

## **Second Meeting of the Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

### **Working Group 1: "Commitment"**

#### Recommendations

Secretary General should;

- write letters to heads of states of developed and developing countries requesting for reports on what is being done and what has been achieved at government and non-governmental levels, including grass-roots movements in conservation and use of water. Based on this information champion can be selected every year on the World Water Day, March 22, during the water decade.
- include in his address at the Mauritius International Meeting on sustainable development of the small island states the importance of water and sanitation.
- bring about the importance of water at every occasion when he delivers a public speech on peace and security.
- recommend the World Bank and other donors to encourage developing countries to include in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) the impact of their programmes on water resources.
- advise UN resident coordinators to encourage coherence of UN actions at the country level and participation of important actors from organized civil society, international finance institutions, and other stakeholders in the country.
- encourage discussions on water as human right in the relevant bodies of the UN system.
- involve ILO to link labor to UN Water activities.

UN should;

- improve their existing monitoring mechanisms for water and sanitation through such measures as making recommendations on how to harmonize the data to make them comparable, using more precise indicators when reporting the progress.
- make available the number of countries that have water and sanitation included in their PRSPs.

Countries should fill in the missing links between the Millennium Development Goals and their policy actions by measuring the number of people benefiting from their efforts on water and sanitation. Donors should also publish data on the number of people benefiting from their aid.

## Action Plan

The board will;

- study the Millennium Task Force Report to recommend five priority recommendations for further work.
- send a message to the Inter-Parliamentary Union recommending that water be included in the national legislations.
- identify other relevant institutions to carry out activities for raising the level of awareness on water issues.
- encourage the relevant UN organizations to mainstream gender in the water programs.
- consider the possibility of holding its future meeting in a city where poor population is in need of water.
- consider its activities between the meetings.

## **Working Group 2: “Mobilization”**

### Recommendations

The resource mobilisation theme is one which contains issues which are potentially controversial and on which the Board may not be able to speak with one voice. However, agreement was reached on the following:

A. It was clear that members do not want to re-invent the wheel. The Camdessus Panel and more recently the UN Task Force have already come up with numerous recommendations for action. We need to go through these carefully, focus on the most urgent areas and identify where the Board can add value and weight.

B. Finance & Capacity Building 4 points were largely agreed.

1) It is a given that more investment is urgently needed if the MGDs are to be met and given the scale of the requirements all potential sources of finance need to be fully evaluated and the barriers to financial flows addressed. Such barriers are likely to be most crucial at the local level.

2) While money is a necessary condition to meet the MGDs it is not a sufficient condition. We cannot simply add new wine into old leaky bottles. Governance reforms must go hand-in-hand with investment and the international community must make it clear that aid will go to those willing to help themselves by undertaking necessary reforms, confronting vested interests and prioritising services for the poor.

Likewise we cannot simply throw money at the problems disregarding the capacity of countries, sub-sovereign bodies, local authorities to absorb that investment, service the debt and manage the facilities. Therefore, investment must be accompanied by capacity building.

3) The level of investment is not a measure of sustainable outcomes. We need to have a clear idea of how the money has been spent and who benefits. Has it gone on appropriate technologies (defined by capacity and ability to pay), has it reached the maximum number of people and has it gone to the poor?

4) Although donor countries need to be reminded of their commitments, ODA is, and is likely to remain, a relatively small element in the total financial flows. It must be focused (as indeed must internal national subsidies) on the poorest in the poorest countries.

From these points of agreement:

Advice to the Secretary General

1) The UN could have a much greater checking and reporting role which goes far beyond the monitoring work of the JMP. This is the ideal time to extend this role as we move into the Decade for Water. Specifically, the UN should ask

(a) donor and lending agencies to report annually on the real outcomes of their aid and lending, i.e. how many people have they helped get services, who are they, i.e. is aid going to the poor?

(b) Donor and lending agencies to report on the leverage effect of their activities.

(c) Country governments to report on the steps that they have taken to mobilise internal resources (cut subsidies to the relatively well-off), reorganise financial frameworks to help local governments obtain access to low cost finance. Before offering this advice, the Advisory Board will need to establish whether such data are available and contact the groups already working on monitoring.

2) Request the SG to consider mobilising the UN Resident Co-ordinators to enhance grass roots work on water and sanitation. Specifically, in identifying and facilitating capacity building and actions to improve participation, both of which are needed to accompany any investment.

3) The capacity to absorb and employ investment effectively is likely to be one of the major barriers to MGD achievement. The UN family should not only co-ordinate its capacity development efforts but should also set an example and avoid 'stealing' capacity by employing and removing from the country the most able / trained staff.

4) UN Water should be asked to work on appropriate technologies and help disseminate good practice. However, for UN Water to perform its co-ordination and other roles, the SG should be aware that current staffing levels are likely to constrain progress.

#### Messages to wider community

The Advisory Board could reinforce messages from UN Task Force. Specifically -

(a) to donors, banks on the need to increase and refocus development assistance - target poorest. Ask G8 and OECD to review this issue.

(b) To national and sub-national governments of the need for internal reforms, redirection of subsidy, improvement of financial and technical capacity at service provider level, and ensuring low cost capital is accessible to local government.

#### Actions for the Advisory Board

1. Ushi Eid to check whether German data would allow calculation of the number of people / poor served as a result of aid and report back.
2. Consider further non-standard financial instruments (bonds, pensions, funds etc.)
3. Consider further at future meeting whether the Board should consider asking for 'ratings' lists to be published, rating both countries vis- vis the MGDs and the effectiveness of donors / lenders.

#### Partnerships

While it was agreed that partnerships were likely to be essential if the MGDs were to be met, the Board lacked the information to give advice on the most appropriate partnership arrangements, under different economic, social and political conditions.

#### Actions for Advisory Board

1. Work on improving our understanding of the outcomes from different partnership arrangements. Mr Miranda to advise the Board on public-public partnerships.
2. Mr Boys to report back to the Board on the ongoing PSP review, when more progress has been made.
3. There was a need to consider the role of partnerships in improving capacity within the sector, including the possibility of transferring knowledge held within the labour unions.

### **Working Group 3: “IWRM and others”**

The following documents were disseminated during the working group:

- “Recommendation on IWRM and Water Efficiency Plans” (adopted during the International Conference on IWRM held from December 6 to 8, 2004)
- “Urgent Appeal to the UN Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation” (prepared by the session on Risk Management in IWRM during the International Conference on IWRM)
- “Catalyzing Change” a report prepared by Global Water Partnerships on IWRM strategies. (report and a summary)
- “What will it take? Water, Sanitation, and the Millennium Development Goals”, Task Force on Water and Sanitation

#### Recommendation from the Working Group

- The working group supports the process proposed by the Recommendation on IWRM and Water Efficiency Plans adopted during the International Conference on IWRM held from December 6 to 8, 2004. The Board will endorse the approach outlined in the recommendation and the Chair of the Board will submit it to the CSD13 to be held in April 2005.
- The working group strongly supports the underlying spirit of the Urgent Appeal to the UN Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, prepared by the session on Risk Management in IWRM during the International Conference on IWRM. The working group recommends that this appeal be taken to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe in January 2005.
- The working group recommends that a consideration be given to writing to UNESCO asking them together with UNEP and regional banks would begin a campaign of water education modules for schools.
- The working group can also investigate how with tourist agencies short films can be produced for educating tourists on how to use and treat water.
- The working group also expressed the interest in exploring the Petersberg process on Transboundary work.