

**Global Thematic Consultation on Water and the Post-2015 Development  
Framework**

**WATER IN THE POST-2015  
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

**Beyond**2015

March 2013

## PREFACE

Beyond 2015 is a civil society campaign pushing for a strong and legitimate successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals. The campaign is built on a diverse, global base, brings together more than 620 organizations and ranges from small community-based organizations to international NGOs, academics and trade unions. Whilst Beyond 2015 participating organizations have a range of views regarding the content of a post-2015 framework, the campaign is united in working to bring about the following outcome:

- A global overarching cross-thematic framework succeeds the Millennium Development Goals, reflecting Beyond 2015's policy positions.
- The process of developing this framework is participatory, inclusive and responsive to voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Beyond 2015 position paper addresses the three dimensions of the UN thematic consultation on water, namely **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**; **Water Resources Management**; and **Wastewater and Water Quality**.

This Beyond 2015 paper focuses on setting out the importance of these topics for the overall post-2015 development agenda. It argues that the agreed overarching focus on poverty reduction for the post-2015 agenda cannot be achieved unless these three dimensions of water are addressed holistically. The paper further shows how integrating these themes into the future agenda is essential to realising all of the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. As civil society organisations, we firmly believe in the need for a common set of principles that are key to achieving progress across the dimensions of the water theme, but also reach beyond the subject. The Millennium Declaration itself recognised the need for human rights, including equality and non-discrimination, as well as more inclusive and participatory governance to form key objectives of the current set of MDGs.

While the current MDGs have served to focus efforts on poverty eradication and overall development, progress has been uneven and governance and human rights have been neglected. This paper therefore calls for the future framework to catch up on this missed opportunity and to ensure that inclusive, participatory development, based on good governance, environmental sustainability and human rights, are put at the forefront of not just the water theme, but across the entire development agenda.

## A. THE THREE THEMATIC AREAS OF WATER

### 1. WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

**Universal access** to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is crucial for the elimination of poverty and underpins all other aspects of social, economic and sustainable development.

Nevertheless, at least 783 million people still lack access to improved drinking water sources and, with 2.4 billion people still lacking access, sanitation is one of the most off-track targets of the current MDGs agenda. 1.1 billion people still practise open defecation. Though the proportion of people practising open defecation is decreasing, the absolute number has remained at over one billion for several years, due to population growth. Even these numbers **underestimate the true scale of the problem**, since crucial aspects like continuous availability, drinking water quality and distance to facilities, among others, are currently not measured.<sup>1</sup> Despite the importance of sanitation, it is frequently neglected and, at current rates of progress, the MDGs target for sanitation will be missed by over half a billion people.<sup>2</sup> Financing for sanitation is generally low or neglected in comparison to water and risible in comparison to other development sectors such as health and education. It is estimated that investments in sanitation in Africa between 1990 and 2000 made up just 12% of the total WASH investments.<sup>3</sup>

The potential of WASH interventions for **disease prevention** is enormous. This would also support a health agenda that focuses on prevention as well as treatment, as demanded in the Beyond 2015 paper on health.<sup>4</sup> Unclean water, inadequate sanitation and lack of hygiene are associated with a plethora of deadly and/or debilitating diseases which have profound impacts on the health, welfare and productivity of developing country populations. They include diarrhoea, still one of the leading causes of under-five mortality. They also include, but are not limited to, pneumonia, cholera, typhoid, schistosomiasis, trachoma, guinea worm and rotavirus. Vulnerable population groups, such as those living with HIV/Aids and children with more vulnerable immune systems are more susceptible to falling ill in the absence of adequate WASH. Poor WASH also accounts for 50% of malnutrition cases, which only progresses to severe malnutrition when children also suffer from diarrhoea and therefore have a poor intake of nutrients.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012), *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*. P.34. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/IMPreport2012.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, The Water Blog, submission by Guy Hutton (2013), *What costs the world \$260 billion a year?* Available at: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/water/what-costs-the-world-260-billion-each-year> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>3</sup> WaterAid (2008), *Tackling the Silent Killer. The case for Sanitation*. Available at: [http://www.wateraidamerica.org/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/t/tacking\\_the\\_silent\\_killer\\_the\\_case\\_for\\_sanitation\\_1.pdf](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/t/tacking_the_silent_killer_the_case_for_sanitation_1.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Beyond 2015 (2012), *The post-2015 development agenda: what good is it for health equity?* Available at: <http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/Health%20Beyond%202015%20paper.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>5</sup> WaterAid (2008), *Tackling the Silent Killer. The case for Sanitation*. Available at:

Day-to-day nutritional deficiencies over a period of time lead to diminished, or stunted, growth.<sup>6</sup> Global access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and good hygiene education would significantly reduce illness and death from disease, leading to improved quality of life, health, poverty reduction, and socioeconomic development.

Access to WASH also helps to improve **education** outcomes, both by reducing the time spent on fetching water, meaning that children are able to attend school, and by reducing the incidence of WASH-related diseases which lead to missed school days. However, recent data from least-developed and low-income countries show that, in 2011, only 51% of schools had an adequate water source and only 45% had adequate hygienic sanitation facilities.<sup>7</sup> Nearly half of the girls who drop out of primary school in Sub-Saharan Africa do so because of the lack of clean water and sanitation facilities.<sup>8</sup> Once girls reach menstruation age, many more miss school days or drop out of school altogether because schools lack clean and private sanitation facilities that allow for menstrual hygiene management. This ultimately affects girls' and women's opportunities for economic prosperity and well-being, and constitutes a severe impediment to gender equality.

Lack of adequate water, sanitation and hygiene also significantly impacts on countries' **economies**. The impact of inadequate sanitation alone, for example, costs 18 African countries around 5.5 billion US\$ each year.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, investments, especially in sanitation, that are targeted and carried out to certain standards set out below, can yield broad social, health and economic returns. It is estimated that each US\$ 1 invested in sanitation yields an average benefit of US\$ 5.5 globally – and can be as high as US\$ 8; whilst for interventions in improved drinking water sources, the yield is US\$ 2. More awareness is needed of the benefits that accrue from improved WASH, especially for the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalised, which, in turn, impact on entire economies.<sup>10</sup>

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[http://www.wateraidamerica.org/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2008/t/tacking\\_the\\_silent\\_killer\\_the\\_case\\_for\\_sanitation\\_1.pdf](http://www.wateraidamerica.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2008/t/tacking_the_silent_killer_the_case_for_sanitation_1.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF (2009). *Tracking progress on Child and Maternal Nutrition*. P.5. Available at:

[http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Tracking\\_Progress\\_on\\_Child\\_and\\_Maternal\\_Nutrition\\_EN\\_110309.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Tracking_Progress_on_Child_and_Maternal_Nutrition_EN_110309.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF (2011), *UNICEF Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Annual Report 2011*. P. 29. Available at: <http://www.usaid.gov/aidissues/watersanitation/Documents/unicef-wash-annual-rep.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>8</sup> UNDP (2006), *Human Development Report 2006. Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*. P. 47. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR06-complete.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>9</sup> World Bank/WSP, Economics of Sanitation Initiative, Press release 2012//390//SDN, *Inadequate Sanitation Costs 18 African Countries Around US \$5.5 Billion Each Year*. Available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23170309~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>10</sup> The estimates are based on benefits due to time savings, health benefits, especially the value of saved lives, and health care savings. Potential benefits omitted from the calculations include e.g. nutrient reuse, educational impacts, cleaner environment, tourism and intangibles such as privacy, dignity and security. WHO (2012), *Global cost and benefits of drinking-water supply and sanitation interventions to reach the MDG target and universal coverage*. Available at:

[http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/publications/2012/globalcosts.pdf](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2012/globalcosts.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

**Hygiene** needs to be recognised as a crucial component of water and especially sanitation, and we welcome that this is now included as an issue to be addressed by the future development agenda. Access to hygiene should cover personal hygiene (particularly handwashing), menstrual hygiene, domestic hygiene and food hygiene. Hygiene has two dimensions: firstly, good hygiene and associated health benefits are impossible without adequate water supply and sanitation facilities; secondly, awareness raising measures, including hygiene education in schools and hygiene promotion in health centres and other public places, are needed to ensure that the importance of basic hygiene practice is understood by all.

From all of the above follows that the future framework must aim for a basic standard of water, sanitation and hygiene for all that is compliant with states' existing human rights obligations and prioritises the ending of open defecation. Universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene at the household level and in schools, health facilities and work places, is an essential foundation for eradicating poverty and hunger and achieving health and education for all. Only such an approach can therefore ensure that individuals, communities and indeed entire societies can reap the full benefits associated with adequate WASH.

## **2. WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Water is a common good and the foundation for all social and economic development. There are strong synergies between water resources and all aspects of life. Managing water in an environmentally sustainable manner, protecting the ecosystems that store, deliver and clean freshwater for multiple uses, and harnessing water resources as an input to small and large scale productive activities are crucial aspects of sustainable development.

**Water resources management** must balance the different uses of water, including for agriculture (accounting for about 70%), industry and energy production (about 22%), and human domestic use (about 8%),<sup>11</sup> as an essential measure for addressing poverty reduction and ensuring water security in the long-term.

**Agriculture** is by far the biggest consumer of water at the global level and access to a reliable water supply is critical to preventing hunger and ensuring adequate nutritious food.<sup>12</sup> To ensure enough water for food and farming, households need equitable access to water and the knowledge and skills to manage water resources efficiently, including improved irrigation and drainage systems. Many of the world's poorest people in both rural and urban areas need water to grow crops, water livestock, produce goods and provide services in and beyond the household to sustain their livelihoods. Water for

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<sup>11</sup> The United Nations World Water Development Report UNESCO (2003), *Water for People, Water for Life*. P. 228. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129726e.pdf#page=311> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Grafton, Q. R., & Hussey, K. (2011), *Water Resources Planning and Management*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

small-scale livelihoods has become increasingly challenged due to a combination of competing demands and lack of coordination across water, food and energy priorities, variable supplies and weak governance and regulation of water and related sectors.<sup>13</sup>

Water is a key economic input to many **industries**. Without water, economies would collapse. Water scarcity, depleted aquifers, disrupted rainfall and climate change all pose major challenges to the ability of businesses to generate jobs and economic growth. In recognizing the important role of water for growth and employment, a balance needs to be found between the interests of competing large- and small-scale water users and the social and ecological impact of economic activities on water resources.

Water is used in many methods of energy production, including in biofuels and large-scale **hydropower production** – the latter being one of the most important trends affecting environmental flows, water availability, river connectivity and migratory fisheries. Although hydropower has been at the centre of successful national and regional development projects, many of these projects have resulted in unnecessarily high environmental, social and economic costs. The post-2015 agenda must ensure that the siting, design and operation of future hydropower projects take fully into account environmental and social costs. This includes keeping in mind the best practices and designs recommended by the World Commission on Dams, as well as the criteria identified in the Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol.<sup>14</sup> At the basin scale, strategic environmental assessments should be conducted to identify no-go zones in areas of high conservation value and inform decision-making on tradeoffs across water, energy and food security, in a changing climate.

**Demand for water** continues to increase due to changing patterns of consumption and production, industrialisation, areas of rapid economic growth and changes in population, among others. Food demand is predicted to increase by 50% by 2030; and it is estimated that global energy consumption will increase by almost 49% between 2007 and 2035, increasing pressure on the world's water resources.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the increasing demand, **competition for access to water** could intensify, creating tensions between states sharing international watercourses, lakes and aquifers, as well as across sectors and political units within states.<sup>16</sup>

The world's freshwater resources are part of a finite and balanced **environmental water cycle** on which all living things rely for their existence and whose protection is

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<sup>13</sup> Overseas Development Institute, Eva Ludi (2009), *Climate change, water and food security*. Available at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/4116.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>14</sup> The World Commission on Dams. Information available at: <http://www.internationalrivers.org/campaigns/the-world-commission-on-dams> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>15</sup> World Water Assessment Programme (2012), *The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk*. P. 40. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002156/215644e.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>16</sup> A. Carius, et al., ESCP Policy Brief (2004), *Water, Conflict and Cooperation*. Available at: [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ecspr10\\_unf-caribelko.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ecspr10_unf-caribelko.pdf) (Last visited 19 Feb 2013). See also dedicated chronological database on water conflicts at <http://www.worldwater.org/conflict/>

critical for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Mixed indigenous mountain forests are responsible for cloud seeding through bio-precipitation as well as for channelling water into aquifers, lakes and rivers, replenishing water sources. Wetlands perform hydrological functions by absorbing water in wet periods and releasing it during dry periods, enhancing groundwater infiltration and recharge, reducing the risk of floods, reducing soil erosion and purifying water. Surface water is renewed through water evaporation, runoff and rainfall, from seasonal melting of the freshwater stored in the form of glaciers, ice and snow, and through the different components within a freshwater system, such as rivers, their tributaries and connected lakes, wetlands and aquifers.<sup>17</sup>

Freshwater ecosystems are the largest source of available water for the majority of humanity. To ensure the long-term availability of freshwater resources, the ecosystems that underpin the environmental water cycle must be protected from negative impacts and, as appropriate, restored.

Impacts on water derive, for example, from deforestation, wetland conversion, pollution from various sources, unsustainable water extraction for various uses and water diversions through infrastructure development. In the world's 276 transboundary watersheds, these challenges are compounded. Without stronger cooperation, tensions fuelled by competing water demands are likely to increase. It is vital that states work together to achieve water security, within the framework of appropriate institutions and agreements at various levels. In relation to international watercourses, lakes and aquifers, the future framework must call for the widespread endorsement and effective implementation of the applicable international water and environmental law.

The impacts of **climate change**, in combination with other drivers of global change, are compromising our ability to address global economic, social and environmental priorities. As floods, droughts and other impacts of climate change on water become more frequent or intense, economies and livelihood security will weaken.<sup>18</sup> For addressing such global priorities, the future agenda must call on countries to mitigate against and respond to climate change and related impacts by building resilience, ensuring sustainable water management, protecting the ecosystems that deliver water-related services, and using the best available technologies and best practices, such as water harvesting techniques.

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<sup>17</sup> Bigas, H. (Ed.), (2012), *The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue. Papers for the InterAction Council, 2011-2012*. P. 26-32. Available at: [http://www.inweh.unu.edu/WaterSecurity/documents/WaterSecurity\\_FINAL\\_Aug2012.pdf](http://www.inweh.unu.edu/WaterSecurity/documents/WaterSecurity_FINAL_Aug2012.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Water and Climate Coalition (2012), *Proposals to the Climate Change Negotiations DOHA, Qatar, 26 November – 6 December, 2012*. Available at: [http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/Water\\_and\\_Climate\\_Coalition\\_Doha\\_Positions.pdf](http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/Water_and_Climate_Coalition_Doha_Positions.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).



The post-2015 agenda needs to ensure that the different uses of water are balanced and ecosystems are protected. The need for increased consistency and coherence in decision- and policy-making for **water, energy and food security**, development and climate change must be highlighted.

**Integrated water resources management** (IWRM) aims to reconcile the needs of different users and uses, both large and small, for energy, food production, livelihoods or business, and the environment, while ensuring that ecosystems are maintained. This is a key approach to achieve balanced water use, but must be implemented in an inclusive and sustainable manner to be beneficial to all, including the poorest and most marginalised.

Additionally, concepts such as virtual water, which tracks the **indirect consumption of water** that is embedded in the production of consumer products, should be used to encourage businesses to act sustainably by increasing their water efficiency and by minimising negative impacts of water uses. These and similar concepts are also an important tool to raise awareness among consumers, especially in the North, and enable them to make better informed consumption choices.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. WASTEWATER AND WATER QUALITY

**Wastewater** is any water that has been adversely affected in quality by anthropogenic influence, which most commonly includes a combination of one or more of: domestic effluent consisting of black water (excreta, urine and faecal sludge) and greywater (kitchen and bathing wastewater); water from commercial establishments and institutions, including hospitals; industrial effluent, stormwater and other urban runoff; agricultural, horticultural and aquaculture effluent, either dissolved or as suspended matter.<sup>20</sup> **Sewage** is the subset of wastewater that is contaminated with faeces or urine, but is sometimes used to mean any wastewater.

**Wastewater management** encompasses a broad range of efforts that promote effective and responsible water use, reuse and recycling; wastewater collection, treatment and safe disposal; and the protection and restoration of watersheds and coastal waters. Wastewater management is crucial to ensure the quality of water, both for human consumption and ecosystems. With proper management, wastewater can be an essential resource for supporting livelihoods. Wastewater treatment and reuse in agriculture can provide benefits to farmers in conserving fresh water, improving soil integrity, preventing water pollution, and improving economic efficiency.<sup>21</sup> WASH and environmental sustainability are mutually reinforcing: for example, improving access to sanitation can prevent water pollution from human waste; similarly, securing

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<sup>19</sup> For more information on the concept of virtual water, see: <http://www.allianceforwaterstewardship.org> & [www.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>20</sup> UNEP, UN Habitat (2010), *Sick Water? The central role of wastewater management in sustainable development. A Rapid Response Assessment*. Available at: [http://www.unep.org/pdf/SickWater\\_screen.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/SickWater_screen.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



sustainable access to water, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable, depends on maintaining healthy watersheds, lakes and aquifers.

While the demand for water is increasing, the availability and quality of water is reducing as water resources continue to be degraded through **wastage, overuse and pollution**. Today, in many areas, water resources and related ecosystems can no longer withstand the increasing pressure placed upon them by human activities. Among such activities, the discharge of agricultural, industrial and domestic waste, pesticides, heavy metals, biological wastes for food processing, as well as defective or inadequate wastewater collection and treatment systems, are damaging aquatic habitats, leading to loss of biodiversity and damaged ecosystems.<sup>22</sup> The risk from industries is not only restricted to the larger companies and multinationals, but also informal, small-scale industries. 90% of wastewater in developing countries flows untreated into rivers, lakes and coastal zones.<sup>23</sup>

**Urbanisation** is also one of the most critical issues influencing the production and use of wastewater. The majority of the world's population now lives in urban areas, putting increasing pressure on existing wastewater collection and treatment systems in cities and towns.

The future framework must ensure that governments effectively control these damaging impacts on water resources. Appropriate treatment systems that are suited to local circumstances, including poor and/or informal settlements, must be rapidly expanded to accommodate urban growth. The release of polluted wastewater and sewage into the environment must be curbed. Universal access to adequate sanitation would reduce open defecation and thereby protect water sources. Alongside this, water quality parameters must be reviewed, strengthened and enforced in all countries, in order to ensure that the quality of water for different uses is guaranteed in the long term. This includes water quality criteria and standards to meet the human right to water and support healthy ecosystems.

## **B. GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

We call for the future framework to be underpinned by a common set of governance and human rights standards and principles. The MDGs framework exclusively focuses on producing outputs, without taking into view principles and structures needed to ensure that outputs are targeted and in line with existing human rights obligations. Addressing all challenges discussed under the water theme requires a principled approach and **effective governance** at the global, regional, national and local levels. We believe that

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<sup>22</sup> See: UN Water Statistics on Pollution. Available at: [http://www.unwater.org/statistics\\_pollu.html](http://www.unwater.org/statistics_pollu.html) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>23</sup> World Water Assessment Programme (2012), *The United Nations World Water Development Report 4: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk*. P. 67. Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002156/215644e.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

the principles set out below would ensure that the future framework progresses in holistically addressing poverty, guided by the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

## **1. PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Participation and access to information oblige governments to engage in **genuine consultation** with all societal groups and at all stages of decision-making, from priority setting to planning, implementation and monitoring. This, in turn, requires governments, donors and other development actors to make information easily accessible to communities, thereby also empowering the whole community to engage in progress and claim entitlements. The needs of potentially affected communities must be considered, with particular attention to those most vulnerable and marginalised. There is growing consensus and evidence that development interventions are most effective when people are empowered to engage and their needs are at the centre of government planning.<sup>24</sup> Public participation also ensures the legitimacy of the process, so that plans, programs, policies and projects can proceed with the endorsement of those potentially affected.

Consultation processes must include **awareness raising and sensitisation** so that communities understand and are well aware of the detail and impact of any planned interventions and have the confidence to express their position. With respect to sanitation and hygiene, the taboos and misinformation that often surround these topics must be understood and overcome.

With respect to **WASH**, only interventions that are planned in genuine consultation with communities can ensure that the needs of communities are met and increase efficient usage and maintenance of services. Particular attention needs to be given to consulting all groups within a community, including women, children, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, to ensure WASH infrastructure is accessible to all. One of the major reasons for WASH infrastructure to fall into disuse is because the needs, including cultural preferences, of people are often not taken into account.<sup>25</sup>

**Integrated water resources management** aims to reconcile the needs of different users. To be successful, integrated water resources management must include all water users within a watershed and take account of the local politics or power dynamics and contextual values inherent in water access, use and management. The poorest and most affected and marginalised are often the first to lose out when there is competition over

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<sup>24</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008), *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. United Nations New York, 2008. Available at: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028359.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>25</sup> UNDP (2006), *Human Development Report 2006. Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*. New York, 2006. P. 120-122. UN DESA. *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. United Nations New York, 2008. P. 14-15. Available at: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028359.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

scarce water resources, but poor people are rarely given a voice in local decision-making around the extraction and use of natural resources.<sup>26</sup> Government at every level must recognise the critical role that local communities, including indigenous groups, play in water resource management and climate change adaptation. This must include building the technical capacity of communities in water resources management.

## 2. ENSURING EQUALITY

**Inequalities are one of the principal underlying causes of poverty.** Equality and non-discrimination are binding human rights obligations that apply to all states. Poverty can therefore only be holistically addressed if inequalities are progressively reduced. Governments must commit to identifying groups that face discrimination or particular barriers in realising their rights and must ensure that development efforts are designed and implemented in a way that focuses on removing barriers and closing existing gaps, including through mechanisms of affirmative action. This necessitates the prioritisation of resource allocation from national funding and international assistance to disadvantaged groups.

This, in turn, requires stronger and more inclusive **monitoring systems** to ensure that credible disaggregated information will be available at the global, regional, national and local levels. Monitoring systems must always include data on people living in informal settlements, who are often disregarded. Finally, the mechanisms, including policies and plans, that are used at the global, regional, national and local levels to deliver progress must be considered. Only if these mechanisms comprehensively address inequalities can the future framework meaningfully accelerate progress.

Equality and non-discrimination must be **key principles** of the future framework. The current MDG agenda focuses on average attainments and has therefore often failed to reduce disparities between different population groups. In Southern Asia, for example, access to sanitation has increased by 5% and 10%, respectively, for the two poorest quintiles, while coverage increased by 31% for the fourth quintile, over a study period of 13 years.<sup>27</sup> In fact, a country can reach the current goal for water and sanitation without ever extending access to any person belonging to the lowest wealth quintile.<sup>28</sup> Inequalities and discrimination lead to the marginalisation of entire sections of the population. This is not just true for WASH, but also for access to water for livelihoods, which is particularly critical for the world's poorest people.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> IWMI Africa Regional Office, *Integrating 'livelihoods' into integrated water resources management: taking the integration paradigm to its logical next step for developing countries*. Available at: [http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0000575/P530\\_IWMI.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0000575/P530_IWMI.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>27</sup> WHO/Unicef Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012), *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*. P. 30. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/IMPreport2012.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>28</sup> UN (2010), *Report of the independent expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque*. UN Doc. A/65/254. Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/r65.shtml> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>29</sup> UNDP (2006), *Human Development Report 2006. Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*. P. 174. Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR06-complete.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

**Women** are in many ways disproportionately affected by the lack of water and sanitation, and have to literally carry the burden when water resources are scarce, as they are most often responsible for water collection.<sup>30</sup> Lack of access to safe and private sanitation facilities increases women's and girl's vulnerability to sexual violence, especially when they wait to relieve themselves under cover of darkness to try to have some privacy. Waiting long hours to relieve themselves also means that women risk severe long-term health impacts, such as urinary tract infections, which can lead to more serious infections, and have been associated with low birth weight babies.<sup>31</sup>

**Discrimination and stigmatization** compromise the ability of people in many parts of the world to access existing water and sanitation services. Denial of access to services on the basis of discrimination contravenes human rights obligations. Frequently marginalised groups include, but are not limited to, indigenous and tribal peoples, persons with disabilities, older people, ethnic groups, children and people living in informal settlements. Tenure status is also a significant ground for denying access to services.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. ADDRESSING DISPARITIES

The current framework lacks **accountability and coordination mechanisms** to ensure that agreed aims are fulfilled. Progress against the current MDGs targets is routinely monitored, which is a key tool to ensure accountability. Yet, even with this tool, progress has been uneven – some targets have already been achieved, while others, and most notably sanitation, are considerably off track. Additionally, the current MDGs framework does not set any regional or national targets. Hence, at the global level, targets may be reached masking the fact that some regions are left far behind. For example, progress against the water target has largely occurred in China and India, while it is markedly slower in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, access within countries is often uneven. For example, 84% of the global population without access to an improved drinking water source lives in rural areas.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012), *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*. P.31. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/JMPReport2012.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>31</sup> See:

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_id=22932&p\\_table=INTERPRETATIONS](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=22932&p_table=INTERPRETATIONS) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>32</sup> For a comprehensive report on the manifestations stigma and discrimination in access to water and sanitation, see UN Human Rights Council (2012), *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, Catarina de Albuquerque. Stigma and the realization of the human rights to water and sanitation*. UN Doc A/HRC/21/42. Available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/r65.shtml> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>33</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012), *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*. P.6. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/JMPReport2012.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

<sup>34</sup> Unicef/WHO (2011), *Drinking Water Equity, Safety and Sustainability: Thematic report on drinking water 2011*. P. 22. Available at: [http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/resources/report\\_wash\\_low.pdf](http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/report_wash_low.pdf) (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).

The future framework must therefore include robust accountability and coordination mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels to ensure that gaps in progress towards agreed aims and regional disparities are progressively addressed and closed. One tool to improve accountability towards future aims is the targeting and prioritisation of aid and sector budgets with regard to those regions, people and issues most often left behind. Progress in sanitation, for example, will not be achieved unless the budgetary gap is closed (see page 3 above) and legal and policy frameworks are created to ensure that narrowing gaps is given priority.

Accountability of governments towards their citizens is also vital and civil society must be empowered with the legal tools that ensure access to justice when their rights are violated or not effectively taken into account.

#### **4. THE RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS TO WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE**

The internationally agreed content of the human right to water and sanitation must form the basis to develop and monitor future goals for water, sanitation and hygiene. The future framework must use the opportunity of the recognition of the human right by the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council in 2010, and the global consensus built since then, to truly introduce a human rights-based approach to water, sanitation and hygiene.<sup>35</sup>

The **normative content** of the human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. The human right to sanitation entitles everyone, without discrimination, to sanitation services that are physically accessible and affordable, safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable, and which provide privacy and ensure dignity.<sup>36</sup>

A **human-rights based approach** further commits governments to observe important principles closely related to the governance principles set out above. In addition to participation, equality and accountability, governments are obliged to progressively realise the rights for all, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised. With respect to the right to sanitation, awareness raising and education about sanitation and hygiene are crucial elements in fulfilling the right, as taboos surrounding sanitation must be addressed to ensure its sustainability. The implementation of these principles and activities must be monitored within the future framework.

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<sup>35</sup> All UN Member States have by now joined one or more resolutions, declarations or other key international documents that recognise the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

<sup>36</sup> See: *General Comment No. 15 (2002) on the Right to Water (arts. 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)* CESCR, E/C.12/2002/11 (2002) & Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Statement on the Right to Sanitation*, E/C.12/2010/1 (2010).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER IN THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK

### *WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE*

The future framework must aim for **universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene**, with a particular focus on expeditiously ending open defecation, and ensuring sustainability of services.

- The **definition of access to water, sanitation and hygiene** in the post-2015 agenda must be based on the normative content of the human right to water and sanitation. Data collection and dissemination of information on levels of access to water and sanitation must fully assess quality, availability, physical accessibility and affordability.
- We support the overall vision and priorities outlined in the *Proposal for consolidated drinking water, sanitation and hygiene targets, indicators and definitions* put forward by the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme.<sup>37</sup>
- To accelerate progress in sanitation and ensure good hygiene behaviour, governments must commit to **awareness raising and education** measures to break taboos around sanitation and ensure the importance of basic hygiene practice is understood by all.
- WASH targets and indicators should address access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene at household level and also in **schools, health facilities and work places**.
- The post-2015 framework should reflect the **critical linkages** between WASH and health, education, gender, economic and environmental sectors for both strengthening the efficiency of interventions and for producing sustainable human development outcomes.

### *WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT*

- The post-2015 agenda for **water resources management** needs to ensure that the different uses of water are balanced and that the ecosystems that deliver water-related services are safeguarded.
- The **holistic implementation of IWRM** must be prioritised in the new framework. This necessitates giving all societal groups, including local communities and marginalised groups, a critical role in all aspects of water

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<sup>37</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012), *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: 2012 Update*. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/IMPReport2012.pdf> (Last visited 18 Feb 2013).



resources management to ensure their needs and interests are integral. This includes capacity development of all actors in water resources management, and ensuring access to information and justice, and participation in decision-making.

- Water resources management must include practical mechanisms to improve **climate change adaptation and resilience** through, for example, watershed management, water harvesting techniques and flood resistant water and sanitation services.
- Climate change must be mainstreamed into water resources management legislation and policies as well as into emerging policies and approaches to tackle the water-food-energy nexus.
- We recommend the introduction of a mechanism to **track indirect consumption** of water, such as the virtual water concept and water footprint, to ensure that water consumption stays within resource thresholds by encouraging countries, businesses and individuals to reduce their water consumption.

#### **WASTEWATER AND WATER QUALITY**

- The future framework must aim for effective **wastewater collection, treatment and management** to ensure the preservation of ecosystems and sustainable access to and use of **quality water**.
- **Water pollution control parameters** must be introduced and safe wastewater reuse and recycling must be made possible, particularly by large-scale water users, such as agriculture and industries.
- Future **water quality parameters** and monitoring must support preservation of ecosystems and guarantee adequate standards for water for human consumption and for livelihoods.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

- **Eliminating all inequalities** must be central to the future framework. Governments must commit to identifying groups that face discrimination and injustice or particular barriers in realising their rights and must ensure that development efforts are designed and implemented in a way that focuses on removing barriers and closing existing gaps, including through mechanisms of affirmative action. This necessitates the collection of data that is disaggregated by, for example, wealth quintiles, rural-urban, formal-informal settlement status, age, sex, gender and disabilities.

- The future framework must **monitor the existence of mechanisms**, including policies and plans that are used at the global, regional, national and local levels to deliver progress. Only if these mechanisms comprehensively address inequalities can the future framework meaningfully accelerate progress.
- The future framework must include robust mechanisms to ensure that disparities in progress are addressed through **targeting of aid and sector budgets** as well as the establishment of credible plans at the national level. Financial investments must integrate comprehensive approaches, including prioritisation of those most in need, awareness raising and participation. Woefully inadequate progress in areas such as sanitation must be directly addressed.
- The future framework must reflect **states' existing obligations under international human rights law, international water law, and international environmental law**, and must be designed to support the realisation of human rights and environmental sustainability at all levels. This must include the monitoring of national policies, programmes and practices and of international cooperation and technical and financial assistance. This necessitates the creation of national institutions with the expertise to review development plans, related legislation and their implementation for consistency with human rights obligations. Institutions must exist that can hear and address claims by people and communities.

## Annex 1. About this paper

This paper, issued on behalf of Beyond 2015, was drafted by the Water Drafting Committee composed of the organizations and individuals below. The original draft was produced through a broad consultation and survey process with Beyond 2015 members, which elicited several inputs from organizations worldwide. In total, comments and feedback were received from 28 organizations. The redrafting was then coordinated by WASH United, Freshwater Action Network (FAN) Global and End Water Poverty (EWP), incorporating all of the inputs received. In accordance with the Beyond 2015 protocol on forming policy positions, the final version was signed off unanimously by the Executive Committee of Beyond 2015.

Whilst participating Beyond 2015 organisations have a range of views regarding the content of a post-2015 framework, the campaign is united in working to bring about the following outcome:

- A global overarching cross-thematic framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals, reflecting Beyond 2015's policy positions.
- The process of developing this framework is participatory, inclusive and responsive to voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice.

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