

Recommendations for World Leaders

UN High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals



Background

The UN High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a unique opportunity for world leaders to collectively accelerate efforts to take action on the most off-track MDG targets. It cannot be wasted. In particular, governments must use the Event to agree clear, concrete and measurable outcomes to meet the sanitation and water targets, and establish a review process to monitor progress and take remedial action.

The High-Level Event serves as a prestigious public platform to solidify, strengthen and develop the commitments made by leaders at various events this year. This includes commitments made by African leaders in the *eThekweni Declaration* (February 2008) and at the African Union summit (July 2008), as well as commitments made by donor governments at the G8 Summit (July 2008) and the EU Agenda for Action (June 2008).

1. We call on world leaders to champion increased action in the water and sanitation sector at the following key High-Level Events:

- a. **22nd September: High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs** (Africa only): This NEPAD event will produce a list of recommendations to feed into later events. We call on African leaders to make sure that these recommendations include ambitious and specific calls on donors for action on water and sanitation.
- b. **24th September: High-Level Partnership Event on Water and Sanitation:** This meeting will announce an important declaration to go into the following day's event. Leaders willing to champion the sector should work with the organizing governments to ensure that the declaration is ambitious, specific and covers the recommendations outlined in section 3. A commitment to reconvene the meeting in 2009, and annually thereafter, should be made.
- c. **25th September: Main High-Level Event:** Leaders willing to champion water and sanitation should commit to attending the *health and education* roundtable discussion and press for agreement on the items covered in section 3. Leaders willing to do this will have to reply to an invitation sent recently, stating their preference for participating in this roundtable. However, if leaders are attending one of the other two discussions on poverty or environmental sustainability, they should also aim to raise the issues in these contexts.

2. We call on world leaders to agree a global action plan to meet the sanitation and water MDG targets that includes:

a. A global task force and an annual high-level meeting

The High-Level Partnership Event on 24th September should serve as the first annual High-Level Meeting (HLM) to monitor and drive global progress in the sector. The HLM should draw on analysis presented in the Global Annual Assessment on Water and Sanitation (GLAAS) Report. The meeting would identify

specific issues affecting countries that are not on-track to meet the MDG targets on water and sanitation and financial gaps requiring attention. The outcome of the meeting would be a set of achievable policy and financing actions agreed by participants.

The HLM should include representation from major bilateral and multilateral donors and from governments of the most off-track regions. The meeting could be chaired by members on a rotating basis. A small secretariat under the aegis of a UN agency would be charged with ensuring follow-up of commitments and providing technical and administrative support.

b. A commitment from donors that ‘no credible national water and sanitation plan will fail through lack of finance’

Such a commitment is immensely important. Not only will it increase investments in water and sanitation, it will provide incentives for the creation of credible, costed national plans. Similar commitments spurred increased investments and the development of national plans in promoting education and tackling HIV and AIDS.

A recent report from the MDG Africa Steering Group estimated that by 2010 Sub-Saharan Africa will require *at least* **\$5.8bn**¹ of external finance each year to meet the MDG targets on water and sanitation. In June, the EU committed to providing 60% of this amount². European countries need to be made clear how (and by whom) this will be delivered, whilst other donors should make it clear how the remainder of this amount will be provided.

3. We call on world leaders to use the events as platforms to highlight their own commitments to increase action to meet the sanitation and water MDG targets.

a. Developing countries should commit to increasing domestic investment, including a timetable to invest *at least* 1% of GDP³ in efforts to meet the water and sanitation MDG targets. African leaders should say when they will meet the commitments in the *eThekweni Declaration* to invest 0.5% of GDP in sanitation⁴.

b. Developing countries should outline timetables for the production of costed, coordinated national sanitation and water plans, which would describe the actions needed to meet the MDG targets, and would include a **single coordinating mechanism** and **monitoring and evaluation framework**.

c. Donor countries should significantly increase their investment in the sector, and commit to targeting 70% of aid on low-income countries, in addition to agreeing the proposals for a global action plan outlined in section 2.

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¹ Recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group, June 2008, Recommendation 4.3, p19,

<http://www.mdgafrica.org/pdf/MDG%20Africa%20Steering%20Group%20Recommendations%20-%20English%20-%20HighRes.pdf>

² EU Agenda for Action, June 2008, p8 http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Fact-summit-JUNE/0616_EC_Priloga.pdf

³ UN Human Development Report 2006, p9, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr06-complete.pdf>

⁴ eThekweni Declaration, February 2008, <http://www-usa.african2008.net/Final%20eThekweni%20Declaration.pdf>