

CSD-12

Commission
on Sustainable
Development

12th Session

New York
April 2004

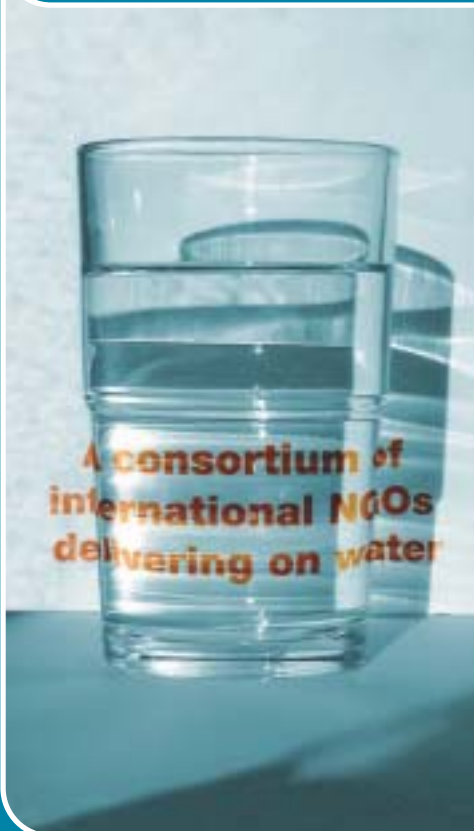
Water, sanitation
and human
settlements

NGOs call on governments to remove key barriers to better water management

The priority of improved water management to achieve key social, economic, public health and environmental goals was affirmed in explicit targets for the provision of water and sanitation services set in the 2000 UN Millennium Development Goals and for integrated water resources management at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Governments – developed and developing – have since failed to take the key steps needed to meet these commitments. Developed countries must live up to their funding, technology transfer and other obligations. Developing countries must position themselves for donor assistance by completing their integrated water resources management plans and by including water in PRSPs and other poverty reduction strategies and action plans.

Our organisations, major international development and environment NGOs, call on governments at the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12) to review the inadequacies relating to the funding and delivery of integrated water resources management and water supply and sanitation services, correct these deficiencies, and initiate immediate plans for stronger funding and delivery commitments at CSD-13 in 2005.




The Water Crisis: A Failure to Act


1.1 billion people lack access to safe water and 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation. Each year, 250 million cases of water-related diseases lead to over 2 million deaths. Around the world, poor communities consistently identify the provision of reliable and safe water as one of their leading priorities. If current consumption patterns continue, nearly three-quarters of the world's accessible freshwater will be utilised by 2025 and half the world's population will live in water-stressed river basins. Globally, river basins and their wetlands are rapidly becoming damaged and are less able to provide the conditions and processes that provide a water supply of adequate quality and quantity to enable sustainable development.

This increasingly critical situation was recognised in the Millennium Development Goals' target to reduce the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by half by 2015, and with the commitment at the WSSD to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005 as an initial step. To date, the international community is not on course to meet these targets.


What must happen at CSD-12


The delivery of safe water and basic sanitation depends upon integrated water resources management and requires a combination of social, economic and environmental activities and expertise, a fact reflected in the diverse skills of the NGOs coming together to make this call. In order to put the world back on the path to sustainable water management, our organisations call on governments to take action now in fulfilling their commitments. In addition, we urge governments to focus on the five key areas listed below for review at CSD-12 and further negotiation at CSD-13:


 The United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and their member governments must review their policies and link funding for national-scale poverty reduction strategies in developing countries to the achievement of the global UN Millennium Development Goals' and WSSD's targets, especially those relating to water;

 Donor countries, in particular those which promised much more at the WSSD, but have thus far delivered little (including the EU, Canada, USA and Japan), must review the reasons for the current decline in aid to the water sector and review the causes of blockages to donor coherence and

co-ordination. Future aid must be better targeted, including an increase to those countries with the greatest needs. Aid must include investment in capacity-building and community-based schemes, engaging public participation and employing appropriate technologies as alternatives to costly and potentially damaging large infrastructure projects;

 Developing and developed countries must focus on the preparation of integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans and the use of such plans to facilitate the strategic investment of national and donor resources to achieve long-term development goals. Moreover, they should report on the challenges that developing countries face in producing their plans, how donor assistance is helping or hindering them to address these challenges, and whether these plans cover the full range of water management concerns including the conservation of watersheds and other natural sources of water, the supply of water and sanitation services to the poor, and the equitable sharing of water between different users;

 Developing countries must focus on the need to reflect in PRSPs and other plans the importance of water supply and sanitation through the integrated management of water resources, review why PRSPs and other plans have not adequately prioritised water issues (despite the poorest people repeatedly raising them in participatory assessments) and assess how this can be corrected;

 All countries must assess current situations, recognising that clean water supply, sanitation provision and integrated water resources management can only be delivered by establishing governance structures that actively encourage communities to participate and work in partnership with local governments and water providers.

We urge CSD-12 to address these five areas and call on developed and developing countries to make progress towards resolving these issues, which can be further elaborated in negotiations at CSD-13.

Several of our organisations are collaborating on joint documents for CSD-12 and will circulate at the session a review of progress on the major water initiatives announced at the WSSD, a "scorecard" assessment of the performance of donor and developing countries, and case studies to illustrate the contributions of NGOs towards better water management.

A consortium of international NGOs delivering on water.

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