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Nepal Pledges Water And Sanitation For All By 2017

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Pour résorber le retard, les dirigeants vont planifier les investissements à venir en faveur de l'eau, de l'assainissement et de l'hygiène
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Ministros Asistieron A Reunión Sobre Agua Y Saneamiento
UltimaHora.com (Paraguay) (April 13)
“Water is life”, said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, at the opening session of the high-level meeting on sanitation and water for all, in Washington, DC, on April 11, 2014. Yet lack of access to safe drinking water, and poor sanitation and hygiene in many parts of the world, often leads to death. The Lancet Series on childhood pneumonia and diarrhoea estimated that in 2011 around 700 000 child deaths occurred from diarrhoeal disease alone. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7c target to halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water by 2015 has been declared on track, yet 748 million people globally are still without access to safe drinking water. In a letter in today’s Lancet, Mira Johri and colleagues argue that the indicator does not consider water quality, and should be reconsidered. Progress for sanitation is alarmingly off track. An estimated 2·5 billion people lack access to basic sanitation (functioning toilets and safe means to dispose of human faeces). A shocking 1 billion people practise open defecation, with nine in ten living in rural areas. The high-level meeting gathered ministers and representatives of finance, health, and water and sanitation from 46 countries, donors, international organisations, and civil society to discuss how to reach water and sanitation targets. Margaret Chan and Jim Kim were both in attendance. The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking—Water (GLAAS) project, led by WHO, simultaneously released a preliminary reportInvesting in Water and Sanitation: Increasing Access, Reducing Inequalities. Special Report for the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High-Level Meeting (HLM). The report comprehensively analysed whether an enabling environment (governance, monitoring and evaluation, financing) for reaching water and sanitation targets exists for each country. The full report will be released in September, 2014, with data from 90 countries.

The good news is that there is progress. Cambodia for example, has increased access to safe water and sanitation in urban areas for all quintiles by implementing pro-poor policies. 7% of the population in urban areas practice open defecation, reduced from 28% in 2005. 75% of countries analysed have pro-poor universal access to water and sanitation policies, and three-quarters of countries have constitutions or legislation recognising the human right to water and sanitation. The alarming news is that although many countries have established policies for disadvantaged groups (poor individuals, populations with disabilities, urban slums, and remote communities), only 30% have financed implementation plans, and household contributions range from 6—97% of water, sanitation, and hygiene financing. More than 50% of the unserved population for water and sanitation live in middle-income countries.

Access to safe water and sanitation is essential to all development outcomes across the life course. It ensures healthy growth and prevention of water-borne and food-borne diseases causing diarrhoea, which contributes to stunting in children. Contaminated and stagnant water
also contribute to the global burden of trachoma, and vector-borne diseases. 165 million children worldwide with stunted growth risk compromised cognitive development, physical capabilities, and future school performance; resulting in a less productive generation, with unfulfilled potential to contribute to the workforce and the economy.

Beyond direct health outcomes, investing in water and sanitation is essential to achievement of post—2015 sustainable development goals. The Lancet highlights four areas going forward. First, the poor must remain central to all planning, because they pay the highest individual cost in health and finances in efforts to access safe drinking water and sanitation. Donors and governments must target and urgently address open defecation in particular. Second, girls and women must be prioritised. They travel long distances to fetch water, and the lack of private sanitation facilities at schools to ensure their dignity and safety risks absenteeism and drop out. Third, in fragile states and situations, access to health services, clean water, and sanitation must be secured, rapidly and without question. The supply of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities can be the difference between life and death, not to mention risks to personal security. Fourth, and finally, with the rapid and uncontrolled growth of urban slums, climate change, conflict over water resources, and growing global demand for products and food that require water for production, all sectors beyond health must develop governance mechanisms to ensure that access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, is a right for all. Only then can the global community return to the notion of water as life.
What is the best way to make money in the developing world? The general idea is much the same as wealth creation in developed countries – find a need and fill it.

But capitalism, innovation and entrepreneurship in the developing world can also take on a more philanthropic air – belying those who say that capitalism must have winners and losers.

One area where this duality can clearly be seen is in the provision of water and sanitation services. The two issues go hand-in-hand. Sanitation – particularly contamination from human waste – is a major cause of a lack of clean drinking water. And the two are major contributors to on-going poverty, according to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

“Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free – but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all,” he says.


One Ethiopian project demonstrates the commercial potential of sanitation – and its wider economic as well as societal impact. EOC, the development arm of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, in partnership with WaterAid, an international charity improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation, have set up a bio-gas production facility that can be sold to individual families in order to provide a safe method of sanitation that can also produce gas for cooking and light.

The facility consists of a 6 meter-cubed underground tank. Human and animal waste is placed inside the tank where bacteria break it down through fermentation. Gas and fertiliser are then produced, providing fuel and fertiliser for the family.

The device is cheap to produce and operate. It is constructed using local cement and due to Ethiopia’s climate there is no need to provide heat to aid in microbial digestion.

“It has to be fermented well, the temperature has to permeate well – if it was in a cool place it wouldn’t work,” says a spokesperson for EOC.

The Bio Gas System, May Ayni, Ethiopia – WaterAid – Marco Betti
The initial cost and ongoing running and maintenance requirements are an essential consideration for any project aimed at the bottom of the pyramid, but one that seems too often forgotten in Western-sponsored developmental projects.

This is particularly true in purely aid driven projects. Many solutions provided to developing countries turn out to be too expensive and water-wasteful, says a spokesman for the Water and Sanitation Program, a partnership administered by the World Bank.

"While the discipline of economics has been around for centuries, its application in the area of sanitation planning has been underexploited," he says. "Indeed the sanitation sector in developing countries is saddled with a historic legacy of adopting the technologies from richer countries which are both expensive and have high water demands."

Many technical solutions created in richer countries and landed in a local area to solve a particular challenge won’t necessarily be the right solution, says Dave Hillyard, an economist and head of major partnerships at WaterAid.

Equally, WaterAid found that pure charity often left the end-users feeling uninvolved – leading to projects being poorly maintained or co-opted into another use. This can be seen in Madagascar where a project to provide latrines to those without access to proper sanitation initially failed for that very reason.

Instead WaterAid has elected to spread latrines through empowering local entrepreneurs.

"With sanitation marketing, WaterAid subsidises small local businesses to buy latrine moulds and basic start up materials. These small businesses, alongside local authorities and WASH [water, sanitation and hygiene] committees, carry out hygiene promotion in order to persuade community members of the importance of having a latrine and the need to invest in one," says a spokesperson. "Once an individual has invested in a latrine, the idea is that ownership will promote adoption of the facilities and create a sustainable approach to safe sanitation and hygiene practices."

Edmond Rabemananjara, 55, Sani park Manager, at the Sani park, Miandrivazo, Madagascar, 2012. WaterAid – Anna Kari

It is through the fostering of entrepreneurial activities such as this that Madagascar will be able to hit commitments it agreed to at the 2014 High Level Meeting – Sanitation and Water for All, held earlier in April.

The government has said it will provide access to water and sanitation for more than three million people by 2016, says Lovy Rasolofomanana, Madagascar country representative for WaterAid. This will be accomplished by prioritising social sectors, implementing an action plan and strategic document that gives details on milestones as well as methods for achieving objectives, and securing $200M (£119M) in funding, he adds.
“In my opinion, this commitment is realistic given that the Country has begun to recover from a very long political crisis and the government and donors have started to confirm their contributions to increase the resources allocated to the sector,” he says.

And as it does so, expect local entrepreneurs to be a major driving force.

This story forms part one of a two part look at sanitation and water. Click to read how entrepreneurship activity in water and sanitation could contribute to a $480B swing in the global economy.
THE first decade of this century brought a surge in aid for health, particularly for HIV and malaria. Now health officials and wonks are debating how to fight a broader range of diseases. The World Bank has set a goal of universal health-coverage by 2030. This is an important, complex endeavour. But in the effort to improve health care, it is worth remembering a simple, albeit unsavoury truth: poo matters.

In the history of public health, few events are as important as a discovery made in the mid-19th century, not far from the site of The Economist’s London offices. A doctor named John Snow demonstrated that a contaminated water pump was helping to spread cholera. Subsequent investment in sewage systems helped banish the scourge from London and much of the world. Today proper water and sanitation systems are as crucial as ever to avoid crippling infectious diarrhoeal diseases, such as cholera and salmonellosis. Every dollar spent on sanitation brings a return of $5.50, in the form of lower health costs and improved productivity, according to the World Health Organisation.

Worryingly, however, 14% of the world still practises what health types politely call "open defecation". In poor countries that share is 21% and, interestingly, in lower-middle income countries the share rises to 32%. India is becoming an economic giant, but 48% of its population relieve themselves outdoors. There are efforts to change this. Most of the 86 countries surveyed in a new report have plans to improve water and sanitation. But less than one-third have implemented them. A lack of funds is one problem, but money has also been spent poorly. Donations for water and sanitation have risen in the past three years, but spending has remained flat. Countries blame complex procedures for procurement. Donors blame poor management within countries.

There is some hope that this will change. Finance ministers and the heads of the World Bank and the United Nations met in Washington, DC, this month to discuss the issue. UNICEF has launched a campaign in India to end the practice of open defecation. A web video informatively titled “Take the poo to the loo” features dancing brown mounds. Disgusting, perhaps, but better than an epidemic of infectious and deadly diarrhoeal disease.
On 11 April, just ahead of the IMF-World Bank Spring meetings in Washington DC, a group of 80 government ministers from around the globe are gathering to promise to do more to bring safe water and decent toilets to those without.

It has been two years since a similar group of ministers from developing and wealthier nations made similar pledges, and events since then have shown us why this time around is more important than ever.

Since then, the world has been gripped by unusual and often devastating weather patterns. We've seen drought in southern Africa, Australia and parts of the United States, and dramatic flooding in the UK, Central Europe, India and Indonesia. All of these make creating and maintaining safe drinking water supplies and sanitation systems more challenging, particularly in developing countries where infrastructure is fragile and easily destroyed.

We've seen the eradication of polio in India through a massive vaccination effort - a stunning public health victory, but threatened by the country's struggle to improve safe water and sanitation services, since polio thrives in their absence.

**Still 748 million in need of safe water**

Despite the world's efforts, this week a Joint Monitoring Programme of the WHO and Unicef has revealed that some 748 million people are still without safe drinking water and 2.5 billion are without access to decent toilets. The latter number has remained largely unchanged in more than a decade.

One child dies every minute from diarrhoeal diseases linked to unsafe water, bad sanitation and poor hygiene -- illnesses that are completely preventable.

So we at WaterAid look to the 11 April meeting with strong expectations. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim will lend their voices to the call. This is our moment to convince the international community to deliver water and sanitation to everyone, everywhere, forever, and within our lifetimes.

It is a crisis of incredible proportion, and it needs to be addressed now.

This year is a critical time for progress in water, sanitation and hygiene. The United Nations is in the final stage of outlining its agenda for reducing international poverty beyond 2015. The original UN Millennium Development Goals run out next year and will be replaced by a set of sustainable development goals. Water and sanitation need to be among those goals.

There is momentum. We have had calls to action from the UN Deputy Secretary General, Jan Eliasson, and the President of the UN General Assembly, John Ashe. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called the need for access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene "a matter of justice and opportunity."

But this fight cannot be an exercise of words alone. The Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting cannot become a place for lofty promises that are soon forgotten.
We need more commitment and accountability from both donors and developing countries to make this happen. We need to work with public and private partners on both financing and delivery, to make sure investment in good work is sustainable and long-lasting.

**Massive gap**

The gap to bridge is massive. In southern Africa alone, the gap in financing to put countries back on track on water and sanitation amounts to $3.6 billion US per year.

That means 36 million people in southern Africa who should have received clean water by 2015 will miss out, and another 66 million will go without sanitation.

There is a tremendous economic cost to this, from lost productivity and missed work and school days stemming from illness or time spent searching for water or a safe place to defecate. The economic impact of inadequate sanitation in India alone is estimated at over £34 billion. Poor sanitation in Nigeria costs nearly £2 billion a year.

Safe water and sanitation mean better health, a better chance at survival for mothers and their newborns, better education, better nutrition and stronger resistance to illness. They also create a safer environment for women and girls, by removing the vulnerability that comes with long walks for water or open defecation and empowering them to spend their time on education, generating income or caring for their families.

These are basic human rights, and extreme poverty cannot be eliminated without them.
Sanitation And Water For All -- Because We Must - April 1, 2014 - The Huffington Post (blog) - By Sanjay Wijesekera, Chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, and Associate Director of Programmes at UNICEF

In just under two weeks around 50 countries from the Sanitation and Water for All partnership will meet at the World Bank in Washington, D.C. to make tangible, measurable pledges to deal with the problem of global access to two of the most basic necessities of life: safe drinking water and adequate toilets.

'Sanitation and water for all' is more than a title. It is a goal that is both morally right and unquestionably necessary.

Why is it so important?

Because diarrhea from inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene kills 1,400 children under five each day. This is like several jumbo jets filled with babies and little children crashing every single day, 365 days of the year. Were this to happen even two days in a row, it would cause a media storm, wouldn't it? As well it should.

Because, apart from the deaths, diarrheal diseases sicken many thousands more. Stunting, linked to frequent bouts of diarrhea, retards the development of about 165 million children worldwide. These figures can be drastically reduced if they get access to improved water and sanitation.

Because, as UNICEF noted on World Water Day this year, three-quarters of a billion of the world's population still do not have access to safe water.

Because we estimate that 2.5 billion people do not have adequate toilets. Of these, 1 billion have to defecate in the open.

Because these are real people -- people living in the poorest and most marginalized regions of the world.

The good news is that many countries are making huge progress. For example, between 2000 and 2012, Ethiopia was able to cut in half the proportion of people practicing open defecation -- equitably across its 11 states, and with progress across all income levels.

However, we will not reach the last person with water and sanitation unless we find new, innovative, cost-effective and sustainable methods. One key challenge is helping people to get inexpensive, good quality products that they will use.

Martin Ayo, a carpenter in the village of Iyorpuu in the state of Benue in Nigeria, invented a simple latrine cover made of wood and mesh, which serves the dual purpose of keeping flies out of the pits, and releasing the build-up of gasses which was causing people to shun latrines as unhealthy. At $3 per cover, it is affordable and in high demand well beyond Martin's own community. We need more solutions like this.

Lower cost manual drilling technologies are helping to supply water to some of the world's poorest and most isolated regions. For example, UNICEF and partners have used hand-dug boreholes in Pakistan to supply safe water to around 100,000 people since 2012.
We are also using social media to generate awareness of issues in WASH. Like the hugely successful ‘Take poo to the loo’ campaign in India, which leads people to talk about the unmentionable subject of faeces and defecation through their various online platforms, and agree that a problem exists and the solution is in their hands.

UNICEF is using mobile phones for water point mapping in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. This is helping to show where water sources are working, pinpoint where repairs are needed, as well as to identify the most deprived areas.

The SWA commitments -- and the commitment to hold ourselves accountable to them - will be one of many steps the world needs to take to get sanitation and water to where they are sorely needed.

We need to take these steps together -- communities, countries, donors, recipients, and ordinary people -- because when we leave one person behind, all of us have failed.
Remember Those Without Taps and Toilets - April 9, 2014 - The Huffington Post (blog)

By Catarina de Albuquerque

The rows upon rows of tents and caravans in Jordan's Zaatari refugee camp represent one of the world's most complicated challenges when it comes to water and sanitation.

This desolate stretch of Jordanian desert, 15 km from the Syrian border, houses more than 110,000 Syrian refugees with no natural shade from the hot summer sun or cold desert winter. I was struck by its many difficult challenges during my visit there last month. Even more striking are the terrible conditions of refugees still outside the camp, who are forced to purchase water privately and must relieve themselves in the open.

Jordan is now one of the three most water-scarce countries in the world, exacerbated by successive waves of refugees from regional conflict. The overwhelming task of delivering water and sanitation to both Jordan's own people and these refugees in need cannot be handled by the government alone. Support is crucial to avoid a public health crisis and internal unrest. It is not yet summer, and the taps are already running dry most of the week already.

This is just one of the ever greater challenges in trying to secure the human right to safe water and sanitation. From refugees of conflict, to those rebuilding in countries like Sierra Leone and Mali, to those who have been left behind by reasons of ethnicity or caste, gender, age or remote location - we know that we still have far to go.

The UN has said there are 768 million people still without access to improved water and another 2.5 billion without sanitation. Other research suggests as many as 2 billion are still drinking unsafe water. These are shocking statistics for such a basic human right.

Chance to make a difference

But in the next year, we have a chance to make a difference. We can set a path to make the human rights to sanitation and water become reality.

This year, the UN will set its post-2015 development agenda. Different UN agencies and NGOs like WaterAid are working hard to make sure that the Sustainable Development Goals include universal access to water and sanitation as separate and ambitious goals, with a clear commitment to eliminate inequalities in access.

Though the UN's original Millennium Development Goals met their target on water -- to halve the number of people without access -- the work is nowhere near complete. Appearances can be deceptive, quality of water has not been a consideration and the inequalities in this achievement are masked by statistics.

The target on sanitation is one of the most behind of all the development goals. At the present rate of progress, it will take more than 150 years for sub-Saharan Africa to reach its target.

And even in countries with extraordinary progress, it is the poorest and most marginalised who are still left without. There are massive inequalities in access across social groups, especially if you are a woman, or older, or disabled, or far from a city, or if you belong to an ethnic minority, or are migrant, or are poor.
Reaching everyone, everywhere

On 11 April in Washington, DC, we will see government ministers from around the world, representing both donor and recipient nations, gather at the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting. They will be pressed for renewed commitments, more accountability and transparency, and a focus on eliminating inequalities and sustainability - to make sure we reach everyone, everywhere with access to safe water and sanitation by 2030.

But as we undertake these high-level processes, we must listen to the voices of those still excluded from progress and make real differences to their lives.

We can stand up and say that we do not accept that 1 billion people have no choice but to defecate daily in the open, that we do not accept the cost of hundreds of millions of school and work days lost yearly, that we do not tolerate nearly 700,000 children under the age of five dying each year of diseases linked to lack of access to water and sanitation.

Universal access to safe water and sanitation is within our reach. But we must act now, and ensure no one is left behind.
GENEVA, Apr 9 2014 (IPS) - There are great expectations for the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) in Washington, DC, later this week. The 2012 meeting, through engagement with Finance ministries, saw almost 40 developing countries make pledges designed to provide an additional 60 million people with improved drinking water sources and another 80 million people with access to improved sanitation between 2012 and 2014.

Donors also said they would massively increase the number of people they are reaching. At this HLM, we will see how they have done. An ambitious meeting agenda has been set under the theme of Smart investments to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

One of the advantages of a partnership such as SWA is that it allows its members to bring their experience, expertise and views to the table. With that in mind, I ask the question, particularly for sanitation and hygiene, what is a “smart investment”?

It is an important question, because in these times of fiscal austerity, every Dollar, West African Franc, Pound, Kenyan Schilling, Euro or other currency must be invested with maximum efficiency if it is really to benefit poor people.

At WSSCC, we believe strongly in large-scale, “software” approaches that can bring about lasting changes in people’s behaviour as a method of eliminating the practice of open defecation, the first step up the sanitation ladder for more than 1 billion people.

Software approaches include interventions at the community level that sensitize households about the connection between sanitation and health, hygiene and human dignity.

They also involve working with local governments and other forms of local authority to institutionalize safe sanitation and hygiene; as well as collaborative initiatives with small scale entrepreneurs that strengthen emerging markets for sanitation solutions, large and small.

While software approaches undoubtedly have their challenges, hardware provision and construction of toilets based on subsidy models have several problems that make them unsustainable and poor investments.

Fundamentally, they’re expensive, and they don’t reach large numbers of a population. Also, they tend to create disincentives for people to improve their sanitation, maintain their facilities or undertake hygiene practices associated with improved sanitation.

In addition, the processes associated with the disbursement of hardware subsidies are particularly vulnerable to non-performance and cost-overruns.

Contracting out the construction of toilets to third party firms, for example, can result in kickbacks and other rent-seeking behaviours that occur as subsidies are disbursed by central government, administered by local government and third-party operators, and route to community leaders and the intended beneficiaries.
Hardware subsidies are also politically problematic. Few countries in the world are able to finance subsidies to the entire population of those in need of improved sanitation. Once you have limited resources, where they go or don’t go, can become a political hot potato.

We all know that every country in the world has its own idiosyncrasies, history and baggage; so when one constituency benefits from a subsidy at the expense of other communities, the selection process naturally generates a level of frustration in those communities that didn’t receive funding.

Conscious of these limitations of hardware subsidies, WSSCC promotes a software approach to sanitation financing through the Global Sanitation Fund. This approach allows us to work with communities, small-scale entrepreneurs and local governments to foster understanding about the importance of sanitation as a means to improve health, education and productivity.

Through Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), institutional triggering and sanitation marketing, the Council makes investments that can result in five times as many people gaining access to sanitation compared to a similar investment made in a hardware subsidy programme.

Importantly, beneficiaries of hardware subsidies don’t usually change their behaviour towards sanitation and hygiene. Once they have the subsidy they have little incentive to maintain the toilets, and there is little scope for understanding of hygiene. There is also no thought that there will be additional financing once the state makes that initial investment to improve sanitation.

India provides a good case and point. About 60% of the one billion people who open defecate daily live in India. India is well aware of the problem and is pumping huge sums of money into sanitation through a massive hardware subsidy programme.

In some States, open defecation has been eliminated without subsidies, or by combining subsidies with behaviour change programming. However, in most of the country, the Federal government and State governments simply finance toilet construction.

There is a huge debate about the effectiveness and sustainability of this. At worst, it is counter-productive. If people don’t maintain facilities, or the hygiene practices associated with them, the large-scale, resource intensive hardware investments will basically be lost.

Hardware versus software also raises questions about how to manage people’s expectations and personal choices. The Indian government does not hand out cell phones, but even the very poor buy them because they find phones to be important. They generate business, facilitate communication, and are considered necessary to everyday life.

When people make the positive connection between sanitation and health, they too will build a latrine with their own resources, as we have seen with the national programmes funded by the GSF in 11 countries. Once sensitized, individual households mobilize their own investments to construct toilets or pay local entrepreneurs to do it for them.

Unfortunately, the public resources invested in behaviour change approaches are few. Central governments are failing overall to invest adequately in sanitation.

It will be crucial in the coming years for governments to make the political case for sanitation and hygiene, arguing forcefully that by eradicating open defecation, improving sanitation, and reaching the targets they themselves have established, they can reduce their health budgets by four or five times the cost of the initial software investment.
As such, it is up to cabinet secretaries to establish a longer-term perspective and break away from the four-to-five year election cycles that govern their behaviour. External support agencies in the WASH sector also must also have the courage to raise their game.

They need to reach consensus and adopt an international protocol on behaviour change financing for sanitation and hygiene. And they must demonstrate to governments with clear and concrete evidence that software approaches are not a soft option for dealing with the global sanitation crisis. This HLM provides a great opportunity to showcase this smart approach to investing in sanitation.

* Dr. Christopher W. Williams is Executive Director, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), and Multilateral Representative, SWA Steering committee
Private Sector To Lead The Way In Meeting New Water And Sanitation Commitments

April 25, 2014 - PathfinderBuzz (editorial) - By Freddie Dawson

A new pledge of universal access to clean water and sanitation undertaken by several sub-Saharan African nations could lead to private sector opportunities in emerging countries.

A total of 14 Sub-Saharan countries committed themselves to new targets at the Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting held in Washington DC, USA in April.

It has been calculated that there are 325m consumers without safe water and 644m consumers without basic sanitation in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to new analysis by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) on Water Supply and Sanitation.

Assuming that countries follow through on their non-binding pledged commitments, this massive consumer base offers a real opportunity to international companies with relevant expertise.

This could lead to countries such as Madagascar and Rwanda using the private sector to increase access and help provide solutions.

In Madagascar, the government has committed to providing access to water and sanitation for more than 3m people by 2016. It has a strategic document and action plan in place on how to do this, which allocates £119m ($200m) per year and devolves power and resources to local levels, says Lovy Rasolofomanana, Water Aid country representative for Madagascar.

"In my opinion, this commitment is realistic given that the country has begun to recover from a very long political crisis and the government and donors have started to confirm their contributions to increase the resources allocated to the sector," he adds.

Although stakeholders still need to decide on exact operational plans and a method for monitoring progress still needs to be implemented, it is likely that the private sector will be called upon to increase its already substantial role in delivering water and sanitation services.

For example, a private sector initiative has helped to install gravity water systems in rural areas with initial support from charitable organisations such as Water Aid and the Stone Foundation. These have been taken over by E.C. Abraham, a private supplier that controls ongoing maintenance and support that is paid for through metering of public and private taps connected to the system.

The system has proven to be a success – public taps are operated in a kiosk (pictured above) with a supervisor who gets 20% of the money collected from individuals using the source. Those that can afford it can also get a private connection installed to their house, which is separately...
metered and charged. Houses some distance from a public kiosk can also receive a connection paid for by the NGOs involved and then club together to pay the ongoing private-sector charges.

Meanwhile the Malagasy government, Water Aid and other NGOs have also started to empower local entrepreneurs in the area of sanitation. The organisations provide subsidies for local businesspeople to buy moulds and basic start-up materials. These are used to the build the components for a latrine that can be bought by locals and installed in houses.

This system not only creates a local entrepreneurial culture, it also means that latrines are better maintained. Previously the organisations provided straight subsidies to households to install latrines but found that many would be poorly maintained due to a lack of feeling of ownership or responsibility.

At the same time, Rwanda has also pledged to increase government funding in water and sanitation by at least 18% annually until 2016 at the High Level Water Meeting. Part of this funding will be used to enable businesses in the private sector to implement large-scale infrastructure projects through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement.

And as the provision of water and sanitation services increase in these countries, they will experience knock-on benefits. The time people save can be sued in other pursuits. For one example Josiane Rahelisoa, a Malagasy woman with a juice-shop, has been able to concentrate on her business because she no longer has to wait in line for potentially unclean water.

“Now I can go to the market to choose what I want and I am free to do that. Before I had to ask someone to go for me as I was stuck waiting for the standpipe. This means I can look after my juice business more. When there are people that need more juice I can prepare it quickly and deliver it because I have more time," she says.

The more countries concentrate on the provision of water and sanitation, the more their general economies are likely to benefit. And the more that happens, the more opportunities will appear for businesses both local and international.
A puzzle: Sanitation is one of the most productive investments a government can make. There is now rigorous empirical evidence that improved sanitation systems reduce the incidence of diarrhea among children. Diarrhea, in turn, harms children’s nutritional status (by affecting their ability to retain nutrients). And inadequate nutrition (stunting, etc.) affects children’s cognitive skills, lifetime health and earnings. In short, the benefits of sanitation investment are huge. Cost-benefit analyses show rates of return of 17-55 percent, or benefit/cost ratios between 2 and 8.

But if the benefits are so high (relative to costs), why aren’t we seeing massive investments in sanitation? Why are there 470 million people in East Asia, 600 million in Africa and a billion people in South Asia lacking access to sanitation? Why are there more cellphones than toilets in Africa?

This is a puzzle because nobody cares more about children than their parents. Why aren’t they investing in toilets, so their children will be sick less often, be better nourished, learn more in school and become more productive adults? One answer is that they don’t know about all these benefits from sanitation. But the evidence has been around for decades. Also, we should never underestimate poor people’s knowledge. We used to say the same thing about education—poor people don’t send their kids to school because they don’t know the benefits—until we found out that illiterate parents know more about the benefits of education than literate ones.

Another response is that poor people don’t have the money. But they are making decisions every day on how to spend their money—on food, clothing, etc. The returns to sanitation expenditures are higher than some items that they’re already spending on.

Even if households don’t invest enough, why doesn’t the government step in? 17 to 55 percent rates of return are better than many, if not all, public projects.

Here is the resolution of the puzzle: This evidence is not what is relevant for government investment decisions. Finance ministers are constantly besieged by advocates for one activity or another who say, “My sector has all these effects on growth and poverty reduction, so you should spend more on my sector.” This argument is wrong.

Why? Because governments have limited resources. Any expenditure by government on sanitation will come at the expense of something else (or higher taxes)—such as roads or education or health.

So how should governments decide what to spend on? They should spend on those things that the private sector will not spend on, or will not spend enough on. The classic example is an externality—where the benefits or costs occur to people other than the person undertaking the action (such as when an upstream firm pollutes downstream villages). Society is better off if government steps in and taxes the externality provider.
Sanitation, or its converse, open defecation, is a negative externality. People who defecate in the open not only harm their own children, but other people’s children. Their incentive to invest in sanitation is less than the costs. In Maharashtra, India, a village-level sanitation program showed that children from households that didn’t adopt latrines were statistically better off (taller, etc.). In rural India, the reduction in diarrhea incidence from others’ adopting sanitation is about half of the effect of your own household’s adopting it.

This is the strongest case for public spending on sanitation. Furthermore, ignoring the externality argument has serious consequences. Governments typically overspend on private goods, such as high-end medical care, at the expense of goods with externalities, such as sanitation. Rich people and medical unions have political power to lobby for spending on curative health care; others lobby for fuel subsidies (another private good). Poor people’s voice for sanitation goes unheard. This was also the case in today’s rich countries—in the 19th century. William Henry Harrison, the tenth president of the U.S., died of enteritis, contracted from fetid marshes near the White House. Unfortunately, today, many of our cities in Africa and South Asia look like Dickensenian England—or worse.

Another consequence of ignoring the externality is that implementation of sanitation projects can fail. India’s sanitation program, where they gave out free toilets to households, wasn’t working. The reason was that people were using the toilets for other purposes, such as grain storage. Meanwhile, Bangladesh had a very successful program, run by an NGO, financed by government. The difference was that in Bangladesh, they were giving the toilets to the community, and asking them to allocate to individual households. They recognized that by giving toilets to people, you weren’t solving the problem of the externality. But giving it to the community enabled the community to monitor whether people were using the toilets. The community as a whole had an interest in everybody using the toilets (rather than open defecation). The good news is that Maharashtra now has a successful total sanitation program. So much so that you now see signs saying, “We will not give our daughters in marriage to someone from a village that doesn’t practice total sanitation.”
The recent IMF/World Bank spring meetings were another important moment for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as leaders from around the world came together to make a number of important announcements. Gathered in Washington, D.C. for the meetings, United Nations officials and partners from government, civil society, the private sector, and multilateral institutions highlighted the urgent need to step up efforts to improve lives around the world through the MDGs.

Established in 2000 by the UN and governments around the world, the MDGs provide a shared “to-do list” for the global community: reduce poverty and hunger, improve education and health, and promote gender equality and the environment – all with a target achievement date of 2015. As Ted Turner, the Founder and Chairman of the UN Foundation and an MDG Advocate, recently said, “We have made tremendous progress – the MDGs have spearheaded political commitments and momentum is gaining speed. But this is not the time to slow down – we know there is still much work to be done.”

Here are three big announcements from last week that will help keep up the momentum to transform lives through the MDGs.

1. Education (MDG 2): MDG 2 set a goal for all children to complete primary school by 2015. While we’ve made significant progress, around the world 57 million children of primary school age are still not in school.

That’s why last week the UN’s Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown launched an “Emergency Coalition for Global Education Action,” which includes leaders ranging from Archbishop Desmond Tutu to Shakira who have pledged to help accelerate efforts for marginalized populations, advocate for increased funding, and help to hold donors and governments accountable to deliver results.

This group will work alongside youth and other leaders to increase global focus on education and overcome barriers – like child marriage and child labor – that keep children from school through a 500-Day Global Education Countdown Campaign. Learn more here.

A World at School, an international organization founded by Sarah Brown, also announced 500 Global Youth Ambassadors and a Global Faiths Coalition for Education to support the push for universal education. Learn more here.

2. Sanitation (MDG 7): Around the world, 2.5 billion people don’t have access to basic sanitation, which results in disease, safety risks, and other problems. Efforts to improve access are not
moving as quickly as they need to, which is why the UN and the World Bank brought together
governments, civil society, and other partners for the Sanitation and Water for All High Level
Meeting.

Over forty countries made a combined 265 new commitments to increase funding for and expand
access to clean water and sanitation. Read more here.

3. Health (MDGs 4, 5, and 6): MDGs 4, 5, and 6 focus on reducing child mortality, improving
maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. As UN Secretary-
General Ban Ki-moon has said, “Countries around the world have achieved great advances on
health through the Millennium Development Goals. … But now we have to go further – and that
means reaching the most vulnerable people.”

On April 11, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank President Dr. Jim Yong Kim, and
other leaders came together for an event to emphasize the importance of investing in health to
achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

In his remarks Dr. Kim said, “The World Bank Group remains deeply committed to helping
countries push as far and as fast as possible toward all of the goals. Yet despite all our best
efforts, there will be unfinished business when 2015 ends…So as UN member states come
together to forge the post-2015 development framework…we must build on the progress made
through the health MDGs and work together to set goals that are universal and based on the
principle of health equity for all.”

This high-level commitment to health can help mobilize the world to accelerate efforts to achieve
the health MDGs and build a foundation for further progress after 2015.

To learn more about the MDGs, visit un.org/millenniumgoals and follow @unfoundation on
Twitter to join us in acting for a better world.
Secretary-General Urges High-Level Meeting To Be ‘Turning Point’ In Achieving Water Initiative Goals - April 11, 2014 - United Nations Secretary-General Statement

Following are UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message, as prepared for delivery, at the Sanitation and Water for All High-level Meeting, in Washington, D.C., today:

I am inspired by this gathering. I thank UNICEF for bringing us together, and I congratulate His Excellency John Kufuor on his leadership.

All of you in this room have the power to improve the lives of millions of people around the world. Water, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental to human development and progress across the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). When people have better access to sanitation and water, they are healthier of course, and they can also work more productively, live more fully and contribute more to society.

You are part of a push for advancement that is succeeding around the world. In just over two decades, more than 2 billion people saw improvements in their water supply. We reached that MDG target. But, we are not stopping until we help the remaining 2.5 billion people who still lack adequate sanitation. We are especially concerned about the 1 billion who are forced to practice open defecation.

Our partnership aims to provide water, sanitation and hygiene to all people, wherever they live and no matter how limited their resources are.

The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) initiative can meet needs, and it can also contribute to human rights. If we reach our goals, we will correct inequalities between rich and poor, cities and the countryside, and men and women, whose health is especially vulnerable to poor sanitation.

Today’s gathering can be a turning point. The momentum is already building. Two years ago at the Sanitation and Water for All meeting, participants made more than 400 concrete commitments. Since then, a fifth of those commitments have been met, and there has been good progress on many others. I applaud all of you here who contributed to that success.

You bring impressive commitments and rich experience to our global campaign. This is a diverse group of public health, development and finance officials. You have different areas of expertise, but you can all see the value of sanitation and water for all. The benefits cut across health and the economy. Action will empower individuals and drive progress across society.

There are three components of success. First: smart investments. We agree that spending on sanitation and water for all is wise. Our challenge is to do this in a way that is smart. Resources are scarce. With the right allocations, we can optimize funds and reach all people in need.

Second: firm commitment. We need strong institutions to reach people living in slums and remote areas — and to make sure that services last. Our collective commitment will push us to the finish line in reaching the MDGs. And together, we can make sure that water, sanitation and hygiene are integral to the post-2015 development agenda.

Third: staunch advocacy. Funding and commitment are important — but we also need awareness. It is not always comfortable to talk about sensitive hygiene matters. Open defecation used to be a taboo topic. But we are speaking up to save lives.
The United Nations is proud to have played a part in starting the conversation. In 2010, the General Assembly passed a resolution on closing the sanitation gap. To build on this, we issued a Call to Action on Sanitation, with my Deputy Secretary-General in the lead. As you know, he chaired this SWA meeting in 2012. We are now launching a communications campaign to educate and inspire the public to take up the cause of ending open defecation. We welcome the support of all partners, including the World Bank. I look forward to hearing from Dr. Kim on its work.

Around the world, the United Nations is supporting water, sanitation and hygiene projects. UNICEF works in more than 100 countries to bring these essential services to people. The World Health Organization, the UN Development Programme and other agencies are also taking action around the world. We are operating even in refugee camps, disaster areas and other insecure environments where people must struggle to cope.

In all of our efforts, we benefit from the valuable contributions of my Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. I thank His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal for his strong leadership.

This is an extraordinary alliance. Sanitation and Water for All brings together Governments, donors, development banks, United Nations agencies and civil society. This meeting can generate the push we need for a major advance on sustainable development.

Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free, but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all.

The UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake, and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim have joined over 50 countries in setting concrete targets to reach the 2.5 billion people across the globe still without adequate sanitation, and the almost 750 million without safe drinking water.

Children in particular will benefit from the new commitments, according to UNICEF. The organization says diarrhoea diseases linked to water and sanitation kill 1,400 children every day, and contribute to stunting in over 160 million children globally.

"The poorest children have the least access to safe water and adequate sanitation and they pay the highest price - so they have the most to gain from these new commitments, as do their communities," Lake said.

"The commitments made here today will help meet the right of millions of children to safe water and sanitation. This can literally transform their lives and their communities," he added.

Major commitments at the High Level Meeting include over 260 concrete actions by over 50 countries to strengthen institutions, improve planning, and increase domestic spending and donor investment in water and sanitation.

Seventeen countries committed to end open defecation by 2030 or earlier, while over 20 countries went even farther and pledged to achieve universal access to water and sanitation within the same period.

Latest data from UNICEF and the World Health Organization released at the High Level Meeting show that rapid progress is possible.

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 30,000 people per day gained access to an improved water source between 2000 and 2012.

Ethiopia cut in half the proportion of people practicing open defecation over the same time period and managed to do it across all income levels and provinces.

In general, however, global progress has been uneven, and those already at the bottom are falling even farther behind.

"We cannot address water and sanitation without addressing inequities, such as disadvantaged girls who can’t go to school because the bathrooms aren’t safe or because they must collect water for their families during school hours when they should be building their futures," Lake said. "When the global community set the goal of providing water and sanitation for all, that included these girls and every child, everywhere"

About SWA
Sanitation and Water for All is a global partnership aimed at achieving universal and sustainable access to sanitation and drinking-water for all, by firmly placing sanitation and water on the global agenda with an immediate focus on achieving the MDGs in the most off-track countries.
About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.
WASHINGTON, D.C., 10 April 2014 – Government ministers from 50 countries are expected this week to pledge concrete commitments to bring safe water, sanitation and hygiene to those who need it most.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will open the third biennial Sanitation and Water For All (SWA) High-Level Meeting here on Friday, along with World Bank Group President Dr. Jim Yong Kim and SWA Chair John Kufuor, ahead of the 2014 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake, World Bank Chief Economist of the Middle East and Africa Region Dr. Shanta Devarajan, and ministers from Ethiopia and Kenya will also speak about the crucial role safe water, toilets and hygiene play in development. [Watch live webcast at 2 p.m. EST at http://live.worldbank.org/sanitation-water-for-all-high-level-meeting]

The theme of the 2014 High Level Meeting is: “Smart investments to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all.” Chief executives have issued a clarion call for the DC gathering to make the most of the High Level Meeting.

“On behalf of the Secretary-General, I have called for increased action on sanitation – in particular, to end the practice of open defecation by 2025,” said UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson. “This High Level Meeting is about solutions and how to ensure better sanitation, water and hygiene for all people.”

“Lack of adequate sanitation and water is most devastating for children, especially the poorest and most marginalized,” said Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF, which is convening the meeting. “We are asking everyone coming to this meeting to think of these children as they plan their commitments. When the lives and futures of children hang in the balance, how can we hesitate to act?”

“Lack of access to sanitation can contribute to keeping people in poverty and preventing equitable prosperity in society,” said Jae So, Director, Trust Funds and Partnerships, World Bank. “And this is particularly troubling to us at the World Bank Group. Our goals are to end poverty by 2030 and boost shared prosperity for the poorest 40% in developing countries. As SWA partners report on progress made and increased country commitments leading up to 2016, we have a chance to leap forward toward this goal by signaling to the world that solving sanitation is an essential step to ending poverty, and one that can see vast and rapid progress among poor people in a relatively short amount of time and for little cost.”

“This crisis in water and sanitation simply cannot wait. This meeting represents our best chance to reach the world’s poorest people with these basics of life. We cannot let this moment pass by – we need smart, sustainable, ambitious commitments to reach those who need help most,” said Barbara Frost, Chief Executive of WaterAid.
“The scale of the global sanitation problem and of open defecation, in particular, is massive. Sanitation proponents can no longer just work in a village here or a slum there. Like a polio campaign, they need to work with many partners to cover entire districts and provinces. This meeting offers a real opportunity to harness community savings, public investment and private capital so that countries in Africa and South Asia can finally stop open defecation, move to safe sanitation, and have clean water,” said Chris Williams, Executive Director at the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC).

Background:

- The world met the Millennium Development Goal to halve the proportion of people without safe water in 2010, exceeding the target and reaching 89 per cent of the global population. Water access has continued to improve, but according to the latest data from UNICEF and the World Health Organization, 748 million people globally still lack improved sources of drinking water.
- The MDG target on sanitation is to extend access to improved sanitation to three-quarters of the global population by 2015. However UNICEF and WHO report that 2.5 billion people – one-third of the people in the world – still do not have access. Of these 1 billion practice open defecation. At the current rate of progress, the MDG target will not be met.
- Diarrhoeal diseases linked to a lack of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene kill an estimated 1,400 children each day.
- At the last High Level Meeting in 2012, countries made 415 commitments toward bringing safe water and sanitation to those in need. Good progress has been made on more than 200 of these commitments. Yet just 50 have been completed. Ministers from developing and donor countries are urged to renew their commitments towards bringing safe water and sanitation to everyone, everywhere by 2030.
- To be revealed at the meeting is a snapshot of progress on access to drinking water and sanitation, from a preview of the Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation 2014 Update by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP). Also available will be a special report for the SWA HLM of UN-Water's Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS) 2014, Investing in Water and Sanitation: Increasing access, reducing inequalities, an initiative led by the World Health Organization.

To find out more on the meeting and the SWA Partnership, visit http://sanitationandwaterforall.org or follow Twitter SWA and event hashtags: #sw4all, @sanwatforall and #HLM2014.

About Sanitation and Water for All

SWA is a global partnership of over 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively. Partners work towards a common vision of universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

www.sanitationandwaterforall.org

About UNICEF
UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

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Ethiopia Commits To Meet Millennium Development Goals In Water And Sanitation By 2015 - April 17, 2014 - UNICEF Ethiopia (video available here) - By Zerihun Sewunet

Istahi Sohane, 28, mother of 4, divides her precious water at her home in Yahas-Jamal Keble in Somali region of Ethiopia 11 February 2014. ©UNICEF Ethiopia/2014/Ose

Two and a half billion people – over a third of the world’s population – live without adequate sanitation facilities. Nearly 800 million people still do not have access to an improved source of drinking water protected from outside contamination. Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), a global partnership of over 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organisations and other development partners, seeks to address these problems.

The 2014 SWA High-Level Meeting (HLM) was held on Friday 11 April 2014 at the World Bank headquarters in Washington DC. Convened by UNICEF, the meeting was attended by Ministers of Finance from developing countries, accompanied by their ministers responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene sectors, as well as donors, civil society and other development partners. Ethiopia was well represented by ministers from the country’s water, health and education sectors.

Sanitation and Water for All High Level Ministerial Meeting 2014. Credit: SWA/Kristoffer Tripplaar

The meeting was opened by a high-level panel including the SWA Chair, John A. Kufuor, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, President of the World Bank, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, UNICEF Executive Director, Mr. Anthony Lake, and Ethiopia’s Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Sufian Ahmed.

The objective of the meeting was to outline an ambitious and yet achievable vision for the sector by linking WASH and sanitation to the economic growth agenda and by communicating with finance ministers about how to best achieve ‘value for money’ as well as emphasising the importance of making investments that improve sustainability and equality.

During this meeting, 44 SWA partner countries made 265 new smart commitments in three main areas:

- Greater attention to sustainability
- Strengthening national monitoring systems beyond household surveys to include institutional WASH facilities
- Focus on urban sanitation
The 2014 meeting demonstrated the highest level of global commitment to water and sanitation issues. Ethiopia was highly prominent in the meeting and was the only country to have water, health and education ministers present, which was relevant, as these sectors have been placing significant emphasis on institutional WASH implementation in schools, health centers and public institutions.

In the only presentation made by a host country during the 2014 HLM, Sufian Ahmed highlighted how Ethiopia is working to combine resources from development partners to meet the Millennium Development Goals in water and sanitation by 2015. The presentation was well received by Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon and the members of the panel.

A day before the HLM, a Sector Minister Meeting (SMM) was held on 10 April and was facilitated by UNICEF. Ministers from 54 countries and global directors of key development partners attended the meeting to discuss their countries’ high-level commitment statements, which had been prepared by each country. The SMM meeting enabled ministers to interact informally, agree on a summary of commitments, and dialogue with other SWA constituencies.

In its statement of commitments, Ethiopia laid out its vision of how it is working to improve health and wellbeing in rural and urban areas by increasing water supply and sanitation access and by adopting good hygiene practices in an equitable and sustainable manner. The country is determined to reach targets set out in the Universal Access Plan (UAP) by 2015, aiming at 98.5 per cent of the population having access to water. Ethiopia is also targeting to achieve universal access to basic sanitation, thereby eliminating open defecation nationwide, as well as aiming for 77 per cent of the population to wash their hands with soap or ash at critical times.

The meeting also reviewed progress against the 2012 commitments and discussed and confirmed the 2014 and 2016 commitments. Ministers noted that 40 per cent good progress had been made to a total of 415 commitments made by all countries in 2012. Impressive gains were also made in commitments related to financing and planning. Greater focus is still needed on the commitments related to private sector participation and decentralisation. The 2014 commitments for Ethiopia included greater focus on urban sanitation and a need to strengthen the overall monitoring and evaluation system of the WASH sector.

UNICEF Ethiopia, Chief of Water and Environmental Sanitation, Samuel Godfrey attended the High Level Meeting in DC and reflected on Ethiopia’s role and what the future holds for water and sanitation in Ethiopia.
Top international development experts and government finance ministers from nearly 50 developing countries endorsed today a set of commitments designed to speed up access for the 2.5 billion people lacking improved sanitation and the 748 million people without improved drinking water.

Some 1,400 children die each day from preventable diarrhoeal diseases linked to a lack of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene, and countries lose out on billions of dollars of economic growth. Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of women and girls, disabled persons, pastoralists and other poor and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected without services.

The issues grabbed the attention of officials meeting in Washington on Friday, including United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank Group President Dr. Jim Yong Kim and SWA Chair John Kufuor. At the third biennial Sanitation and Water For All (SWA) High-Level Meeting, they noted the vast health, economic, social and environmental consequences of poor water, sanitation and hygiene, and called their meeting an important step forward.

“At the beginning of this meeting, I challenged the ministers in this room to make concrete and practical commitments,” said Kufuor, the former president of Ghana. “I am now more confident than ever, that our name – Sanitation and Water for All – will become our achievement.”

The SWA partnership is a global coalition of 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other partners. It aims to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively.

The meeting yielded 265 new commitments from 44 countries. Broadly speaking, the commitments aim to improve the use of financial resources and reduce inequality in access, build capacity of institutions charged with delivering water and sanitation services, and coordinate resources more effectively, both from governments and overseas development assistance.

The High Level Meeting came one day after a preparatory session at the the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). That meeting brought government water, sanitation and health ministers together with representatives of donor countries, multi-lateral bodies and civil society organisations to review progress against their 2012 commitments and formulate the new promises.

For more information, visit www.sanitationandwaterforall.org.
Ministers To Make New Promises On Water And Sanitation At SWA Meeting
April 9, 2014 - WaterAid Nigeria and WaterSan Perspective

Ministers from nearly 50 countries including Nigeria will submit new commitments to increase access to water and sanitation at the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting in Washington, DC, USA, on Friday, 11 April 2014.

The Sanitation and Water for All partnership High-Level Meeting, which is being held in conjunction with the 2014 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group, will be opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

*Over half of all people in developing countries suffer at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits*

The Sanitation and Water for All partnership is a global partnership of over 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively.

The High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, of which WaterAid was a founding partner, brings together this coalition of more than 90 partners, including organisations such as the World Bank and UNICEF, to work towards a common vision of universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

Two years ago, 48 countries, including Nigeria, made 415 commitments toward expanding access to safe water and sanitation. This year, countries will assess their progress and make new efforts to continue that momentum.
Aftermath Of The Sanitation And Water For All High Level Meeting - April 15, 2014 - IRC (blog) - Promising commitments, shallow discussions but a great depth of optimism for the sector during last week’s Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) in Washington DC. - By Erma Uytewaal, Senior programme officer

Last week Friday 11 April 2014, the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) took place in Washington DC. This third HLM hosted by the World Bank, gathered more than sixty delegations from developing countries and donors, including a new record number of finance ministers from SWA partner countries. The HLM was preceded by a sector minister’s dialogue on 10 April 2014, in which ministers for water and sanitation from more than fifty developing countries reviewed progress against the 2012 commitments; presented the new commitments for the HLM 2014; and drew-up key messages for the HLM the following day. In my view, both events were an unprecedented success. But, as mentioned in an earlier blog, both events are just the most visible happenings of the SWA partnership, the 'cherry on the cake' if you like. In this case, the 'cake' consists of the High Level Country Dialogues (HLCDs) that run up to the HLM and a donor preparatory process. The ultimate test for the strengthened SWA partnership is sustaining and institutionalising the results of these two events in national country sector processes.

In this blog post, I reflect on the main results of both events, and the challenges faced going forward.

The HLM 2014: a real 'force majeure'

With the presence of the United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the World Bank Group's President Dr Jim Yong Kim, SWA succeeded in obtaining the highest political attention for existing challenges in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. Throughout their speeches and the meeting, they both emphasized the vast health, economic, social and environmental consequences of poor water, sanitation and hygiene, and thereby considered this meeting an important step forward.

Skilfully facilitated by the UN Deputy General Secretary Mr Jan Eliasson, international development experts and government finance ministers from nearly fifty developing countries endorsed a set of 265 new commitments from 44 countries and donors. Broadly speaking, the commitments aim to improve the use of financial resources and reduce inequality in access, build capacity of institutions charged with delivering water and sanitation services, and coordinate resources more effectively, both from governments and overseas development assistance. All together they are supposed to speed up access for the 2.5 billion people lacking improved sanitation and the 748 million people without improved drinking water.

Next to the collective commitments made, the most important achievement may be the high level attention given to the challenges in the sector. Finance ministers certainly have a tough task accommodating the multiple priorities within an always limited national budget. The global high level support to the WASH sector, as voiced by the UN General Secretary and other international political leaders present at the HLM, should help provide encouragement to finance ministers in prioritising the national resources needed to tackle the fundamental challenge.
Ethiopia, for example, mentioned the importance of harmonisation of donor approaches in terms of planning, implementation and monitoring, and further highlighted the need to align interventions behind the National 'One WASH National Program' through a joint financing account. On the other hand, the involvement of local government, including the role of local taxation for sustained service delivery, was brought forward by the Minister of Finance of Madagascar. Notwithstanding these and some other concrete commitments made at the HLM, the meeting lacked a more in-depth discussion on advances and ways for effective use of available resources and ensuring lasting impacts of sector investments. This is perhaps understanding given a packed agenda.

Despite a lack of depth in the dialogue, the meeting aired an overall positive spirit. Finance ministers spoke with confidence and a clear determination to achieve their vision of a world with universal access to sustainable WASH services. This was nicely reflected in the closing words of the SWA Chair, Mr Kufuor, former President of Ghana in the following statement: 'I am now more confident than ever, that our name – Sanitation and Water for All – will become our achievement'. In the evaluation meeting of the SWA Steering Committee, which took place the subsequent day, this optimism was picked up as a new trend in the WASH sector, leaving behind an epoch of self-pity and an overall feeling of being a neglected and non-performing sector.

**The sector ministers meeting: main take away messages**

In the 2012 SWA sector ministers meeting, the main challenges for achieving universal access in WASH were considered to be those of reaching the poor, addressing failing and underperforming drinking water systems and improving inadequate sanitary facilities. This very much contrasted with the first Sector Ministers Meeting in 2010 where the emphasis was on achieving more political commitment and funding for accelerating progress towards the MDGs, particularly in the sanitation sector. The dialogue in the third SWA Sector Ministers Meeting that took place last week largely built on the issues raised in the 2012 meeting, leading to the following two main themes of the 2014 Sector Ministers Meeting programme:

- tackling inequalities, and
- ensuring WASH services that last

The dialogue among the sector ministers was clearly inspired by a common vision of universal access to sustainable WASH services. Certain countries, including Ghana, Bolivia, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, shared very ambitious targets. Ghana and Bolivia, coincided in setting their target for achieving universal access to water and sanitation in 2025. Bangladesh and Ethiopia were even more ambitious, with Bangladesh aiming to achieve this by 2021, and Ethiopia committing to achieving a total eradication of open defecation by 2015. In a preview of the upcoming GLAAS report, Dr Maria Neira, Director of the World Health Organisation's Public Health and the Environment Department, stated that to this date, 75% of the 90 participating countries in GLAAS have adopted universal access policies.

However, overcoming inequity and reaching the most vulnerable populations remain a hard nut to crack in a great number of countries. During the meeting, Catarina de Albuquerque, Special Rapporteur on the Human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, put it as follows: ‘if we do not explicitly target the left-outs and the most vulnerable, we will end up with SWS, Sanitation and Water for Some – we don't want this- we want SWA’. Her advice was straightforward

- identify the left- behinds,
- set targets and make a plan
• implement and monitor progress in overcoming the disparities and adjust policies and plans when needed.

Despite agreeing with her advice, I couldn’t help but feeling that the debate and the commitments fell a bit short in terms of determining concrete approaches towards tackling inequity, including questions on how such a plan would look, and what the implications are for the current approaches and service delivery models. Moreover, critical issues such as willingness to pay, affordability and financing service delivery to the poor, and reaching remote rural areas or other vulnerable groups, were hardly addressed. In short, it is clear that there is still a way to go.

The dialogue on sustainability highlighted a trend moving away from an emphasis on infrastructure to one on services, thereby giving consideration to long term financing and investments. This includes bringing in local governments into the financing of service delivery, fiscal transfers to the local level and the professionalisation of service delivery. An emerging need is to think about the long term planning in the sector. It’s about going from projects to programmes – taking up a programmatic approach that is systematically applied – requiring long term commitments from donors and governments and linked to results. In summary, long term engagement, long term planning and agreements on long term financing.

A first quick scan of the county commitments for the HLM shows that at country level, the sector is moving ahead in addressing some of the most structural and fundamental blockages that have been obstructing a lasting WASH service for all. At least twenty countries prepared HLM 2014 commitments in which sustainable service delivery was explicitly addressed. An example is Rwanda, which is now committed to allocating 60% of the total investments to the implementation of the national WASH plan, to maintaining the drinking water and sanitation systems, and to ensuring the sustainability of the WASH services. Moreover, Rwanda aims to clearly spell out the responsibilities between national and local governments in which local governments are expected to generate resources for asset management and other maintenance costs. A more in-depth analysis of the commitments in the context of each country’s reality will be needed in order to understand the level to which the commitments are designed from a holistic point of view – i.e. to make the entire sector work, rather than being isolated patches with limited long term impact.

The way forward: embedding country dialogues and donor agreements on more effective aid

In summary, I believe that both events were a great success and an important step forward in the SWA partnership. The political commitment from world leaders and the concrete commitments made towards achieving universal access to WASH services are clear steps forward. The commitments, in general, have been formulated in realistic and traceable terms, thereby addressing crucial bottlenecks in achieving sustainable services for all and herewith going beyond the more generic statements pledged in former years.

Towards a SWA donor compact?

Many countries highlighted their ‘demand’ to the donor community for better coordination and harmonisation of approaches and for aligning their support behind national policies and plans. This is not surprising in light of the figures presented by Mr Serge Tomassi, Deputy Director of the Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in which he highlighted that in 2010-2012 87% of ODA in WASH went
through project-type interventions and only 10% consisted in sector-based aid (including technical assistance, budget support and direct support to NGOs). The example of Mozambique, where the donors together are financing more than 850 projects, is an absurd case in point.

It was quite striking that the request from finance and sector ministers, pleading for more effective aid, remained mainly unanswered by the donor members of SWA. A quick glance through the available HLM donor commitments shows that some individual donors such as Sweden and the USA do make explicit pledges to strengthen elements of country sector systems, including the improvement of sector performance monitoring. However, a collective vision and statement, at a global level, on coordinated support and making aid at country level more effective is lacking. In my view, the next mayor challenge for the SWA partnership is to prove its value by encouraging the member donors to work towards a global framework for effective aid in the WASH sector. This will be about further specifying the Aid Effectiveness principles (agreed on in Paris, Accra and Busan) into a common set of agreements – perhaps in the form of a global SWA compact. In order to make aid more effective in support to country leadership and sector capacities, agreements on the way aid is delivered at a global level, and clear indicators on donor behaviour at the country level, are urgent. After all, countries with strong sector systems are in a better condition to provide lasting WASH services to all and are better equipped to maintain and improve service delivery, even in a post-aid world.

**Embedding the High Level Country Dialogues**

No one wanted to pour cold water on these great meetings, but while you have to commend the country commitments for being ambitious, realistic and traceable, we need to be aware that the implementation of the wide array of commitments is not guaranteed. This risk, as discussed in my previous blog post, is particularly present if the commitments have not yet been embedded in a national budget, sector policies or other specific plans. Therefore, the main challenge today is to hold on to the momentum of the HLCDs and the HLM and to seek the institutionalisation of the country dialogues by embedding them – where existent- in the national planning, monitoring and reporting cycle. Only this way can the SWA commitments be translated into specific goals, tasks and responsibilities integrated in annual sector plans. However, in countries lacking an inclusive system for sector dialogue, planning and performance monitoring, SWA partners should collaborate in supporting national governments in building these sector capacities. Although the HLCD should not be a goal in itself, it certainly helps in filling the gap in countries lacking an inclusive sector dialogue and planning process, simultaneously triggering and boosting national ownership for the implementation of a structured approach to sector dialogue and planning.

Well done to all involved!
The SWA Process: Is It Worth All The Effort? - April 9, 2014 - IRC (blog) - By Erma Uytewaal, Senior programme officer

Clearly, the High Level Meeting (HLM) is a massive global undertaking. As an IRC colleague phrased it, the HLM is the "cherry on the cake" that is preceded by a long preparatory process. Whether the HLM delivers the results that justify the gigantic efforts and costs associated with it is to my opinion a very legitimate question.

We are now on the final sprint of preparations for the Sanitation and Water for all (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) that will be held in Washington on 11 April. "We" represent the almost 100 members of the SWA partnership. At country level, High Level Country Dialogues (HLCD) are being wrapped up; governments are revisiting and updating their respective commitments for presentation during the HLM. Similarly, donors are finalising their statements and briefing ministers of development cooperation in preparation for their participation in the HLM. Last but not least, the small but highly efficient SWA secretariat, hosted in UNICEF, is doing an excellent job attending to final programmatic and logistical details to offer a first-class forum befitting of the over 40-country member delegation in attendance.

Clearly, the HLM is a massive global undertaking. As an IRC colleague phrased it, the HLM is the "cherry on the cake" that is preceded by a long preparatory process. Whether the HLM delivers the results that justify the gigantic efforts and costs associated with it is to my opinion a very legitimate question. Here, I will reflect on this question by first looking at what have been achieved against the commitments framed in earlier HLMs; what the obstacles have been in framing commitments, monitoring implementation and holding governments to account; and what we as IRC can commit to.

A short introduction to SWA

Since its launch in 2009, the SWA has served as the central platform to build political momentum for sanitation and water. Driven by a common vision of universal access to adequate sanitation and safe water, SWA members work together to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability mechanisms and prompt the efficient use of limited financial resources.

The HLM, first organised in 2010, is a biennial event where finance and sector ministers from developing countries who are responsible for enabling the delivery of sanitation and water, meet with donors to discuss political priorities and make commitments for implementation in the coming two years.

HLM commitments: achievements and challenges

Important political commitments have been tabled at previous HLMs. The SWA secretariat asserts that since the HLMs, there has been a tangible increase in political prioritisation over sanitation and water. The SWA website lists more than 400 new commitments from the 2012 HLM. Of these commitments, 124 focus on increased political prioritisation for the WASH sector, which is expected to translate to more funding: both from national governments and donors.

Examples of countries that have made firm commitments to raising national budget allocation include Benin, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso. Enhanced political prioritisation also provides greater mandate for sector ministries over WASH services, and expands national government potential for better coordination and more efficient use of available financial resources.
However, formulating and monitoring progress in delivering against commitments face numerous challenges. Here I highlight what I consider as the most significant:

- Some commitments are "old wine in new bags": they do not offer new or more ambitious commitments for genuine progress.
- There continues to be a difficulty in tracking progress against achievement of commitments.
- Even when commitments are monitored, it is not clear how governments or donors are held to account for lacklustre performance.

“Old wine in new bags”?

Do commitments presented in HLMs add value to sector policies, plans and projects, or do they merely repackage existing ones? In HLCDs, finance and sector ministers, together with other sector stakeholders, agree jointly on new commitments for presentation at the HLM. The HLM is expected to trigger new and ambitious commitments to tackle fundamental challenges and to make the water and sanitation sector move faster towards its goals. With new commitments formulated exclusively for the SWA-HLM—that is, outside existing national planning frameworks—one wonders what structure is there to keep ministers in countries to stick to their promises. In cases where commitments presented at the HLM are already included in national policies, plans and or budgets, I am of the opinion that the chance of actual implementation is greater. However, as these are already part of existing plans, one cannot help but wonder what added value is being offered by the HLCD and the HLM.

Monitoring progress on achievement of commitments

All SWA commitments and progress updates are openly accessible on the SWA website. The SWA secretariat keeps track of donor and country-level commitment implementation, but is faced with a number of difficulties. The available monitoring instruments are limited in offering a quantitative or objective measurement of actual progress. While efforts have now been put in place to embed in-country reflection on progress in the HLCD, for many, reporting is still based on a rather subjective interpretation[1] by the reporting government official. Also, some of the commitments are vaguely formulated and therefore difficult to track. This shortcoming is currently being addressed by the SWA secretariat, which has now given special attention to the formulation of "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic and Time-bound) commitments.

Accountability, but to whom?

In theory, the HLM serves as the forum to hold all SWA partners accountable to each other. But how does this work in practice? Who and how will a donor country such as The Netherlands, for example, be held accountable for insufficiently performing on its commitments? What happens to governments like Niger that has yet to allocate a minimum of 0.5% of its GDP to the sanitation sub-sector as agreed upon in the previous HLM? Who in the SWA partnership can keep the Government of Niger to account? A similar question could be asked for the case of Nigeria. Who and how will the Government of Nigeria be held accountable for not achieving its commitment to develop a national WASH Sector Investment Plan by 2013?
Assuming that all commitments result from an inclusive planning process, one expects the participants of these processes, particularly civil society organisations, to hold national governments or leading sector ministries to account. This touches on the Achilles heel of many of the countries participating in SWA: the absence of a structured approach that operationalises inclusive planning and sector monitoring processes. A starting objective for many HLCDs therefore would be to boost or develop national planning and sector performance monitoring systems where these are weak or non-existent, as opposed to cultivating a parallel system specific to SWA performance, which runs the risk of insufficient embedding and tracking.

From HLCD towards strengthening national planning and sector monitoring processes

Over the years, the HLCD has evolved from one that used to be a rather exclusive exercise participated in by national governments, with support from an external party (UNICEF in most cases), to one that is now enriched by broader stakeholder participation and stronger national government ownership. Still, in many countries there is room to improve the HLCD and truly embed these in existing sector planning and monitoring processes where they exist, or to use the HLCD as the basis to develop planning and monitoring systems where they don’t. In that way, the three challenges above may be addressed gradually.

IRC’s commitment to the SWA partnership

Committed to the SWA principles and objectives, IRC is an early member of the initial core group that drove SWA’s formalisation in 2010. Until September 2013, IRC represented the Research and Learning constituency in the SWA Steering committee. Through our participation in the country process task team, we contribute to the enlargement of the sectors’ knowledge base, capitalising on our experiences in the countries we work in.

In the spirit of mutual accountability and transparency, IRC is offering its own commitment statement to the SWA partnership. We believe that the SWA partnership provides a good framework for IRC to work with stakeholders globally and in our focus countries in search of solutions and innovations to provide safe water, sanitation and hygiene services for all.

For IRC, we will concentrate our main efforts within the SWA partnership at the national level, in our focus countries. We commit to providing support towards strengthening government leadership and capacities, improving sector planning processes and developing monitoring systems to track progress on sector targets and commitments. We will not shy away from engaging with civil society organisations to hold governments accountable for unmet commitments.

Our engagement with the sector in Ghana is a case in point. Today, the discourse of a service delivery approach, as promoted by IRC, has been adopted in the Government of Ghana’s commitment statement. Now, we work with the Government and other Ghanaian sector players to implement and monitor progress for transparency and accountability.

The SWA-HLM provided added impetus to strengthen Ghana’s planning and monitoring capacity. If we are successful in achieving this in all our focus countries, then we can probably say it was worth all the effort.

See the Press Release on IRC's commitment statement to the SWA partnership. Note: Read Erma Uytewaal’s reflections in the aftermath of her participation in the 2014 SWA High Level Meeting here. [1] Completed-Arly Completed-Good Progress-Slow Progress-Major Barriers – No data
IRC Joins Dialogue In Washington On Sanitation And Water For All - April 7, 2014 - IRC Press Release

THE HAGUE, 07 April 2014 – The third Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting will be held at the World Bank in Washington DC on 11 April 2014. The international think-and-do tank IRC announced its commitment statements today.

It is a major milestone as developing and donor countries, and international organisations meet to discuss and commit to improved access to sanitation and water for all. Water, sanitation and hygiene deserve the attention of the highest level policymakers around the world. The SWA High Level Meetings are organised to address the issue that nearly 800 million people do not have access to clean drinking water, and over a third of the world’s population lives without adequate sanitation facilities.

Held once every two years, the SWA High Level Meetings bring together ministers of finance, water and sanitation from developing countries; ministers of development cooperation from donor countries such as the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States; high-level representatives from development banks such as the African Development Bank and the World Bank; and leading sanitation and water organisations.

As an active member since the SWA launch in 2009, leading water and sanitation organisation IRC has today publicly committed to and wishes to be held accountable for five statements, one of them being to:

“Contribute to driving a global movement, in partnership with local and national governments and other organisations, that promotes the delivery of sustainable services to achieve safe water, sanitation and hygiene services for everyone, forever by 2030.”

IRC believes that today’s world water crisis is not just about scarcity or lack of hardware. Systems that should give people access break down, or provide sub-standard services on a massive scale across the world. IRC believes that strengthening the ability of governments to lead water and sanitation services is not only the best route to bring improvements to scale, but the only viable strategy in preparing for a post-aid era.

After the High Level meeting IRC will continue to support its partner countries and other sector players in implementing its commitments. Through its engagement in SWA working groups, IRC actively contributes to lesson learning and sharing among the SWA partners and strengthens the sector’s knowledge base on successful approaches to achieve sustainable service delivery for everyone, forever.

About IRC

IRC is an international think-and-do tank that works with governments, NGOs, businesses and people around the world to find long-term solutions to the global crisis in water, sanitation and hygiene services. At the heart of its mission is the aim to move from short-term interventions to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services. With over 40 years of experience, IRC runs projects in more than 25 countries and large-scale programmes in seven focus countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is supported by a team of over 100 staff across the world.
For more information on IRC’s commitment statements, please see the attachment or visit www.ircwash.org

About Sanitation and Water for All (SWA)

SWA is a global partnership of over 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively. Partners work towards a common vision of universal access to safe water and adequate sanitation. SWA is not an implementing organization, nor a funding channel. Recognizing that countries and organizations achieve more by working together, SWA provides a transparent, accountable and results-oriented framework for action based on common values and principles. See more at: www.sanitationandwaterforall.org

More information on IRC’s participation in SWA

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In conjunction with the World Bank's annual meetings in Washington in mid-April, the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High-level meeting was convened. The meeting is one mechanism for drawing attention to the need for water and sanitation investments as well as encouraging accountability for countries that have pledged action. As part of the meeting, an updated release of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Data report was issued. The snapshot is here, and a full report can be found here which provides country-level data.

The sad story is that the MDG target for sanitation for 2015 remains elusive. It is not new news, but it is reconfirmation of slow progress. Sanitation coverage since 1990 has increased 21%. Yet more than one third of the people in the world still do not have access to safe sanitation. Of these, an estimate 1 billion continue to practice open defecation. Diarrheal disease continues to kill and 1,400 children die each day.

The SWA meeting noted that good progress is being made in a number of countries, though investments, implementation and political will is lagging. Of the national-level commitments made at the 2012 SWA meeting, only 50 of 200 countries have completed their goals of bringing expanded safe water and improved sanitation to their citizens.

Nudge, nudge. We can, and need to do better. The goal to end poverty by 2030 will not happen without much expanded investments in sanitation.
The Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) took place on Friday 11 April 2014 at the World Bank in Washington DC prior to the World Bank Spring Meetings. This meeting represents a major milestone in the ongoing SWA High Level Commitments Dialogue (HLCD) and is the culmination of extensive country preparation processes all over the world during which 2012 commitments have been reviewed and new smarter commitments for the period 2014-2016 are developed. The HLM 2014 was attended by 20 Ministers of Finance from developing country partners, accompanied by 35 Ministers responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene, and by 16 Donor/Bank delegations and 3 civil society representatives, among others. The meeting was opened by SWA Chair H.E. John A. Kufuor, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President of the World Bank, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, and Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr. Anthony Lake. Keynote addresses were provided by Dr. Shanta Devarajan, Chief Economist, World Bank and Hon. Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Ethiopia. Countries, donors and development banks reported on the progress made since 2012 and tabled their new commitments to address key sector bottlenecks. In total, 40 SWA partner countries made more than 250 specific commitments. The theme for this year's HLM was “Smart investments to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all”.

SWA Sector Ministers’ Meeting 2014

The HLM was preceded by a meeting of ministers responsible for WASH, known as the Sector Ministers’ Meeting (SMM), which was held on Thursday, April 0th 2014 (the day before the HLM). Ministers presented and discussed their countries’ high-level commitment statements, which were prepared in each country’s high level commitments dialogue. It enabled ministers to interact informally, agree on a summary of commitments and, with other SWA constituencies (including CSOs), to identify trends and issues of mutual concern. This year 16 CSO Representatives (nominated through a consultation process) attended the SMM discussions and represented civil society’s voice through an Opening Remarks Speech, and speaking slots on both the Equity and Sustainability panels, and through interactions with ministers.

For more information on the SWA HLM and SMM 2014 visit: http://sanitationandwaterforall.org/priority-areas/political-prioritization/forthcoming-2014-hlm

CSOs’ Voice at the HLM and SMM

Nominated CSO representatives (CSO list for SMM-HLM 2014 - 21 March 2014.xlsx) were busy representing the views of the whole CSO Constituency with a list of strong CSO messages (formulated through a consultation process in the run-up to the meetings). A 2-pager summarising these messages is available here in English: SWA 2014 CSO 2 Pager ENG.pdf And here in French: SWA 2014 CSO 2 Pager FR.pdf

To get a snapshot of the great work CSOs have been involved in at country level to prepare for these meetings see SWA CSO Matrix - updates - v2 7 - 20 Mar 2014.xlsx
BLOGS! A blog series is in place to capture the views, expectations and reflections of CSOs pre, during and post HLM.

PRE HLM - CSO EXPECTATIONS: Blog from Latin America click here; from the Netherlands click here; from Kenya click here

POST HLM - CSO REFLECTIONS: Watch this space!

TWEETS! CSO reps tweeted about the events in real time by using the hashtag (#sw4all; @sanwatforall; #HLM2014) - see @endwaterpoverty for some of the tweets

If you would like any further information don’t hesitate to contact the SWA CSO Advisor at oliviergermain@endwaterpoverty.org

- See more at: http://www.endwaterpoverty.org/swa-high-level-meeting-and-sector-ministers-meeting-2014#sthash.hMndDDv5.dpuf
According to the United Nations, water poses one of the greatest sustainability challenges of the 21st Century, and that in fact, by the year 2025, two-thirds of the world’s population will face a severe water shortage. The 2014 Sanitation and water for all (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM), convened by UNICEF, was held in Washington DC on April 11, and attended by Ministers of Finance from developing countries, accompanied by their ministers responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as donors, civil society and other development partners, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Several ministers of development cooperation from donor countries also attended, plus senior representatives from development banks, foundations and civil society.

The 2014 HLM marked the third milestone meeting to increase global access to sanitation and water and built on the continuing dialogue resulting from the 2012 HLM and the results of the Progress Update in 2013 and 2014. It has been concluded that safe drinking water for all is one of the major challenges of the 21st century, and data during this meeting, over 40 SWA partner countries made more than 250 specific commitments, aimed at increasing the amount and improving the use of financial resources, reducing inequality in access, building capacity of institutions charged with delivering water and sanitation services, and coordinating resources more effectively, both from governments and donor aid.

Ms. Catarina de Albuquerque, UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Mr. Keith Weed, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer at Unilever, Hon. Ms. Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Netherlands and moderator Andrea Koppel; April 11, 2014.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) says the presence of pathogens and toxins in water cause more than two million deaths annually, mostly children under the age of five years old.
A paper entitled “Water Microbiology. Bacterial Pathogens and Water” by João P. S. Cabral of the Center for Interdisciplinary Marine and Environmental Research at Oporto University in Oporto, Portugal, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, notes that acute microbial diarrheal diseases are a major public health problem in developing countries, and that people affected by diarrheal diseases are those with the lowest financial resources and poorest hygienic facilities. Children under five, primarily in Asian and African countries, are the most affected by microbial diseases transmitted through water.

Dr. Cabral points out that microbial waterborne diseases also affect developed countries, and that in the USA for example, an estimated 560,000 people suffer from severe waterborne diseases annually, while 7.1 million suffer from a mild to moderate infections, resulting in estimated 12,000 deaths a year. However in less-developed countries, many people struggle to obtain access to safe water, and access to both clean water and sanitation are the exception and not the rule, with waterborne infections common. Two and a half billion people have no access to improved sanitation, and more than 1.5 million children die each year from diarrheal diseases globally.

Infectious, water-related diseases are a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. According to the WHO, the mortality of water associated diseases exceeds 5 million people per year, and of these, more than 50 percent are microbial intestinal infections, with cholera the most prevalent. Since 1817 at least seven cholera pandemics have been recorded and most have provided specific examples of issues of pathogen emergence, or have significantly influenced public health reforms and the development of microbiology. However, the WHO says while a significant proportion of the immense burden of waterborne disease is caused by ‘classical’ water-related pathogens such as typhoid and cholera, newly recognized pathogens and new strains of established pathogens are being discovered that present important additional challenges to both the water and public health sectors.

In a paper titled “Emerging Issues In Water And Infectious Disease,” the WHO notes that between 1972 and 1999 — 35 new agents disease were discovered and many more have re-emerged after long periods of inactivity, or are expanding into areas where they had not previously been reported, and amongst this group are pathogens that may be transmitted by water. Developments in the understanding of the relationships between water and human health have been characterized by the periodic recognition of previously unknown pathogens or of the water-related significance of recognized pathogens. The WHO notes that several studies have confirmed that water-related diseases not only remain a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, but that the spectrum of disease is expanding and the incidence of many water-related microbial diseases is increasing.

Clearly, improving access to clean water and effective sanitation are will be key elements in improving public health worldwide.
A Texas A&M researcher is looking to naturally occurring iron to solve the world’s water problem. “Water scarcity and pollution threaten our ability to grow strong and stable economies, meet basic human needs, and protect healthy ecosystems, while also posing severe human health problems,” says Virender K. Sharma, Ph.D., M.Tech, M.Sc., professor and environmental chemist at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health in a TAMU release.

According to Dr. Sharma, supercharged iron, or ferrate, may hold the solution to the world’s impending water crisis. He is investigating the use of this environmentally friendly chemical compound as a water-treatment disinfectant to ensure public health protection through availability of water that is clean and suitable for communities.

“It is vitally important that a readily abundant and cost-effective solution be developed,” says Dr. Sharma. “Naturally occurring iron can be easily converted to ferrate, which can be used in both air and water purification as a disinfectant to aid in the removal of toxins without leaving behind harmful by-products.”

The release notes that Ferrate has been found to be particularly useful in the reuse and recycling of water, and that this emerging water-treatment technology could potentially address the challenge of eliminating potentially carcinogenic disinfectant by-products (DBPs) currently left behind with traditional water treatment chemicals, such as free chlorine, chloramines and ozone.

“When combined with solar energy through sunlight, ferrates provide a green and innovative sustainable treatment strategy to remove a variety of contaminants from the public’s water,” Dr. Sharma observes.

Currently, Dr. Sharma is conducting a Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health study on the oxidative elimination of cyanotoxins – potent toxic compounds that can be absorbed by water and pose a serious environmental hazard — by ferrates.

“Microcystins, which are toxic to plants, animals and humans, are the most widespread cyanotoxins globally and ferrate efficiently treats microcystins without producing toxic by-products,” Dr. Sharma notes.

In another study for the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Dr. Sharma explored clean technologies capable of water refining and nutrient/energy recovery. That study found the development of a low cost oxidation and coagulation treatment with no start-up time and quick process for the treatment of pollutants and prevention of adverse environmental impacts.
“Access to clean and sustainable water is essential to ensuring a community remains strong and continues to develop,” Dr. Sharma maintains. “We rely on clean water to survive; however, with changing climate patterns and continuous pollution, it becomes all the more important to develop cost-effective ways to protect our water sources and safely remove harmful contaminants.”

Sources:
Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health
The World Health Organization
Sanitation And Water For All (SWA)
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health
The United Nations

Image Credits:
Sanitation And Water For All (SWA)
Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health
Girls at a water pump in Sindh, Pakistan, where the U.K. Department for International Development helped provide clean water and sanitation to thousands of families after a massive flood that contaminated wells and water supplies in the area. Participants at the Sanitation and Water for All high-level meeting renewed their promise to work toward universal access to clean water and toilets by 2030.

Up to 44 developing countries and their partners committed on Friday to accelerate efforts to provide basic sanitation to 2.5 billion people and clean drinking water for 750 million across the globe.

At the Sanitation and Water for All high-level meeting in Washington, D.C., participants renewed their promise to work toward universal access to clean water and toilets by 2030, as well as eliminate open defecation. The pledges include over 260 concrete actions to strengthen institutions, improve planning, and increase domestic spending and donor investment in water and sanitation.

In particular, U.K. Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening highlighted that the United Kingdom is on track to meet its previous commitment to provide 60 million people with WASH education by December 2015, and in line with the country’s new law that requires gender issues to be observed in all ODA programs, the donor will focus partnerships on reaching girls and women, sustainable investment and improving development effectiveness.

International nonprofit WaterAid welcomed these and other efforts to make progress on WASH goals, something which will especially benefit children.

“A child dies every minute from this global health crisis, and all it takes to save those lives is safe water, improved toilets and proper handwashing with soap. Billions of lives can be transformed into healthier, more prosperous ones with these pledges,” WaterAid CEO Barbara Frost said in a statement.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon opened the meeting with warnings that the crisis in water and sanitation will hold back efforts to eradicate poverty.
According to new data released last week by the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program on Water Supply and Sanitation, about 748 million people around the world still lack access to safe drinking water, and half of them live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some 2.5 billion people are without proper sanitation — a figure that has remained practically unchanged for a decade.

UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake hopes children will benefit from Friday’s commitments.

“The poorest children have the least access to safe water and adequate sanitation and they pay the highest price — so they have the most to gain from these new commitments, as do their communities,” Lake said in a statement. “The commitments made here today will help meet the right of millions of children to safe water and sanitation. This can literally transform their lives and their communities.”
Sir Jim Paice MP backs call for clean drinking water for ‘everyone, everywhere’ - April 1, 2014  
Haverhill Echo - By Jack Tappin

Sir Jim Paice MP has met with public supporters of the international development charity WaterAid at the Houses of Parliament to discuss the international water and sanitation crisis, which claims the lives of 700,000 children under the age of five every year.

The South East Cambridgeshire MP used the opportunity to add his support to the WaterAid ‘everyone, everywhere’ campaign, which calls for no one to go without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation by 2030.

Speaking after the event, Sir Jim said: “The UK’s own history shows that improvements in our health, welfare and economy have been closely linked to investments in water and sanitation.

“Cholera and other water borne diseases that a century ago blighted our towns and cities have been consigned to our history books, but we still live in a world where far too many die for want of something as simple as clean drinking water.”

The meeting comes after World Water Day, which took place on March 22, on which WaterAid released a report showing that just a quarter of global water and sanitation aid gets targeted at the world’s poorest countries – defined by the United Nations, as Least Developed Countries – despite those countries being the most in need.

The UK’s good track record of making sure aid money earmarked for water and sanitation projects goes to some of the world’s poorest communities could serve as an important example to other Governments attending the Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting in Washington DC, in early April.

It was also announced at the Parliamentary event by a UK Government Minister that the Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening MP, would be leading the UK delegation to the Washington meeting.

Rhian Lewis, WaterAid UK campaign manager said: “This meeting in Washington DC could set the world on the historic path of ending water and sanitation poverty. With the support of MPs such as Sir Jim we can ensure that the UK continues to lead from the front in tackling the international water and sanitation crisis.”

For all the latest news see Thursday’s (April 3) Echo.
Kenya has reiterated its commitment to provision of clean water and improvement of sanitation to bolster its’ citizen’s health at a time when the country is losing over Sh27 billion annually due to poor sanitation and hygiene.

Speaking at the Sanitation and Water conference in Washington, DC, US recently, Prof Judi Wakhungu the cabinet secretary for water, environment and natural resources promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030.

The conference was organised by United Nations and graced by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

Kenya’s revelation is timely as estimates from WHO and UNICEF indicate that over 48 percent of Kenyans lack access to adequate safe water. Having noticed the magnitude of the problem, the government set out to halve this figure by end of 2015 although according to data compiled by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) indicate that the set deadline may not achieved.

The conference attracted several countries globally with a group of Sub-Saharan African leaders including Kenya pledging to work harder to reach 325 million people on the continent without safe water and 644 million without basic toilets.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened the 11 April meeting with warnings that the crisis in water and sanitation will hold back efforts to eradicate poverty.

"Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free - but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all,” she said.

WaterAid (http://www.wateraid.org), a founding partner in the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, welcomed the commitments.

New data from the World Health Organisation and Unicef Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) on Water Supply and Sanitation show the massive and growing inequalities in access to safe water and toilets around the world: 748 million globally without safe water and 2.5 billion without proper sanitation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there remain 325 million without safe water and 644 million without basic sanitation.

Out of the 1 billion people around the world still practicing open defecation, 227 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa; 9 in 10 of them live in rural areas. In Kenya, the government’s efforts to help foster sanitation and hygiene through the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) concept initiated in the year 2007 has registered success with the recent declaration of Nambale and Nyando sub-counties Open Defecation Free.

However more effort is needed to register notable success with JPM 2012/2013 report indicating that, 29 percent of Kenyans have access to improved sanitation, 26 percent shared sanitation,
31 percent of the population still practice open defecation.

Safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene can prevent illness and make a community healthier and more productive. They can also prevent infant and child mortality, improve rates of education, and prevent the vulnerability that comes when women and girls tasked with fetching water must walk long distances to do so, or when they do not have a safe place to relieve themselves.

“This crisis has had a devastating impact on Sub-Saharan Africa's economy, development, and families. But sanitation is now recognised as essential in ending extreme poverty. Our challenge is to reach our poorest and most excluded and ensure that everyone's right to water and sanitation is met in our lifetime. These pledges from African governments are a big step towards realising a healthier and more prosperous future for our continent,” said Nelson Gomonda, pan-African programme manager for WaterAid.

In total, government ministers from 44 developing countries made 265 commitments to increase access to water and sanitation, including promises to address massive inequalities in access, including between urban and rural residents, rich and poor, and among ethnic groups and regions.

WaterAid has made its own commitments toward a vision of reaching everyone, everywhere by 2030 with safe water and sanitation, as a founding partner in the Sanitation and Water for All Partnership of more than 90 country governments, donors, civil society organisations and other development partners.
Sierra Leone’s Hon. Health and Sanitation Minister Madam Miatta Kargbo has shown Sierra Leone’s success in combating open defecation at this year’s Ministerial Participation on Thursday April 10, 2014 at the Headquarters of the Pan American Health Organization on 23rd Street North West, Washington DC USA, during the Health Sector Minister’s Meeting, which saw Thirty nine countries represented by their respective Ministers. (Photo: Hon. Minister Madam Miatta Kargbo)

During a panel discussion, she shared her Ministry’s experience in changing the behavior of people who were living in communities in Sierra Leone without adequate toilet facilities, and elaborated on the conceptual action implemented to accomplish the task which has seen the West African Country making tremendous progress in the increase in toilet facility in different parts of the Country.

“We used community based initiative through effective teaching and sensitization of the causes, effects and consequences of living in houses without toilet facilities. We further gave them practical examples, drawing from real incidents and grim consequences resulting from open defecation.”

“We appealed to affluent and persuasive community leaders to support the weakling by making their own input, while the government reinforced the projects where necessary.

“Our partners (UNICEF, World Bank, WHO etc.) who are fully aware of what we do, invited the President Ernest Bai Koroma led government and in particular me, to be a forth leader authoritative voice on the issue of the Community led approach of behavioral change for sanitation.”

The Ministerial Participation Sectors Meeting not only saw government Ministers pledged concrete commitments to bring safe water, Sanitation and hygiene to “those who need it most” in their respective Countries: but also precedes the third biennial “Sanitation and Water for All” (SWA) high level meeting, scheduled for Friday April 11, 2014, to be formally declared opened by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, along with World Bank Group President Dr. Jim Yong Kim and Sanitation & Water for All Chair John Kufuor.

Several speakers including Jan Eliasson United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Anthony Lake Executive Director United Nations Children’s Organization (UNICEF), Dr. Shanta Devarajan World Bank Chief Economist of the Middle East and Africa Region, and government Ministers...
from Ethiopia and Kenya will also speak on the theme of the 2014 High Level Meeting “Smart investment to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all”.
Ministers from Liberia and nearly 50 other countries have pledged to strengthen efforts to bring water, basic toilets and hygiene to their people following the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting in Washington, DC, USA, on 11th April 2014.

The meeting was opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

“Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free – but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all,” Ban Ki-moon said.

Around 20 countries including 14 from Sub-Saharan Africa promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Sixteen Sub-Saharan African leaders promised to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

At present 25% of people in Liberia do not have access to safe drinking water, and 83% are without basic sanitation. Over 1,300 children in Liberia under the age of five die each year of diarrheal diseases because they don’t have access to safe water and sanitation.

Liberia has pledged to deliver basic, universal access to safe drinking water, toilets and hygiene practices and to eliminate open defecation by 2030. The country made 11 specific commitments on increasing access through better and dedicated financing, better coordination, decentralization of projects and a national study on reaching Liberia’s poorest areas.

Peter Abdulai, Communications and Campaign Assistant at WaterAid Liberia/Sierra Leone said, “We welcome our neighbour’s commitments at the High Level Meeting to provide safe water and sanitation. On our side of the border, we are missing on the Sanitation and Water for All partnership website among underdeveloped countries who committed themselves at that 2014 High Level Meeting. We look forward to our government’s emulation of that significant step and an action for both countries to deliver those promises because safe water, basic toilets and proper hand-washing with soap can save those children we lose every minute”.

At the last High-Level Meeting in 2012, Liberia made six commitments toward increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Liberia’s government has met one of these commitments, and has nearly met another, has made good progress on a further two, but crucially two commitments face major barriers according to the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.

The High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brings together a coalition of more than 90 partners including developing countries, donor countries, and organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF. WaterAid is a founding partner.
Angola - State Secretary At Conference On Water, Sanitation - April 14, 2014 - Angola Press

Washington — An Angolan delegation led by the State secretary for Biodiversity and Conservation Areas from the Ministry of Environment, Paula Francisco Coelho, participated in the second meeting of the 2014 Sanitation and Water for All partnership, held on 10-11 April in Washington, United States of America.

According to a press release from the Embassy of Angola to the United States, which ANGOP had got access on Monday, the meeting, which takes place every two years, was convened by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and held under the theme “Enhanced Investment for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in relation to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All,” serving to balance the performance of countries towards achieving the millennium goals. Among the objectives of the event this year stand out ambitious outline an achievable vision for the sector, the relationship between sanitation and economic growth and development, inform how the finance ministers of the countries may best achieve “value for money”, emphasizing the importance of getting the right investments to mitigate inequalities and achieve a sustainable and effective aid, providing an opportunity to learn from profitable investments? success and challenging participants to make water, sanitation and hygiene issues of high priority on the post 2015 development agenda. The meeting also aimed to provide assistance to participants to enhance the recent growth to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The meeting brought together ministers of finance, water and sanitation in developing countries, environment, and high-level representatives of development banks and water and sanitation agencies. Like the first held in 2012, this second high-level meeting, which took place at the World Bank in Washington, was chaired by the president of the Partnership Sanitation and Water for All, John Kufuor, former President of Ghana (2001-2009) and former President of the African Union (2007-2008), a global advocate for leadership development and governance and widely regarded for his sense of African and international status. Kufuor was appointed in December last year, the Secretary - General of United Nations Ban Ki-moon’s Special Envoy for Climate Change. The opening speech of the event was taken by the Secretary - General , Ban Ki -moon, who called for the need to create conditions by governments to the water and sanitation sector can be developed and contribute to the economic growth of the same. The event was attended by Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank Group and the Executive Director of UNICEF, Anthony Lake, who is sixth ahead of the UN agency, since 2010. The meeting was a milestone of high-level appointments in progress among developing countries and donors once again pledged to attend so that the main constraints related to the sector are exceeded.

The international event is a meeting where governments are aware of the programs of the sector have an impact on reducing preventable diseases such as cholera, malaria, and acute diarrheal diseases. Participants besides having made the balance of the performance of countries with regard to the measures implemented in the Sanitation and Water for All sector in terms of global partnership, acknowledged that despite a general aggregate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on the water, overlooking the PROGRESS sanitation and hygiene, has been slower than expected, which can lead to many countries fail to meet the target for water. Highlight the commitment of the Angolan Government, in the sector which translates among other initiatives, the implementation of the "Water for All" program, which aims to ensure
access to safe drinking water regularly to the population of the rural area and that reached in 2013, a run level of about 55 percent, benefiting approximately seven million people. This program got its start in 2007 and the goal is to achieve a coverage rate of up to 80 percent of the population of the rural area by 2017. With the implementation of the National Sanitation Policy and evolve the "Total Sanitation Programme", which aims to improve sanitation in rural areas, with emphasis on social mobilization within communities to change behaviors, attitudes and practices, Angola calls, before 2015, to meet and surpass the goals set internationally, Last April 11, Paula Francisco Coelho, State secretary for Biodiversity and Conservation Areas from the Ministry of Environment, held a courtesy meeting with Alberto Ribeiro, Ambassador of Angola in the USA, at the premises of the diplomatic mission.
Ministers from Ghana and about 50 other countries have pledged to strengthen efforts to bring water, basic toilets and hygiene to their people following the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting (SWA-HLM) in Washington, DC, USA, on April 11.

The meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brings together a coalition of more than 90 partners, including developing countries, aid-donor countries, and organisations such as the World Bank and UNICEF to discuss the global state of water, sanitation and hygiene. WaterAid is a founding partner of this partnership. The meeting was opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

"Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free – but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore of fetching water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all," Ban Ki-moon said.

About 20 countries including 14 from Sub-Saharan Africa, promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Sixteen Sub-Saharan African leaders promised to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

At present, 13 per cent of people in Ghana do not have access to safe drinking water, and 86 per cent are without basic sanitation facilities. Over 3,600 children in Ghana, under the age of five, die each year of diarrhoea diseases because they don’t have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. This intolerable situation demands action!

Ghana pledged to deliver universal access to safe drinking water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2025, and made nine other commitments, including better financing and coordination, renewing the national water policy and conducting a national study on access for the hardest-to-reach.

At the present rate of progress, WaterAid calculations show Ghana will achieve universal access to safe water by 2020, but will not achieve universal access to sanitation until 2265.

Dr. Afia S. Zakiya, Country Representative of WaterAid Ghana, said: “WaterAid welcomes our government’s commitments at the High Level Meeting to provide safe water and sanitation. What is crucial now will be concrete actions to deliver those promises, and to act on previous pledges. A child dies every minute from this health crisis. Safe water, basic toilets and proper hand-washing with soap can save those lives.”

At the last meeting in 2012, Ghana made 16 commitments towards increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Ghana’s government has made good progress on nine of its commitments, and slow progress on seven, but has crucially not completed or nearly completed any of its commitments, according to the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.
WASHINGTON, D.C., 11 April 2014 – Top international development experts and government finance ministers from nearly 50 developing countries endorsed today a set of commitments designed to speed up access for the 2.5 billion people lacking improved sanitation and the 748 million people without improved drinking water.

Some 1,400 children die each day from preventable diarrhoeal diseases linked to a lack of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene, and countries lose out on billions of dollars of economic growth. Meanwhile, hundreds of millions of women and girls, disabled persons, pastoralists and other poor and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected without services.

The issues grabbed the attention of officials meeting in Washington on Friday, including United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank Group President Dr. Jim Yong Kim and SWA Chair John Kufuor. At the third biennial Sanitation and Water For All (SWA) High-Level Meeting, they noted the vast health, economic, social and environmental consequences of poor water, sanitation and hygiene, and called their meeting an important step forward.

“At the beginning of this meeting, I challenged the ministers in this room to make concrete and practical commitments,” said Kufuor, the former president of Ghana. “I am now more confident than ever, that our name – Sanitation and Water for All – will become our achievement.”

The SWA partnership is a global coalition of 90 developing country governments, donors, civil society organizations and other partners. It aims to catalyse political leadership and action, improve accountability and use scarce resources more effectively.

The meeting yielded 265 new commitments from 44 countries[1]. Broadly speaking, the commitments aim to improve the use of financial resources and reduce inequality in access, build capacity of institutions charged with delivering water and sanitation services, and coordinate resources more effectively, both from governments and overseas development assistance.

The High Level Meeting came one day after a preparatory session at the the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO). That meeting brought government water, sanitation and health ministers together with representatives of donor countries, multi-lateral bodies and civil society organisations to review progress against their 2012 commitments and formulate the new promises.

For more information, visit www.sanitationandwaterforall.org or contact David Trouba at +41-79-261-5400 or david.trouba@wsscc.org.
John A Kufuor Accra, April 24, GNA – Former President John Agyekum Kufuor, has observed that progress made in the past decade showed that access to improved water and sanitation could be achieved globally with more concerted efforts by governments.

"The dream of universal access to sanitation and water is within our reach, but a tremendous increase in political will, adequate resources and coordinated efforts is required to get us there," he said.

Mr Kufuor was addressing the opening session of the Second Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting at the World Bank in Washington, DC being attended by about 200 delegates including about 40 Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning, and Water Resources and Sanitation.

This was contained in a statement issued by Mr Frank Agyekum, Spokesperson and Special Aide at the Office of President Kufuor copied to the Ghana News Agency in Accra.

Ghana was represented by Dr Kwabena Dufour, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Mr Enoch Teye Mensah, Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing, and Mr Samuel Ofosu-Ampofo, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development.

Mr Kufuor, who is chair of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, said although tremendous achievement had been made in meeting the Millennium Development Goals of halving the number of people with access to good drinking water worldwide, a lot more needed to be done to ensure total universal coverage.

"Today, as we speak, 6.1 billion people or 89 per cent of the global population use improved drinking water sources. But this global figure masks regional, national and sub-national disparities."

"Most of the remaining 783 million people without access to good water are in sub-Sahara Africa where only 61 per cent of the people can access improved water sources," he said.

Former President Kufuor said the world had done poorly in the provision of sanitation as only 63 per cent or 4.4 billion globally used improved sanitation facilities.

An estimated 2.5 billion people are still without improved sanitation, almost three-quarters of them in rural areas and 1.1 billion people still practice open defecation.

"This is blight on humanity and we need to re-double our efforts by prioritising water and sanitation in national planning and the donor community showing more commitment," Mr Kufuor said.

Ghana and Nigeria, among other African countries promised to put water and sanitation high on their agenda and Britain, Germany and France promised a doubling of aid to the sector.
Even before the third Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) gets underway at the World Bank in Washington DC on April 11, 2014, the Government of Ghana has pledged a total annual investment of US$170 million in the water and sanitation sector.

This is made up of an annual injection of US$120 million for water and US$50 million for sanitation.

Disclosing this to the Daily Graphic in an interview on Monday, Mr Kweku Quansah, a programme officer at the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate (EHSD) of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and Ghana’s SWA focal person, said this would however leave a gap of US$469 million, which would be taken up by development partners and the private sector.

He gave the gap for water as US$117 million annually, which puts the total investment in water at US$237 million, and which is expected to cater for 1.14 million people each year.

For sanitation, the difference in financing to be taken up by development partners, the private sector and individual households each year, is put at US$352 million, thus bringing the total annual investment to US$402 million.

The overall annual investment envisaged for Ghana’s water and sanitation sector after the 2014 HLM, which will be under the theme “Smart investments to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all”, is therefore US$639 million.

The SWA HLM

SWA High Level Meetings (HLMs) are held every two years and bring together ministers responsible for finance, water and sanitation from developing countries, ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, high-level representatives from development banks, and representatives of leading sanitation and water agencies.

This year’s meeting would be convened by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), on behalf of the SWA Partnership chaired by former President of Ghana, Mr John Agyekum Kufuor and hosted by the World Bank.

Ghana would be represented at the 2014 SWA HLM by the Minister of Finance, Mr Seth Terkper and Ministers responsible for sanitation and water, Mr Akwasi Opong-Fosu and Alhaji Collins Dauda respectively, who would together with two other technical staff from the two ministries, also represent Ghana at a Sector Ministers’ Meeting (SMM) on April 10.

Earlier Commitments
Sector players have accused the government of not fulfilling earlier financial commitments totalling US$350 million and US$400 million for the water and sanitation sector made at the 2010 and 2012 SWA HLMs respectively, and are wondering how the new figure would be achieved.

But speaking to the issue of the earlier commitments made by the government, Mr Quansah said “The fact is that we did a lot, almost 64 per cent of the commitment we made in 2010/2012. There were three main commitments – the political commitments, the institutional commitments and the financial commitments. Where we didn’t fare well is the financial commitments.”

He however indicated that Ghana did very well in the other commitments and was adjudged one of the best across the partnership.

While admitting the government’s failure in making good its earlier financial pledges, he expressed optimism that as the reasons for the poor showing had been identified; it was going to be better this time round.

Mr Quansah explained that the two underlying causes responsible for the government’s poor showing in its financial commitments to the sector, were the confusion between government and donors with respect to the contribution of each party and the low inflows from the government to the sector.

He added that it was also found after a careful study that “there were no clear and achievable indicators. When you box activities and commitments together and they become so difficult for you to measure, then you come back to square one and say how are you going to measure that, how are you going to make sure that you even know whether you have achieved that?”

**Measures put in place**

The SWA focal person said that issue had since been rectified with government now providing clear and achievable indicators, while it had also been decided to put together the same team that helped with the plan to start tracking the progress of government after the 2014 HLM, to forestall some of the earlier challenges.

While lauding the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) for assisting in tracking the government’s financial commitments, he said government had also signed unto Tracksin, a mechanism in the World Health Organisation (WHO), to help developing countries track commitments in their WASH sector.

**Specific Commitments for 2014**

Specific commitments made by the government for the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) sector for 2014, include a review of the National Water Policy of 2007 by June, 2015 to come up with a new policy that matches Ghana’s post 2015 agenda.

The government also pledges to establish District Works Departments in all the 216 districts in Ghana and provide the necessary logistics for their operations, which would be reflected in the 2015 and 2016 budget.

There is also in the offing, a national study on equity and inclusion by end of 2015, to further improve the assessment of the marginalised and pro-poor groups and adequate financial provision for new investments, major rehabilitation and expansion of existing facilities and funding of operational cost of government institutions, for effective delivery of WASH services.
Government says it is also committed to bridging the gap in financial releases from the Ministry of Finance, which stood at 28 per cent in 2013, to at least 5 per cent within the next two years. It also pledges to approve and roll-out with development partners by December 2014, the Water Sector Strategic Development Plan (SSDP) and establish a framework and modalities for sector harmonisation and coordination and establish a sector information system and process to monitor access, equity, functionality and quality of WASH services, to inform planning, investment decisions and remedial actions.

**FACT SHEET**

- According to the 2013 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) update report, Ghana has already achieved her water target with 86 per cent coverage using improved water sources and that only 14 per cent will need to be provided with safe water by 2025.
- The JMP puts the urban access rate at 92 per cent and rural access rate at 80 per cent.
- National utilities however estimate coverage to be around 64 per cent as at the end of 2013.
- The 2013 JMP indicates that only 13 per cent of Ghanaians use improved sanitation facilities, whilst 18 per cent practice open defecation and 59 per cent use shared latrines.
Ex-President Kufuor Returns Home From International Assignment - April 15, 2014 - Business Ghana

Former President John Agyekum Kufuor returned home last night after about two weeks’ engagements in Brussels, London, New York and Washington DC.

A statement from his Spokesperson, Mr Frank Agyekum said in Brussels, New York and Washington DC, former President Kufuor, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the United Nations on Climate Change, held meetings with world leaders on the need to increase awareness and funding for environmental degradation in order to avert the dangers posed to humanity by the continued rise in world temperatures.

In Brussels, he held bilateral talks on the sidelines with leaders attending the African Union and European Union Summit and urged them to adopt measures such as re-forestation and the use of climate resilient products that would mitigate the further destruction of the environment.

Among the leaders he met were President John Dramani Mahama, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, President Blaise Compoare of Burkina Faso and President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria.

In New York and Washington DC, Ex-President Kufuor held talks with officials of the UN and the World Bank on matters to do with Climate Change.

In Washington DC, the meetings included a ministerial dialogue on ‘The Economic Drivers of Climate Change’ with Finance Ministers from across the world attending the spring meetings of the World Bank.

The meeting was addressed by UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and World Bank Dr. Jim Yong Kim.

The meeting urged finance ministers to take lead role in urging their governments to prioritize issues on environmental degradation and help to prepare ambitious plans for adoption at next September’s Summit on Climate Change to be hosted by the UN in New York.

While in Washington, Former President Kufuor in his role as Chairman of the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Partnership chaired the group’s biennial High Level Meeting (HLM) which brought together ministers of Water, Sanitation, Environment and Hygiene from about 60 countries.

The HLM, which was also addressed by Mr. Ban and Dr. Kim called for increased action by governments in the provision of adequate sanitation, increased hygiene and potable water for all.

The meeting urged sector ministers to show leadership in tackling problems of water and sanitation and to give strong, actionable plans that will help to bring dignity and comfort to the hundreds of millions in the world who lack these services.

In the UK, Former President Kufuor participated in activities marking the 700th anniversary of Exeter College, Oxford University, his alma mater, which saw the investiture of a new Rector for the college.
Zambia To Attend U.S. Water Meet - April 8, 2014 - The Times Of Zambia - By James Kunda

Apr 08, 2014 (The Times of Zambia/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- ZAMBIA is among 50 other countries that are this week expected to submit new commitments for increased access to water and sanitation at the Sanitation and Water for All partnership high-level meeting to be held in Washington DC, United States.

The Sanitation and Water for all high-level meeting would be opened by United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

Water Aid Zambia country representative Fatoumata Haidara said while there has been some progress from Government on the commitments, there was still a long way to go before the pledges are honoured in full.

This is contained in a statement made available in Ndola by Water Aid Zambia advocacy, research and communications manager, Mundia Matongo.

The high level meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brings together a coalition of more than 90 partners including developing countries, aid-donor countries, and organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations International Children's Education Fund.

At the last meeting in 2012, Zambia made nine commitments towards increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

About 4.8 million Zambians do not have access to safe drinking water, while 7.8 million people are living without basic sanitation.
Local Government and Housing Minister, Emmanuel Chenda has arrived in the US capital for a two day sanitation and water for all high level meeting.

Mr. Chenda was met at Dulles International Airport by Zambia's Ambassador to the United States Palan Mulonda.

During the meeting which is being held on the sidelines of the 2014 World Bank/IMF spring meetings, Mr. Chenda will make a presentation on Zambia's current status on water and sanitation.

The objective of the 2014 high level meeting is to outline an ambitious and yet achievable vision for the sector, smart investments to achieve water, sanitation and hygiene for all, link water and sanitation to the economic growth agenda, emphasize the importance of getting investments right, including addressing sustainability and inequalities and provide an opportunity for learning from successful cost-effective and sustainable investments in water and sanitation.

The Minister observed that during the meeting his delegation will learn the best practices that can be replicated in Zambia.

He observed that currently only 33 per cent of the rural population have access to clean water which he said was a serious concern.

Mr. Chenda noted that it was also perturbing that the increase in sinking of boreholes in urban centers may in future cause contamination as some of these were sunk within prohibited parameters.

He observed that although 80 per cent of urban dwellers have access to clean water, this would be compromised in years to come, hence the strategies being put in place by Government.

During the meeting Thirty-five developing countries including Zambia and twelve donors will work together with sector partners to review progress on their 2012 high level meeting commitments and sector bottlenecks

Issued by Patricia Littiya, First Secretary (Press and Public Relations), Embassy of the Republic of Zambia in Washington DC
African Leaders Commit To Delivering Safe Water, Basic Toilets, Hygiene To Their People
April 16, 2014 - African Media Agency Press Release

A group of Sub-Saharan African leaders have pledged to work harder to reach 325 million people on the continent without safe water and 644 million without basic toilets.

Around 20 countries, including 14 from Sub-Saharan Africa, have promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Sixteen Sub-Saharan African leaders have promised to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

The pledges came as representatives of more than 50 governments gathered in Washington, DC on Friday, 11 April for the Sanitation and Water for All High Level Meeting, opened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened the 11 April meeting with warnings that the crisis in water and sanitation will hold back efforts to eradicate poverty.

"Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free - but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all," he said.

WaterAid, a founding partner in the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, welcomed the commitments.

"WaterAid welcomes the pledges African governments have made at the High Level Meeting to provide safe water and basic toilets. What is crucial now will be action to deliver those promises. One thousand children in Sub-Saharan Africa die every day from this health crisis. Safe water, basic toilets and proper hand-washing with soap can save those lives," said Barbara Frost, WaterAid Chief Executive.

Among the specific commitments:

- Zambia has pledged 75% access to safe water and 60% access to sanitation by 2015 and universal access to safe water and 90% access to sanitation by 2030;
- Burkina Faso has pledged to bring potable water to 4.5 million more people in 2015 and to address open defecation by improving sanitation for 3 million people.
- Ethiopia has pledged to have 98.5% of its population with access to water and everyone with access to basic sanitation by 2015.
- Nigeria has pledged to end open defecation and achieve universal access to water and sanitation by 2025.

Former Ghanaian President John Kufuor, chair of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership, told participants that he would hold them to their promises.

"Sanitation and Water for All is an important mechanism to not just learn from each other, but to hold ourselves accountable for results - results that benefit the poorest and most vulnerable people," he said.

New data from the World Health Organisation and Unicef Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) on Water Supply and Sanitation show the massive and growing inequalities in access to safe water and toilets around the world: 748 million globally without safe water and 2.5 billion without proper
sanitation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there remain 325 million without safe water and 644 million without basic sanitation.

Of the 1 billion people around the world still practicing open defecation, 227 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa; 9 in 10 of them live in rural areas.

Safe water, basic sanitation and hygiene can prevent illness and make a community healthier and more productive. They can also prevent infant and child mortality, improve rates of education, and prevent the vulnerability that comes when women and girls tasked with fetching water must walk long distances to do so, or when they do not have a safe place to relieve themselves.

“This crisis has had a devastating impact on Sub-Saharan Africa's economy, development, and families. But sanitation is now recognised as essential in ending extreme poverty. Our challenge is to reach our poorest and most excluded and ensure that everyone's right to water and sanitation is met in our lifetime. These pledges from African governments are a big step towards realising a healthier and more prosperous future for our continent,” said Nelson Gomonda, pan-African programme manager for WaterAid.

In total, government ministers from 44 developing countries made 265 commitments to increase access to water and sanitation, including promises to address massive inequalities in access, including between urban and rural residents, rich and poor, and among ethnic groups and regions.

WaterAid has made its own commitments toward a vision of reaching everyone, everywhere by 2030 with safe water and sanitation, as a founding partner in the Sanitation and Water for All Partnership of more than 90 country governments, donors, civil society organisations and other development partners.
KATHMANDU: Delegates from Nepal and 50 other countries have pledged to step up efforts to make water, basic toilets and hygiene accessible to their people following the High-Level Meeting of Sanitation and Water for All in Washington DC, USA on April 11.

Around 20 countries, including Nepal promised to provide all the citizens access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Another 17 countries pledged to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

According to a press release issued by WaterAid Nepal today, currently, 12 per cent of people in Nepal do not have access to safe drinking water, and 38 per cent are without basic sanitation. Almost 10,500 children under the age of five die every year of diarrhoeal diseases as they don’t have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Nepal has pledged to deliver universal access to safe drinking water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2017.

Further, four other specific commitments has been made — to reform its water and sanitation sector, to accelerate efforts to end open defecation, to improve financing and to focus on keeping programmes and facilities functional and sustainable.

Still two-third of the VDCs and three-fourth of the municipalities have to be declared open defecation-free. Ashutosh Tiwari, Country Representative of WaterAid Nepal, said, “WaterAid welcomes our government’s commitments at the High Level Meeting to provide safe water and sanitation. A child dies every minute due to water and sanitation issues. Safe water, basic toilets and proper hand-washing with soap can save those lives.” Earlier, at the High-Level Meeting in 2012, Nepal had made 17 commitments towards increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

There has been good progress on six of its commitments, and slow progress on other two, but there is no data available on the remaining nine commitments, according to the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.

The meeting was opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. “Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the backbreaking chore of fetching water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all,” said Ban.

The High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brought together a coalition of more than 90 partners, including developing countries, aid-donor countries, and organisations such as the World Bank and UNICEF. WaterAid is a founding partner.

Fast facts

- Currently, 12 per cent of people in Nepal do not have access to safe drinking water
- 38 per cent people are without basic sanitation
- Almost 10,500 children under the age of five die every year of diarrhoeal diseases as they don’t have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene
• Still two-third of the VDCs and three-fourth of the municipalities have to be declared open defecation-free

**What it means**

• A child free of disease
• A woman free of the backbreaking chore of fetching water
• A girl free to attend school without fear
• A village free of cholera
• A world of greater equality
KATHMANDU, April 17 -- Twelve percent of Nepalese at present do not have access to safe drinking water and 38 percent are without basic sanitation. Nearly 10,500 children under the age of five die each year of diarrhoeal disease because they don’t have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Nepal assured the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting in Washington, DC the other day that it is to strengthen efforts to ensure access of basic facilities like water and toilets for all its citizens and lure people to maintain good hygiene.

The country has pledged to deliver universal access to safe drinking water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2017.

Government officials from nearly 50 countries had attended the high-level international level meeting jointly inaugurated by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

Speaking at the function, Ban Ki-moon urged the participating countries to prioritize the basic facilities for their citizens. “Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free - but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all.”

Around 20 countries promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Another 17 countries pledged to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

The High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brought together a coalition of more than 90 partners including developing countries, aid-donor countries, and organisations such as the World Bank and UNICEF.
Nepal ministers pledge water and sanitation for all by 2017 at international summit

Ministers from Nepal and nearly 50 other countries have pledged to strengthen efforts to bring water, basic toilets and hygiene to their people following the Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting in Washington, DC, USA, on 11 April.

The meeting was opened by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

“Achieving sanitation and water for all may not be cost-free – but it will set people free. Access to sanitation and water means a child free of disease, a woman free of the back-breaking chore to fetch water, a girl free to attend school without fear, a village free of cholera, and a world of greater equality and dignity for all,” Ban Ki-moon said.

Around 20 countries promised to provide all citizens with access to safe water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2030. Another 17 countries pledged to eliminate open defecation in their countries by 2030.

At present 12% of people in Nepal do not have access to safe drinking water, and 38% are without basic sanitation. Nearly 10,500 children in Nepal under the age of five die each year of diarrhoeal diseases because they don’t have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Nepal has pledged to deliver universal access to safe drinking water, basic toilets and hygiene by 2017, and made four other specific commitments, to reform its water and sanitation sector, to accelerate efforts to end open defecation, to improve financing and to focus on keeping programs and facilities functional and sustainable.

At the present rate of progress still two thirds of the VDCs and three fourths of the municipalities have to be declared open defecation free. To meet the universal access by 2017 accelerated efforts have to be made at all levels.

Ashutosh Tiwari, Country Representative at WaterAid Nepal said: “WaterAid welcomes our government’s commitments at the High Level Meeting to provide safe water and sanitation. What is crucial now will be action to deliver those promises. A child dies every minute from this health crisis. Safe water, basic toilets and proper hand-washing with soap can save those lives.”

At the last High-Level Meeting in 2012, Nepal made 17 commitments toward increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Nepal’s government has made good progress on six of its commitments, and slow progress on a further two, but there was no data available on the remaining nine commitments according to the Sanitation and Water for All partnership.

According to a press release issued by WaterAid Nepal, the High Level Meeting of the Sanitation and Water for All partnership brings together a coalition of more than 90 partners including developing countries, aid-donor countries, and organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF. WaterAid is a founding partner.
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting regarding participation of Pakistan in Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) high level meeting to be held on 11th April in Washington DC.

Secretary Climate Change Raja Hasan Abbas briefed the minister on enhanced commitments of the provincial governments in water and sanitation sectors. He said, collectively Rs 47.3 billion is being spent by all governments during the current financial year. Of which Punjab has allocated Rs 19 billion and Sindh has allocated 11.3 billion. He informed that the ministry is in touch with the provincial governments and donors for universal access to water and sanitation in line with the vision 2025.

The secretary also informed that the provinces have been directed to give time-lines of their plans in consonance with vision 2025. He informed that the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) is a UN driven global partnership between developing countries, donors, multi-lateral agencies, civil society and other development partners and it aims to achieve universal and sustainable access to sanitation and drinking water.

He said that the presence of the finance minister at the event will show our seriousness and commitment to achieving the targets in the two sectors.

Alhaji Pah, Chief Field Operation UNICEF said that his Organisation is working very closely with the Climate Change Ministry for synchronisation of efforts with the provinces and the local governments. He said that polio and malnutrition directly relates to hunger, water scarcity and sanitation. He appreciated that Pakistan is making progress in provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to its citizens.

The finance minister said that water not only affects our social life but it is also essential for economic development of the country. He said that for sustainable growth in industrial and agricultural sectors we have to conserve our water. He said that Pakistan faces huge financial cost due to lack of sanitation and clean drinking water. He added that the cost is estimated to be 4% of our GDP.

He informed the participants that the federal government will work closely with the provinces to firm up their priority for provision of sanitation and clean drinking water. The finance minister concluded that Pakistan would appreciate any programme/initiative that provides assistance in these fields and harmonizes donors’ assistance with our own priorities.

The meeting was also attended by Advisor to the Finance Ministry, Rana Assad Amin, SA to Finance Minister, Shahid Mahmood Khan, Farhan Sami, Pak Country Coordinator WFP, Reynold Duncan, Operations Advisors, World Bank and Irfan Tariq, Director General, Climate Change Division.
ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, who is scheduled to lead a Pakistani delegation at the spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington from April 11 to 13, will attend the 2014 high-level meeting on ‘Sanitation and Water for All’, to be held before the meetings of the international agencies.

The 2014 meeting will be a major milestone in the ongoing ‘Sanitation and Water for All’ (SWA) ‘High-Level Commitments Dialogue’ (HLCD), as developing countries and donors identify and commit to address key bottlenecks, the World Bank sources say.

It marks the third cycle of the HLCD to increase global access to sanitation and water. At the 2014 meeting, countries, donors and development banks will report on progress since 2012 and table new and more ambitious commitments.

Convened by Unicef on behalf of the SWA partnership and hosted by the World Bank, the meeting will bring together ministers responsible for finance, water and sanitation from developing countries, ministers of development cooperation from donor countries, and representatives from development banks and leading sanitation and water agencies.

As part of preparations for the 2014 meeting, Mr Dar presided over a meeting here on Tuesday at which he was briefed by Climate Change Secretary Raja Hasan Abbas about the enhanced commitments of provincial governments in water and sanitation sectors.

Collectively, the secretary said, Rs47.3 billion was being spent by the governments in the sectors during the current financial year. Punjab had allocated Rs19bn and Sindh Rs11.3bn for the purpose.

Mr Abbas said the ministry concerned was in touch with provincial governments and donors for universal access to water and sanitation in line with the ‘Vision 2025’. Provinces had been directed to give timelines of their plans in line with the vision, he added.

Mr Dar said that water not only affected the social life but was also essential for economic development of a country. For sustainable growth in industrial and agricultural sectors the country had to conserve its water.

Pakistan faced incurring huge financial cost on account of lack of sanitation and clean drinking water which was estimated to be 4 per cent of the GDP, he added.

The minister said the federal government would work closely with provincial governments to firm up their priority for provision of sanitation and clean drinking water.

“Pakistan would appreciate any programme or initiative that provides assistance in these fields and harmonises donors’ assistance with our own priorities,” he added.
Pour résorber le retard, les dirigeants vont planifier les investissements à venir en faveur de l'eau, de l'assainissement et de l'hygiène - April 12, 2014 - All Africa

Apr 11, 2014 (Aminata.com/AllAfrica Global Media via COMTEX) -- Des ministres de 50 pays sont attendus cette semaine pour annoncer leur engagement concret à apporter l'eau salubre, l'assainissement et l'hygiène aux populations qui en ont le plus besoin.

Ce vendredi, avant les réunions de printemps 2014 du Fonds monétaire international et du Groupe de la Banque mondiale, Ban Ki-moon, le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, ouvrira la troisième Réunion de haut niveau biennale d'Assainissement et Eau pour Tous (SWA) en compagnie du Dr Jim Yong Kim, Président du Groupe de la Banque mondiale, et de John Kufuor, Président de SWA.


Le thème de la Réunion de haut niveau 2014 est « Des investissements intelligents pour que tous aient accès à l'eau, à l'assainissement et à l'hygiène ». Les hauts dirigeants ont lancé un appel vibrant afin que les participants à la Réunion de haut niveau tirent le meilleur parti de cette rencontre organisée à Washington :

« Au nom du Secrétaire général, j'appelle à une intensification des mesures en faveur de l'assainissement, en particulier afin de mettre fin à la défécation à l'air libre d'ici à 2025, a déclaré Jan Eliasson, Vice-Secrétaire général des Nations Unies. Cette Réunion de haut niveau vise à trouver des solutions pour garantir à tous un meilleur assainissement ainsi que l'accès à l'eau et à l'hygiène. »

« Les effets de l'absence d'installations sanitaires adéquates et d'eau salubre sont particulièrement désastreux pour les enfants, surtout les plus pauvres et les plus marginalisés, a ajouté Anthony Lake, Directeur exécutif de l'UNICEF, qui organise la réunion. Nous demandons à tous les participants à cette réunion de penser à ces enfants lorsqu'ils planifient leurs engagements. Comment pourrions-nous hésiter à agir alors que la vie et l'avenir d'enfants sont en jeu ? »

Selon Jae So, Directrice des fonds d'affectation spéciale et des partenariats pour la Banque mondiale, « le manque d'accès à des installations d'assainissement peut contribuer à maintenir les gens dans la pauvreté et à empêcher une prospérité équitable au sein de la société. Cela nous préoccupe beaucoup, au Groupe de la Banque mondiale. Nos buts sont d'éliminer la pauvreté d'ici à 2030 et de stimuler une prospérité partagée au profit des 40 % des personnes les plus pauvres des pays en développement. La communication des progrès accomplis par les partenaires de SWA et des engagements renforcés des pays d'ici à 2016 nous donne l'occasion de faire un grand pas en avant pour atteindre cet objectif en faisant savoir au monde entier que la résolution du problème de l'assainissement est essentielle pour éliminer la pauvreté et qu'elle
peut engendrer des progrès importants et rapides pour les populations démunies, et ce en un laps de temps relativement bref et pour un coût minime. »

« Cette crise de l'eau et de l'assainissement ne peut tout simplement pas attendre. Cette réunion est notre meilleure chance d'atteindre les personnes les plus démunies au monde et de leur offrir ces éléments essentiels à la vie. Nous ne pouvons laisser passer cette occasion : des engagements intelligents, durables et ambitieux sont indispensables pour atteindre les individus qui ont le plus besoin d'aide », a expliqué Barbara Frost, Directrice générale de WaterAid.

Chris Williams, Directeur exécutif du WSSCC, a ajouté : « L'ampleur du problème sanitaire mondial, et en particulier du problème de la défécation à l'air libre, est impressionnante. Les partisans de l'assainissement ne peuvent plus se contenter de travailler dans un village par-ci, un bidonville par-là. Comme c'est le cas pour les campagnes de vaccination contre la polio, ils doivent collaborer avec de nombreux partenaires pour couvrir des districts et des provinces dans leur ensemble. Cette réunion avec des ministres des Finances nous donne une véritable chance de mobiliser l'épargne locale, des investissements publics et des capitaux privés pour qu'enfin, les pays d'Afrique et d'Asie du Sud puissent mettre un terme à la défécation à l'air libre, adopter un assainissement sûr et disposer d'eau salubre ».

Contexte :

En 2010, la planète a atteint l'objectif du Millénaire pour le développement consistant à réduire de moitié le pourcentage de la population qui n'avait pas accès à un approvisionnement en eau potable, dépassant même la cible fixée pour atteindre 89 pour cent de la population mondiale. L'accès à l'eau continue à s'élargir, mais d'après les dernières données de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé et de l'UNICEF, 748 millions de personnes dans le monde n'ont toujours pas accès à une source d'eau potable améliorée.

La cible des OMD en matière d'assainissement consiste à faire profiter les trois quarts de la population mondiale d'installations sanitaires améliorées d'ici à 2015. Néanmoins, selon l'OMS et l'UNICEF, 2,5 milliards de personnes, soit un tiers de la population mondiale, n'y ont toujours pas accès. De ces 2,5 milliards de personnes, 1 milliard pratique la défécation à l'air libre. Au rythme de progression actuel, la cible des OMD ne sera pas atteinte.

On estime que les maladies diarrhéiques liées au manque d'eau salubre, d'assainissement adéquat et d'hygiène tuent 1400 enfants chaque jour.

Lors de la dernière Réunion de haut niveau, en 2012, les pays ont pris 415 engagements visant à fournir de l'eau salubre et un assainissement adéquat à ceux qui en avaient besoin. Plus de 200 de ces engagements ont enregistré de bons progrès, mais 50 seulement ont été tenus. Les ministres des pays en développement et des pays donateurs sont vivement encouragés à renouveler leurs engagements afin d'amener de l'eau salubre et des installations sanitaires à chacun, partout, d'ici à 2030.

Un aperçu des progrès accomplis en matière d'accès à l'eau potable et à l'assainissement sera divulgué lors de la réunion, tiré en avant-première de la Mise à jour 4 des progrès en matière d'eau potable et d'assainissement du Programme commun OMS/UNICEF de surveillance de l'eau et de l'assainissement (PCS). À l'initiative de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, un rapport spécial de l'Évaluation mondiale de l'ONU-Eau sur l'assainissement et l'eau potable
Le gouvernement d' Omer Beriziky n'est pas prêt de rendre son tablier. Le conseil hebdomadaire qui se tient au palais d'Etat de Mahazoaarivo a pris des décisions qui engagent des ministères pour un bout de temps. On fait comme s'il n'y avait aucune menace de changement, comme si le Premier ministre et les membres du nouveau gouvernement ne seront pas nommés rapidement. Ainsi, beaucoup de ministres prévoient de se déplacer à l'étranger pour des réunions.

**Déplacements à l'étranger**

Ainsi, une communication relative à la réunion des ministres du secteur « Assainissement et Eau pour tous » a été approuvée. Cette réunion de haut niveau organisée tous les deux ans se tiendra le 10 et 11 avril prochain à Washington DC aux Etats-Unis. Une délégation se prépare à partir et sera composé du ministre de l'Eau et de son directeur administratif et financier.

Le double but à atteindre serait de faire le point sur les meilleures pratiques existantes permettant d'aller plus vite vers les Objectifs « millénaire » pour le développement liés à l'eau et à l'assainissement et également de rencontrer des experts appartenant à des agences de soutien. Une autre communication relative à la participation du ministère de la Santé publique à la conférence des ministres de la Santé de l'Union africaine et de l'OMS les 16 et 17 avril prochain à Luanda en Angola a été approuvée.

Le ministre de la Santé, le directeur général et le directeur des études du ministère y participeront pour discuter, entre autres, de couverture sanitaire universelle, d'agence africaine de médicaments, de politiques et stratégies de résorption du problème posé par les risques de maladies non transmissibles en Afrique, de prévention de la mortalité maternelle et infantile. La participation de Madagascar à la 7e conférence des ministres du comité de coordination pour le développement et la promotion de l'artisanat a aussi été approuvée au cours de ce conseil de gouvernement. Cette conférence se tiendra du 2 au 5 juin prochain à Niamey au Niger.

Cette réunion comme de coutume sera précédée par celle des experts qui associent de hauts dirigeants de l'artisanat et des artisans de chaque pays. Enfin, la communication relative à la tenue de la conférence des ministres africains des transports a obtenu son approbation.

Madagascar y sera présent du 7 au 11 avril à Malabo en Guinée Equatoriale.

Bref, les tergiversations politiques qui bloquent la nomination du Premier ministre et la formation du gouvernement n'empêchent pas la vie de suivre son cours normal. Les membres du gouvernement de transition ne se tournent pas les pouces Ils attendent leurs successeurs sans inquiétude et dans l'espoir de ne pas rater les occasions de déplacements à l'étranger.
Une délégation angolaise conduite par la secrétaire d'État de la Biodiversité et de Conservation des zones du Ministère de l'Environnement, Paula Francisco Coelho, a participé du 10 au 11 avril dernier, à Washington, à la 2ème réunion de 2014 du partenariat d'Assainissement et Eau pour Tous.

Un communiqué de presse de l'Ambassade d'Angola aux États-Unis parvenu ce lundi à l'ANGOP, indique que la réunion qui se réalise tous les deux ans, a été convoquée par le Fonds des Nations Unies pour l'Enfance (UNICEF), sous le thème : «L'investissement amélioré pour la réalisation des Objectifs du Développement du Millénaire (OMD), en ce qui concerne l'eau, l'Assainissement et l'hygiène pour tous ».

Parmi les objectifs de l'événement cette année, figurent, entre autres, un plan ambitieux d'une vision réaliste pour le secteur, la relation entre l'assainissement, la croissance économique et le développement, ainsi que l'information sur la façon dont les ministres des Finances peuvent atteindre au mieux la valeur par l'argent », mettant l'accent sur l'importance d'obtenir de bons investissements pour atténuer les inégalités et atteindre une aide durable et efficace, lit-on dans le document.

La réunion avait également pour objectif, de fournir une assistance aux participants, afin de renforcer la croissance récente pour accélérer les progrès vers les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement (OMD).

Ont pris part à la rencontre, les ministres les Finances, de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement des pays en développement, de l'Environnement, ainsi des représentants de haut niveau des Banques de développement et Agences de l'eau et de l'assainissement.


La même réunion, selon la note de presse, a été une étape importante de rendez-vous de haut niveau en cours entre les pays en développement et les donateurs, afin que les principales contraintes liées au secteur soient dépassées.

Il y a lieu de souligner l'engagement de l'Exécutif angolais audit secteur, qui se traduit entre autres initiatives, à la mise en œuvre du programme «Eau pour tous», visant à assurer l'accès à l'eau potable à la population de la zone rurale.

En 2013, le programme a atteint un niveau d'exécution de l'ordre de 55 pour cent, bénéficiant à environ sept millions de personnes. Le même programme a fait ces débuts en 2007, et l'objectif est d'atteindre jusqu'en 2017, au moins 80 pour cent de la population de la zone rurale.
La meta de Paraguay es que en el año 2018 alcance el 75% de cobertura de agua potable y pasar del 11 al 50% en saneamiento; asimismo, este año, con el apoyo del Banco Mundial, se adquirirá un laboratorio móvil para elevar los controles de la calidad del agua en todo el país. A largo plazo, para el 2030 se prevé llegar a 100% de cobertura.

Muchas localidades en Paraguay aún carecen de agua potable. Gentileza.

Estos son los compromisos que el ministro de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones, Ramón Jiménez Gaona presentó en la 3ª Alianza por el Saneamiento y el Agua para Todos (SWA, por sus siglas en inglés) que se realizó en Washington, EEUU.

La SWA es una alianza mundial basada en ideas afines y una visión común sobre el saneamiento y abastecimiento de agua universal y sostenible, constituida por socios miembros, fuertemente respaldados y apoyados por organismos de cooperación internacional, como UNICEF, OMS y otros.

La SWA se basa en la confianza mutua, el apoyo y el compromiso con los principios de eficacia de la ayuda, incluida la responsabilidad respecto a los planes como una tarea nacional. La alianza está integrada por países en desarrollo, donantes, redes de la sociedad civil, bancos de desarrollo, socios multilaterales, socios académicos y de investigación y otros socios del sector, que se reúnen una vez al año.

El Paraguay se incorporó a esta alianza mundial en julio de 2010, como único país de Latinoamérica y del Caribe asociado y participa con voz y voto en los organismos regionales de alto nivel que se reúnen periódicamente.

De la reunión participan los ministros de cooperación para el desarrollo de los países donantes y los ministros de finanzas, salud y obras públicas de los países en desarrollo.

El plan de gobierno de Paraguay 2013-2018 incorporó a la salud como factor esencial del desarrollo sostenible, considerando que la salud juega un papel importante en la reducción de la pobreza y en el crecimiento económico en consideración que las personas sanas son más productivas, capaces de aprender, trabajar y competir en igualdad de oportunidades.

Hay un reconocimiento explícito que la carencia de acceso al saneamiento, al agua y a la higiene compromete el estado de salud de la población y debilita los esfuerzos establecidos en el plan de gobierno encaminados a erradicar la pobreza y avanzar hacia el crecimiento económico.

La falta de saneamiento y agua es un problema de salud pública y de salud ambiental que al ser atendido oportuna y adecuadamente contribuye con la equidad sanitaria, siempre y cuando las políticas públicas estén sustentadas en principios y valores desde la perspectiva de derecho humano.
El desafío más grande que enfrenta el gobierno del presidente Horacio Cartes para cumplir el plan 2013-2018 es la baja cobertura y calidad de los servicios en agua y saneamiento que se encuentran entre las más bajas de América Latina, con extremas inequidades que perduran desde hace más de diez años en poblaciones indígenas, zonas marginadas urbanas y rurales campesinas.
El ministro de Hacienda, Germán Rojas, junto con el ministro de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social, Antonio Barrios, y el ministro de Obras Públicas, Ramón Jiménez Gaona, participaron de la Tercera Reunión de alto nivel sobre Agua y Saneamiento en el Banco Mundial, convocada y coordinada por el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (Unicef) en nombre de los asociados de Saneamiento y Agua para Todos. La reunión fue dirigida por el presidente de Saneamiento y Agua para Todos, ex presidente de Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor.

El tema tratado fue Inversiones inteligentes para lograr agua, saneamiento e higiene para todos, y se centró en los avances considerables que se pueden lograr cuando se invierte en saneamiento y agua, y en la forma tangible en que se pueden lograr resultados a escala, informó Hacienda.

Los participantes abordaron tres prioridades de Saneamiento y Agua para Todos, relacionadas con el logro del acceso universal, la eliminación de las inequidades y el sostenimiento de los resultados a lo largo del tiempo.

Además del secretario general de la ONU, Ban Ki-moon y el presidente del Banco Mundial, Jim Yong Kim, de esta reunión participaron los ministros de Hacienda y/o Finanzas, acompañados por los ministros de los sectores responsables del abastecimiento de agua y saneamiento. También han sido invitados representantes de los bancos de desarrollo.