



Why we need a global action plan
on water and sanitation



The MDGs commit
us to reduce by half
the proportion of
people without
access to safe water
and basic sanitation
by 2015.

The UK Government recognises that access to safe, affordable water is a human right. Yet, over a billion of our fellow human beings lack safe water to drink and half the population of developing countries are without proper sanitation.

The poor suffer most; 5,000 children die every single day from dirty water and inadequate sanitation; and women and children have to spend their time collecting water rather than working or going to school. In Pakistan half of girls drop out of class just because schools do not have latrines. The problem is daunting: we need to bring clean water to 300,000 people and sanitation to 450,000 people each day, every day, for the next ten years, if we are going to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets. Urbanisation, population growth and climate change will make it even harder.

The plain truth is that not enough is being done to solve this problem, either in national poverty reduction plans, national budgets or by donors or the international community. We must act, and there are three main things we need to do:

Invest more money in water and sanitation.
Ensure that money is spent effectively and fairly.
Put the right structures in place to make progress.



HILARY BENN
Secretary of State for International Development

Part of the answer
to the problem is
more money.

The United Nations Millennium Project Taskforce on Water and Sanitation puts the total global cost of achieving the water and sanitation targets at between \$75bn and \$143bn. The UNDP Human Development Report suggests that aid will need to increase by \$4bn a year, with half of this allocated to sub-Saharan Africa, to have a chance of reaching MDG targets. The problem at the moment is largely rural, but as towns and cities of the developing world grow, there will also be a huge need for finance to lay pipes, provide connections and build sewers, particularly for slums. It is clear that we all need to do more.

This is why the UK has agreed that half of our direct aid to poor countries should be spent on basic services, including water and sanitation, and why we will **double our support to water and sanitation in Africa** to £95 million a year by 2008 **and double it again** to £200 million a year by 2011. We will continue to work with all our partners, including NGOs, who do so much to help provide water and sanitation to the poorest.

We need to make sure that those countries which currently get too little support for water and sanitation get more.



The first step is to highlight these donor 'orphans', by reporting on the shortfall in their funding and agreeing who will do what. Existing mechanisms may be able to fill the gap, but we should also think about new ways to speed up progress.

More money alone is
not enough; it needs
to be spent more
effectively and fairly.
All of us need to
play our part.

- **All donors** need to provide longer-term, predictable financing through public budgets to cover investments and, for the poorest, recurrent costs (e.g. salaries and maintenance), and to reduce un-coordinated financing of water and sanitation projects.
- The **World Bank** has increased lending to Africa on water and sanitation. But it should give even more attention to slums and to providing access for the poorest, who have no services at all..
- The **Asian Development Bank** should also focus its increased resources for water on poor people.
- We should all support the **African Development Bank's** Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative. This programme aims to provide access for 80% of rural areas in Africa by 2015. This would mean increased access to water for over 270 million people and to sanitation for over 290 million people.
- **International Financing Institutions** should explore ways of supporting effective financing and capacity building at local and regional levels. This would include finding innovative ways of lending to local authorities and municipalities, and better targeting of subsidies that encourage service providers to increase the number of poor people served.
- The **EU** should provide more resources for water and sanitation:
 - **through EU donor country programmes** (country strategy papers), responding to what poor people want and to government priorities;
 - by allowing member states to make **additional voluntary contributions** to EC programmes under the European Development Fund (EDF) 10. This could be targeted to specific countries and/or sectors including water and sanitation;
 - through a reformed **EU-ACP Water Facility**, under EDF 10, better linked to the EU Water Initiative so that it is much more strongly integrated with national and local planning; and
 - by strengthening the 2002 **EU Water Initiative**, so that water is given a higher political priority, reflected in government plans and budgets, with donors coordinating their efforts better to support this. The EUWI should be widened to include non-EU donors where appropriate.



Better governance is critical. We need the right structures in place to make progress.

Governments and the international community must organise themselves better and be held to account more effectively. There should be:

One annual report to monitor progress towards achieving the water and sanitation MDG targets.

This should set out:

- current levels of access to safe water and adequate sanitation, highlighting where progress is lagging behind;
- which countries have good national plans for achieving the targets, and which countries are implementing them, and how;
- the proportion of developing country public budgets going to water and sanitation;
- the extent to which donors are fulfilling their promises, including looking at future financial commitments;
- what countries need to do to address the challenges in the report.

This annual report should be prepared and submitted by UN Water, and would build on the work currently prepared every two years by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme.

One high-level global annual meeting to decide on action.

Based on the report, this meeting would:

- review what is being done;
- highlight the gaps;
- monitor progress;
- decide on action; and
- agree who is going to do what.

This should help to identify those countries that get too little support, and plan how best to support them. It should be jointly convened by all the multilaterals working on water and sanitation (including the UN) and would be a focus for lobbying and campaigning. We suggest that the first **World Water and Sanitation Meeting** could be held at the IMF/World Bank Spring meetings in 2007.

There should also be **annual regional meetings** on water and sanitation. For example the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) could meet with donors each year to discuss progress in their countries. Through the EU Water Initiative, we will encourage AMCOW, to consider meeting with the EU and other significant donors, in Congo Brazzaville in March 2007.

The right structures providing a single coordinated framework for action are also needed **within each country**. We think there should be:

One national water and sanitation plan.

This should set out current levels of access, the investment required and what's needed to meet needs. These plans should be linked strongly to national development and poverty plans, including Poverty Reduction Strategies, and properly budgeted for through each country's own systems. Implementing the plans will require political will as well as institutional capacity. Donors should give adequate technical assistance to governments as they build the capacity to implement these plans. There should be regular, preferably annual, reviews of the implementation to monitor progress against agreed indicators.

One water and sanitation coordinating group.

This should bring together people from government (national and local), civil society and donors to identify the blockages and address them. There should be a clearly identified lead donor, building on the experience of sector wide approaches in other sectors. The EU Water Initiative should help to form a coordinating group, where one does not exist, or catalyse the work of an ineffective group.

One lead UN body for water and sanitation identified at national level.

This agency would ensure that its programme was part of the overall programme coordinated by UNDP. This would be the only UN agency through which the UK would put our money for water and sanitation – and we encourage others to do the same.

Finally, if we are to meet poor people's demands for clean water and adequate sanitation, and if the right to water is to be realised, governments will have to be more responsive and accountable to poor people. The right institutions and systems need to be put in place to deliver services to those who currently have no clean water and sanitation. The best way we can do this is to work with governments and civil society **to help enable the voices of those without water and sanitation to be heard**, and then for governments to act on what they hear. Now is the time to make this happen.



Front cover photo: © Water Aid/John Spaul. Women carry water from the well to their homes, Malica village, Niassa province, Mozambique.

Inside front cover photo: © Water Aid/Marco Betti. "By becoming mechanics we have broken tradition and show that women can also do this kind of work." Uma Devi, Mahoba region, India.

Photo page 3: © CARE International . Students at Meithaloun school in Jenin, West Bank, enjoy a new water supply thanks to CARE's Empowers programme.

Photo page 5: © Water Aid/Suzanne Porter. "We are taught to wash our hands before and after we eat and after we defecate." Yahna Dinwur (13, right), Warok, Nigeria.

Inside back cover photo: © Water Aid/Alex Macro. "When I heard the news that we were going to get clean water I felt like I'd had a huge burden lifted from me." Nakwetikya, Ndedo, Tanzania.

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