and Sanitation from Africa and Asia⁴, having met in Washington on the 22 April 2010 in preparation for the first Sanitation and Water for All Global Framework for Action High Level Meeting on 23 April 2010 hereby adopt this Statement

Preamble

Nearly one billion people lack access to safe water and 2.5 billion lack access to improved sanitation. 2.2 million children die every year from water and sanitation related diseases. The health, social and economic impacts for our countries are staggering. At the current rate of progress the world will miss the sanitation Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target, and, although it will reach the water MDG target by 2015, there will still be 672m people without access to safe water. This situation is unacceptable and comes at the expense of the livelihoods of the poor, particularly women. Poor performance in our sector holds back progress across all the MDGs.

Water is essential for economic growth, poverty reduction and the impacts of climate change will be felt largely through water. Drinking water and sanitation should be seen in the context of overall regional and local water resource management whereby cooperation between key stakeholders and users is essential.

The social, health and economic impacts of neglecting investment in sanitation and water have been under-estimated. Poor sanitation and water trigger a downward slide into poverty, where the sector economic impact is often found to be excess of 5% GDP. The economic benefits of achieving universal access to sanitation and drinking water are estimated at US \$171 billion per year. Sanitation and water interventions deliver economic returns of at least 5 times on investment, with an annual rate of return of 20% or more.

Aid flows in sanitation and water are poorly targeted to the poorest. Only 42% of development aid commitments in the sector were targeted to the least developed or low income countries. A high proportion of aid for sanitation and water is not targeted towards basic services or the poor. Over the last five years aid to basic services has declined from 27% to 16%. In addition only 37% of sector aid was targeted to sanitation, in comparison to 63% to water. In addition global aid to water and sanitation reduced as a percentage of total aid from 6.3% to 4.7% between 2000 and 2008.

The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness (2005) and Accra Agenda for Action (2008) need to be better implemented in the water and sanitation sector in order to meet our MDG targets. This includes improved collaboration between all parties to improve aid effectiveness.

The Africa Water Vision 2025, the African Union Heads of State Declaration on Water (Sharm El-Sheikh, 2008), the eThekweni Declaration on Sanitation (2008), and the commitments made at SACOSAN Delhi, outline how we propose to meet our water and sanitation Millennium Development

⁴ Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mongolia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Timor Leste, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

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Goals (MDGs). The challenge now is to address the bottlenecks and constraints in our sector and ensure it receives political priority both in our countries and internationally.

We therefore, together with donors and civil society organizations have established the Sanitation and Water for All as our global platform for dialogue, mutual accountability and monitoring progress on commitments towards achieving universal and sustainable access to sanitation and drinking water. Through this platform we can jointly realize the targets and actions set out in our declarations and ensure that all available resources are prioritized and properly targeted. The Sanitation and Water for All partnership enables us to work together within a common, transparent, accountable and results-oriented framework for action.

We Commit to:

- **Advocating and providing the evidence of the benefits** of investing in water and sanitation so that this sector is prioritized in our national budgets.
- **Developing credible National Plans** for meeting the water and sanitation MDG targets and ensuring sustainable service delivery. This includes improving planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes, and to advocate for peer reviews of sector plans.
- **Providing strong sector leadership** and ensuring coordination for implementing national plans. We will ensure clear roles and responsibilities within the sector which also provide for donor coordination and civil society participation.
- **Identifying and addressing the institutional capacity gaps** for implementing our National Plans.
- **Undertake Annual Monitoring** and review of progress against our National Plans with the participation of all the key sector stakeholders. In the interests of strengthening the accuracy and depth of global sector knowledge, we commit to continue to supporting preparatory activities for GLAAS report, Joint Monitoring Program activities and, where applicable, Country Status Overview processes.

We call on the donor community to:

- **Reach a target of over 50% of sector aid to low income countries** by 2013.
- **Increase the percentage of sector aid allocated to basic services to 27%** of the total sector aid by 2013.
- **Increase investment for meeting the water and sanitation MDG targets** so that no credible national water and sanitation plan goes unimplemented due to a lack of funds.
- **Provide catalytic funding for technical assistance** to help us address our institutional capacity issues and develop our national plans, thereby enabling the poorest countries to effectively utilize the increased investment in the sector.
- **Monitor and report on the implementation of the Paris Declaration Principles and Accra Agenda for Action** towards improving aid effectiveness in the water and sanitation sector.
- **Enter into partnerships or compacts with our governments based on mutual accountability** of donors to our governments and our governments to our citizens.

We commit to participating in the next Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting and reporting on our progress and call on the donor community to do the same.