

**JOINT STATEMENT BY  
THE OECD  
AND THE  
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ADVISORY BOARD ON WATER AND SANITATION**

**Paris, 11 July 2006**

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More than 1 billion people lack access to safe water and some 2.6 billion have no access to basic sanitation. Water is increasingly scarce in a number of regions worldwide, and population growth and water pollution are increasing the pressure. As a result, we witness growing competition between household, industrial and agricultural users, and in some cases competition between regions or countries.

Access for all people to safe water and sanitation at an affordable price is a global priority. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include an intermediate target of halving the proportion of people worldwide without access to clean water and adequate sanitation by 2015. Reaching this target will require significant political will and financial investment. The financing gap is enormous. In 2003, the Camdessus Panel warned that the MDGs can be achieved only by doubling annual investments in water supply and sanitation services in developing countries from the 2003 level (US\$15 billion). These figures were confirmed by Task Force 7 of the Millennium Project. Access to water services needs to be a priority for development co-operation, and should be an integral part of Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Members of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB), OECD member countries and the OECD Secretariat met to explore the possibility of collaboration on 11 July 2006 to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on water and sanitation. Participants agreed that the Compendium of Actions prepared by the UNSGAB is a starting point for identifying areas of work that should be undertaken, subject to the mandates of the two bodies.

The joint meeting provided an opportunity for:

- Participants from the UNSGAB and from the OECD Secretariat to present their respective mandates, priorities and the focus of their activities on water and sanitation
- OECD member countries to outline case studies from their countries' policies and experiences concerning water and sanitation
- A very fruitful exchange between the member countries of the OECD and the Secretariats of the two institutions, both on substantive issues and policy priorities.

The exchanges demonstrated that the two institutions have shared concerns, for example: achievement of the MDGs; identification of sustainable financing mechanisms for water and sanitation; improvement of the quality of development cooperation; ensuring the relevance of their work in this sector; and better capacity to disseminate and spread best practice in the sector, and to influence policies in member countries and developing countries. The joint meeting strengthened mutual understanding, helped identify synergies in the work of UNSGAB and the OECD, increased commitment to work together to achieve international goals on water and sanitation and identified entry points for collaboration.

The OECD Secretariat and the UNSGAB agreed that it would be useful to take this dialogue forward, linking it to discussion in OECD Committees and their sub-groups about where water and sanitation might fit into their work programmes. Possible areas for collaboration on water in the coming years were

outlined, building on each institution's specific mandate, expertise, work programme proposals and comparative advantage.

The OECD is well-placed to provide the objective analytical basis, reliable statistics and impartial advice that inform water policy choices. Indeed, much data on water and sanitation and related policies (such as development cooperation policies) already exists at the OECD. Making this data available to the UNSGAB would inform and strengthen its work. Sharing this information and analysis could also contribute to operationalising its recommendations and encourage their replication.

The OECD, working with its member country governments, the United Nations, international and regional financial organisations and developing country partners, has an important role to play in encouraging donors at the highest level to:

- improve the delivery of and where possible increase their assistance to the water sector, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
- identify the key framework conditions needed to support public and private sector investment, and
- share best practice experiences of water pricing, and capacity building at the local and regional levels, to support the delivery of efficient and cost-effective water services.

The UNSGAB is tasked with promoting global action on water and sanitation issues. The Board is composed of a wide range of personalities with proven experience in providing inspiration, influencing government action, and working with the media, the private sector and civil society.

Building on the OECD's substantive work on water, its recent Environment-Development Ministerial Meeting (April 2006) and informed by the outcomes of major international initiatives on water – such as Mr Gurria's Task Force on "Financing Water for All", the UNSGAB's Compendium of Actions, the work of the UN, international institutions, regional bodies, governments and civil society - the following potential areas for collaborative action<sup>1</sup> were identified:

- ✓ ***Securing equitable access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation:*** including sharing country experiences and best practice guidance on project planning to upgrade or extend water services provision; addressing the social aspects of water pricing; and the use of OECD tools to develop multi-year financing strategies for specific regions or countries to extend or improve access to water services.
- ✓ ***Building capacity to manage water resources effectively:*** including providing guidance on the design of frameworks, policies and reforms to manage water resources, including for agricultural water use, in an economically, socially, environmentally sustainable manner; comparing country experiences and developing lessons learned with water sector regulatory reform; supporting capacity improvements in project preparation and financial planning at the local level; providing recommendations to improve water management in OECD and selected non-member countries through environmental performance reviews; and analysing the robustness of country water management frameworks and infrastructures to cope with risks to water supplies including the impacts of climate change.
- ✓ ***Increasing financing for the water sector:*** including monitoring and disseminating information on ODA commitments and disbursements to the water sector, and recommending how this aid can be better delivered in concrete terms; to benefit the maximum number of people, providing guidance on

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<sup>1</sup> The proposed collaborative work mentioned in the statement will be proposed by the Secretary General for inclusion in the OECD's 2007-2008 Programme of Work and Budget.

the financial leverage of non-ODA sources; assessing the financing needs for water supply and sanitation infrastructure; providing recommendations on the design and implementation of cost recovery water charges to improve the efficient use of water resources and increase financing for the sector, including infrastructure and delivery mechanisms; and in OECD countries where the data exists, monitoring public and private expenditures for water pollution abatement and control measures, and developing better knowledge of all water expenditures, including public and private infrastructure investment, operation and maintenance, and household expenditures.

Participants proposed organising expert meetings on water and sanitation, to examine recommendations emerging from OECD work on water policy, financing for the water sector, the role of development assistance and ways to improve the effectiveness of existing and additional resources. Other activities might include enhancing the water domain on the OECD web-site.

Finally, the OECD will consider convening a High Level Meeting on Water and Development and UNSGAB offered to assist with its preparation. The OECD could also contribute to the next World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul in 2009.

This collaboration will enhance their contribution to achieving the internationally agreed goals on water. It will provide the basis for inputs into the international community's deliberations on water issues, for example, should the Evian Action Plan and/or water return to the G8 agenda, provide appropriate support to the G-8 Summits and the sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development on water and sanitation issues. The OECD and UNSGAB look forward to working together in the coming years.

Signed by:

*For the OECD*



**Mr. Angel Gurría**

OECD Secretary-General

*For the UNSGAB*



**Ms. Uschi Eid**

Acting Chair, UNSGAB