

## **Motion**

**Submitted by the Parliamentary Groups of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and Alliance 90/The Greens**

### **Declaring 2008 the United Nations "International Year of Sanitation"**

The Bundestag is requested to adopt the following motion:

#### I. The Bundestag notes:

Solving global water problems is of paramount importance. It is one of the most important keys to fighting poverty and thus to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and implementing the resolutions adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

Whilst international endeavours to improve provision of clean drinking water are considerable, efforts in the area of disposal of dirty water and expansion of the provision of suitable toilet systems are insufficient. Between 1990 and 2004, for example, improvement in access to basic sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa were modest, with access rising from 32% to 37%. National governments, along with the international community of states, are called on to urgently reinforce their efforts to improve basic sanitary provision.

In 2005, 1.1 billion people were without access to clean drinking water and 2.6 billion without basic sanitation. They had no access to wastewater management systems or toilets and their opportunities to maintain body and household hygiene were inadequate. Seepage of waste water and leaking water pipes allow pathogens to enter the water cycle. The effects are dramatic: 80 per cent of all illnesses in developing countries are a result of contaminated water. Every day, 6000 children die as a result of this. Using dirty water for drinking and cooking, and children in slums playing in sewage leads to serious illnesses such as cholera, typhoid, jaundice or diarrhoea. These diseases lead to children missing school, families losing income and increased expenditure for healthcare sectors, which are often underfinanced. Water-related illnesses cost developing countries a total of five billion working days per year. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has shown that every US dollar invested in the water and sanitation sector brings economic benefits of between 3 and 34 US dollars, depending on the region concerned.

#### II. The German Bundestag welcomes:

1. the high priority given by the Federal Government to basic sanitation in the context of its development cooperation for many years;
2. the fact that the Federal Government, at the International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn, took the initiative of anchoring not only the Millennium Goal on drinking water (to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water), but also the Millennium Goal on basic sanitation (to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to basic sanitation);
3. the declaration, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, of the improvement of basic sanitation as a Millennium Development Goal;
4. the fact that, in view of the importance of the water sector for the battle against the causes of poverty, and for economic development, Kofi Annan has declared the decade from 2005 to 2015 the Water for Life Decade;

5. the presentation, at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in March 2006, by the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) of a comprehensive action plan (Hashimoto Action Plan) on the improvement of water supply and basic sanitation;
6. the proposal by the UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) that the year 2008 should be designated the "International Year of Sanitation", in order to draw the attention of national governments and the international community to the urgent tasks in the area of basic sanitation and persuade them to take further-reaching measures.

### III. The German Bundestag calls on the Federal Government:

To actively support, at the United Nations General Assembly beginning in the third week of September 2006, the designation of the year 2008 as the "International Year of Sanitation".

Berlin, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

**Volker Kauder, Dr. Peter Ramsauer and parliamentary group**  
**Dr. Peter Struck and parliamentary group**  
**Dr. Guido Westerwelle and parliamentary group**  
**Renate Künast, Fritz Kuhn and parliamentary group**

### Explanation

Following the considerable success of the International Year of Freshwater in 2003, the idea is that the designation of an "International Year of Sanitation" by the UN General Assembly would help to create the urgently needed enhanced public awareness of the problems which exist in this area and of the social, ecological and economic benefits which can be gained by improvements in the area of wastewater management and education on hygiene.

By supporting an "International Year of Sanitation", Germany can strengthen and expand the good reputation it enjoys in the water supply and disposal sector in the domains of science, environmental policy and development policy and business.

In order for 2008 to be declared the "International Year of Sanitation", the UN General Assembly beginning in the third week of September must adopt a resolution to this end.