



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States

The Director General

Brussels, **23 -04- 2010**
dev.dga.b.1 (2010)216537

Ms Veneman Ann
Executive Director,
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene,
UNICEF
Three UN Plaza,
NEW YORK, NY 10017
USA

Dear Ms Veneman,

I refer to your letter of 25 January 2010, concerning the High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All initiative, to our Commissioner for Development, who has asked me to thank you on his behalf.

I regret that the agendas of Commissioner Piebalgs and myself will not allow us to participate in the High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All initiative on April 23, 2010 in Washington. The Commission will be represented by the EU Delegation in Washington.

We consider that the Sanitation and Water for all is an important initiative to reinforce the action towards the achievement of these MDGs, of which the sanitation target is amongst the most off-track. It will complement and enhance ongoing processes such as the EU Water Initiative, and in particular the partnership established between EU and African partners in this field.

Please find enclosed the EC contribution to the written declarations made at the occasion of this High-level meeting. We look forward to future reinforced cooperation with your Initiative, and with UNICEF in particular.

Yours sincerely,


Stefano MANSERVISI

Elements for a statement from the EU at High-level Meeting on water and sanitation in Washington 23 April 2010

On April 20th 2010, the European Commission has released a Communication presenting its proposed actions in support of the MDGs.

Recognising sanitation among the most off-track MDGs, the communication states that "to support achieving the MDGs, the EU should pay particular attention to the goals furthest from being achieved". It highlights also that "the MDGs must not be seen as a collection of separate sectoral targets and indicators. On the contrary, they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing and should be addressed as such".

Since 2002, the EU has formally agreed, that *"water is a primary human need and water supply and sanitation are basic social services"*, as part of their development policy in this field, with a *primary objective to "Ensure a supply of sufficient, good quality drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygiene to every human being, especially the poorest and with a clear focus on the needs of women and children, with the general objective of reducing poverty and improving people's health, quality of life and livelihood opportunities"*.

To respond to the need for increased focus on water in development policies, the Commission and EU Member States agreed to launch the **EU Water Initiative (EUWI)** in 2002 at the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The EUWI is a political initiative that sees to assist partner countries in the development and implementation of policies and strategies for the water and sanitation sector, that existing resources can be used more effectively and that new resources will be attracted to the sector.

In Africa, the joint EU-Africa strategy calls for Africa and the EU to work together to further develop the existing EU-Africa Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation. On the basis of this partnership the *EU has declared its commitments to increase and deliver resources in response to countries prioritising water and sanitation in national development strategies and poverty reduction strategies where they exist.*

The EU Agenda for Action on MDG states that the EU is willing to contribute to address the financing gap in water and sanitation, and to help in particular Africa to develop and implement credible country national and local plans for provision of water and sanitation services, and to support capacity building interventions and actions aimed at strengthening the institutional and regulatory frameworks according to country needs.

The EU aid to the water and sanitation sector has doubled since 2002, including a substantial increase was by the EC, with the launch of the ACP-EU Water Facility.

Our EU strategy is based on an integrated framework for collaboration with our partner governments, EU Member States and all concerned stakeholders. The ACP-EU Water Facility is part of this integrated framework for financing water and sanitation, which includes also the National and Regional Indicative programmes, and the Africa-EU Infrastructure Partnership Trust Fund, ensuring that all funding is integrated in the national strategies and policy frameworks. Some important results have been achieved by the first Water Facility (500 million Euro), including: that about 14 million people benefitting from access to safe water, some 3 million benefitting from improved sanitation and about 11 million people have been involved in hygiene awareness

activities. The creation of the EUWI and the contribution from the Water Facility has also contributed to increased focus on water governance and sustainable management of shared water resources.

The second phase of the ACP-EU Water Facility of 200 million Euro was launched in February 2010, with the objectives to:

- help achieve the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals;
- contribute to improving water governance and management of water resources and to
- the sustainable development of hydraulic infrastructure.

The Water Facility is responding to the commitments made by African partners in the July 2008 AU Summit : the "Sharm El Sheik commitments for accelerating the achievement of water and sanitation goals in Africa", as well as the eThekweni declaration at the African conference on sanitation and hygiene in Durban.

Building on the lessons of the past, in particular the Facility's potential to work with decentralised actors, and develop innovative solutions, it will continue to play an important catalytic role to mobilise resources for increased access to water supply and sanitation by the poorest part of the population, and to develop the necessary capacities and governance. With a stronger focus on access to sanitation, hygiene and water, we expect that the Facility, complementing other instruments, will have a reinforced impact on the populations where the greatest needs are to achieve these goals.