

**Brief Report on the 10th Meeting of the United Nations Secretary-General's
Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB)**

May 26 – 28, 2008

The Prince Park Tower Tokyo Hotel, Tokyo Japan

Background

UNSGAB's 10th meeting was hosted by the Government of Japan in Tokyo. Three new members were welcomed at the meeting: Ms Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Water in Uganda and former President of the African Minister's Council on Water, Omar Kabbaj, Honorary President of the African Development Bank, Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco and Roy Torkelson, Executive Director JP Morgan. The meeting was held during the transition from Kenzo Hiroki to Francois Guerquin as Head of the UNSGAB Secretariat. In addition to the regular UNSGAB session, members met with representatives of Japanese ministries for a half day dialogue outlining Japan's actions to support the Hashimoto Action Plan. Members also met for a half day dialogue with African Leaders to discuss water and sanitation issues leading up to the African Union Summit. Please find the reports of both these Dialogues at the end of these minutes.

1. Opening

1) Opening Remarks by HRH Chair

UNSGAB Chair, HRH Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands officially opened the meeting and thanked the Government of Japan for generously hosting the Board. He welcomed His Imperial Highness Crown Prince of Japan, reviewed UNSGAB's activities since the 9th meeting and outlined his expectations for the 10th session.

2) Remarks by His Imperial Highness Crown Prince of Japan, Honorary President HHH, Crown Prince of Japan and Honorary President of UNSGAB welcomed participants and extended his heartfelt condolences to the victims of the recent natural disasters in China and Myanmar.

3) Greetings by the Host Government

H.E. Mr. Junzo Yamamoto, Vice-Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism noted that the 10th UNSGAB meeting was the first for HHH Crown Prince of Japan in his role as Honorary President. He accentuated the links among water, sanitation and human security and asked UNSGAB to continue its leadership role in the global dialogue on water and sanitation.

4) Report on the first Asia Pacific Water Summit by H.E. Yoshiro Mori, President of the Asia Pacific Water Forum, former Prime Minister of Japan

His Excellency Mr. Mori thanked the UNSGAB Chair for participating in the Asia Pacific Water Forum, Beppu Japan, Dec. 2007. He said the Forum served to further clarify how critical sanitation is for human dignity. He said the Forum's ultimate success depends on how participants will tackle specific actions locally.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

3. Overall review of progress and implementation after Bogota

Kenzo Hiroki reviewed the UNSGAB's progress according to the six chapters of the Hashimoto Action Plan since the 9th (please see Annex 1).

4. International Year of Sanitation (IYS)

Kenzo Hiroki presented the IYS progress (please see Annex 2). Margaret Catley-Carlson, chair of the UNSGAB Sanitation Working Group said the profile of sanitation has been successfully raised, and the themes set forth by members at the Tunis meeting were well incorporated into the regional dialogues on sanitation – the best example being the AfricaSan dialogue in Durban (Feb. 18 -20, 2008) which resulted in the eThekweni Declaration. This Declaration, she noted, allows for progress to be monitored. For a subject on which it was difficult to get any assistance she said, there is now an avalanche of sanitation related information. Members discussed a range of related issues including the need for social change, waste water treatment, breaking the sanitation taboo, monitoring and financing.

One member stressed that along with technological innovation, there is a real need to promote social change and community demand in order to address the sanitation crisis. For example, it is possible to provide a working system to remove human waste, however the real challenge is long term maintenance and that will only happen if communities believe that sanitation is important and are invested in keeping the sanitation system functional. A related issue is the need to build capacity for operators and managers to maintain sanitation systems. New Delhi has 7 wastewater treatment plants, however there has never been a time when they are all functional simultaneously highlighting the need for more operational capacity.

The fact that 90% of wastewater is untreated in developing countries was discussed. It is critical that capacity is created to use sludge as a resource, for example through an ecosan approach. A member stressed that there are new frontiers to be exploited and replicating the sewage systems used in developed cities does not always provide the answer.

UNSGAB must continue to “call a spade a spade” and push to break the sanitation taboo. Strides have been made in Asia on this front, however other regions are still reluctant to talk about toilets. One member said that UN reports on the IYS should be more achievement oriented rather than simply reporting on outputs. On a related point, it was

noted that the reports of the regional sanitation dialogues provide a monitoring tool to determine, for example, how many countries had appointed a sanitation champion in government.

Providing sanitation is highly local, however, it might be prudent to develop regional plans in order to spread the costs. Members agreed to follow up on the discussion in the Sanitation Working Group.

5. AU Summit, Dialogue with African Leaders, and TICAD IV

After a presentation on the AU Water Summit (Annex 3), members discussed priorities to be addressed during both the Dialogue with African Leaders and TICAD IV. Ms Eid, Vice Chair of UNSGAB and chair of the ad hoc Africa Task force group presented some suggestions for alteration of the AU draft declaration. The draft declaration of water and sanitation will hopefully be discussed and adopted during the upcoming Africa Union summit in Sharm el Sheikh.

6. Working Group Sessions

Members met in their Working Groups on: Water Operators Partnerships, Sanitation, Financing, Monitoring and Reporting, Integrated Water Resources Management, and Water and Disaster.

7. UNSGAB in the 5th World Water Forum

Mr. Loic Fauchon, President of the World Water Council and Ger Bergkamp, designated Executive Director of the World Water Council, presented the substantive framework for the 5th World Water Forum to be held in Istanbul, Turkey in 2009 (Annex 4). Members agreed that UNSGAB would take an active role in the Forum

8. The 11th Board Meeting in autumn, 2008

The Chair welcomed Dr. Karim Allaoui, Operations, Planning and Services Department, the Islamic Development Bank. He said the Bank was committed to financially support the 11th meeting and was looking forward to working closely with UNSGAB in the lead up and during the 11th meeting to be held in Cairo. Tentative dates were discussed.

9. Report by Working Group Chairs and discussion

1) SANITATION

Sanitation Working Group Chair Margaret Catley-Carleson shared her report (see ref-1_SanitationWG.doc). Regarding IYS she said there are lots of reports coming from the regions and there could be a role for UNSGAB to review and comment on the content and to consider follow-up. The possibility of an independent UNSGAB meeting on Sanitation was considered, perhaps with a focus on technology. One member warned

that given the food crisis, sanitation might slip off the global agenda – UNSGAB’s job is to keep sanitation a global priority. Another suggested a great campaign slogan is MESS: Make Excreta Safe and Sanitary.

2) MONITORING AND REPORTING

Monitoring and Reporting Working Group Chair Gerard Payen shared his report (see ref-2_MonitoringWG.pdf). When assembling statistics from many countries there are always challenges since nations have different standards one noted. Another said even in the same country there can be a discrepancy in part because of debates about definitions (for example what can be considered safe drinking water). Another said that sometimes a country will say the Joint Monitoring Programme data is different from their national data – but they are the one who provided the numbers! This sometimes happens since different departments collect data – for example information can come from the statistical department rather than the water department.

The fact that the JMP is underfunded was discussed. It is a real problem a member asserted since donors want sound reliable data on which to base their decisions on allocating assistance. But very few donors are interested in funding the data collection.

A member suggested that regions should develop common data and milestones. This would help to gather information that is more regionally relevant to incorporate water into planning efforts which is sorely needed in Africa.

3) WATER OPERATORS PARTNERSHIPS (WOPs)

WOPs Working Group Chair Antonio Miranda presented the group’s report (see ref-3_WOPsWG.doc). He informed members that UNSGAB would join the WOP’s steering committee as an observer and stressed that the role is supporting and to lend the Board’s convening power – the intention is not to be involved in management related decisions. The need to incorporate water and disaster concerns into the WOPs work programme was stressed.

4) INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM)

IWRM Working Group Chair, Judith Rees presented the group’s report (see ref-4_IWRMWG.pdf). An IWRM approach is an entry point to address issues such as climate change, food security since the linkages are clear – UNSGAB could encourage countries to look at these challenges through an IWRM lens. A member stressed that there is growing economic water scarcity, and the increased demand for water globally will mean more water stress. Given this reality, members could consider extending UNSGAB’s mandate to look at and advise the Secretary-General on these issues such as water stress, the food crisis, biofuel and climate change.

On transboundary issues, UNSGAB should be providing more encouragement to countries to ratify the Convention on the Law of Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

5) WATER and DISASTER

Water and Disaster Working Group Co-Chair, Juanita Castano shared her report (see ref-5_DisasterWG.doc). The importance of good building codes was stressed along with the deployment of early warning systems. It is important to continue work on improving water delivery after a disaster – one emphasized the disaster data base which was suggested in the HAP.

6) FINANCING

Financing Working Group Chair, Gerard Payen reported on the group's progress (see ref-6_FinancingWG.doc). One member noted that the HAP advocated cost recovery and securing user fees provided that government revenues are protected on an annual basis. It is important to identify who UNSGAB could work with on these issues – finding the group of players is both interesting and challenging.

10. Member only discussion on UNSGAB matters

Members discussed the future role of the Board.

11. Future actions of the Board

Members discussed UNSGAB participation in the Zaragoza Water Expo and an upcoming dialogue with the European Union. Members agreed that UNSGAB needs to focus more on increasing donor support to water and sanitation and on donor coordination – the EU dialogue would be an opportunity to address these issues.

On follow-up to the UNSGAB agreement with the OECD, Angel Gurría will facilitate a future meeting or requests. On the World Bank dialogue, one suggested that UNSGAB meet with the IMF development committee (comprised of 24 ministers) which meets before the annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank. This could be an opportunity to make a real impact. Another member said more work on the economics of water is needed to convince finance ministers for whom the balance sheet is sometimes considered in advance of saving lives. UNSGAB could suggest a study which could be an advocacy tool.

12. Other Matters

Members discussed preparations for the 11th meeting to be held in Cairo. Members agreed that a comprehensive review of the HAP was needed and that the composition of the Working Groups should be re-visited. The need to step-up the advisory role to the Secretary-General was considered.

13. Closing

The Chair thanked the Japanese Government for the efficient and gracious hosting arrangements. Thanking everyone for their enthusiastic participation, he closed the meeting.