

More than a billion people lack access to clean drinking water and over 2.4 billion lack access to proper sanitary facilities. The result is that there are more people in the world's hospitals today suffering from water-borne diseases than any other ailment. Some two million children die every year—6,000 a day—from such infections. Donors have committed significant resources to improve access to water and sanitation. While well short of the kind of sums that will eventually be needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals on water, this is a very encouraging start. The challenges ahead may be enormous, but there are success stories from all over the world that we can build on.

— Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION FOR THE POOR

The Challenge

General water usage increased six-fold over the past century, more than twice the rate at which the world's population grew. More than two million tons of human waste are dumped daily into the world's rivers, lakes and streams. In the next two decades, water use is expected to rise by 40 percent.

At least 1.2 billion people currently lack access to safe drinking water. In September 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, world leaders committed themselves to a set of eight time-bound measurable Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); one of the objectives was to halve the proportion of people without access to clean drinking water.

But both the potable-water objective and the effort to increase access to proper sanitation for the 2.4 billion people now living without it will require greater support from developed nations, new policies and technologies in the developing world and improvement in the way water resources are used and managed worldwide.

UNDP's Multifaceted Approach

Over the past decade, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has managed a US\$900 million budget devoted to sustainable water development in 90 countries worldwide. The organization's presence in the field of water resource management ranges from the international to the community level.

The UNDP water strategy stems from recognition that technological innovation, greater manpower and even new financing will achieve little unless such inputs are harnessed and coordinated by good governance over water resources. Good water governance demands the coordination of local, regional, national and international efforts, across the public and private sectors and throughout civil society.

Main Services Offered

UNDP offers several different types of service, including: helping countries ensure that integrated water resource management is part of their national development strategies; supporting efforts to make local use and governance of water resources more effective and sustainable; building capacity for cooperative management of transboundary waters; incorporating attention to gender at all levels of water governance; and Cap-Net, an international network offering information-sharing and training to build effective water resource management capacity.

■ *Integrated Water Resource Management*

UNDP is a founding member and active supporter of the Global Water Partnership (GPW), an international network open to all organizations involved in water resource management. UNDP and its GPW partners work to bring diverse stakeholders together to examine problems and share information on water development and management. GPW accomplishes this in part by facilitating discourse at the national level in many countries and sponsoring numerous, inclusive, multi-sector conferences, collectively dubbed the Dialogue for Effective Governance.

In **El Salvador**, in the aftermath of civil war, rival factions came together through UNDP-sponsored workshops, seminars and discussion groups in 1996 to address the urgent need for expanded distribution of clean water. The mayors of major cities were brought together to form associations through which they could discuss common problems and learn from each other's experiences. Positive results included bipartisan passage of the 1998 Law of the Environment, followed soon after by The Law of Six Percent, which allocates six percent of national revenues to municipalities for key public services, including clean water supply and sanitation.



■ *Local Water Governance*

One focus of local capacity-building work by UNDP is the community development of sanitation systems that recycle nutrients by using excreta for fertilizer. A UNDP project called Ecological Sanitation, or Ecosan, has installed some 200 urine-diverting toilets in South **India** and 30 in **Sri Lanka**. Workshops and training courses have been held for local water authorities and non-governmental organizations to show how urine, diverted from polluting rivers and other bodies of water, can be used safely to make sterile soil fertile.

Another focus has been the promotion of information-sharing between farmers through UNDP's Promoting Farmer Innovation (PFI) programme. In East Africa, scores of innovative farmers have been recruited through PFI to disseminate their ideas and technological inventions to thousands of fellow farmers. Between 1997 and 2000, for example, 59 innovators and 5,000 farmers participated in PFI in **Kenya**, 60 innovators and over 2,000 farmers participated in **Tanzania** and 27 innovators and more than 1,000 farmers participated in **Uganda**.

In arid southern Kenya, innovative farmer Peter Letoya found a way to collect rainwater from his rooftop and keep it clean while storing it in underground reservoirs for later use, both as drinking water and for watering crops. Through participation in PFI, his successful technique has spread to other farmers in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

Through the Small Grants Programme funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP has managed grants for over 4,000 rural community projects on environment-related issues. Expanding on this success, the Community Water Initiative, launched by UNDP in 2003 on the occasion of the World Water Forum in Japan, provides grants to support innovative approaches to water supply, sanitation and watershed management at the community level. Ten to 15 countries will benefit initially from the programme's pilot phase in the first year, but the Initiative is expected to include many more countries as it moves beyond the pilot phase in subsequent years.

■ *Management of Transboundary Waters*

UNDP support to countries that share transboundary waters has spanned decades and continents and has been strengthened by its collaboration with partner agencies. As one of the implementing agencies of GEF, UNDP pioneers efforts in diverse regions to preserve and manage vital transboundary water resources. Its International Waters portfolio currently includes 25 projects at a budget of \$250 million.

Countries often need a mutually respected, outside institution to help them negotiate cooperative solutions to complex transboundary water problems. UNDP's extensive experience with such issues has included support to regional water institutions managing the Mekong, Niger, Nile, Danube, Okavango, Tumen and Dnieper Rivers, Lake Chad, and the Aral and Caspian Seas, as well as projects in South Africa.

UNDP-supported multinational programmes include the Environmental Strategy for the Seas of East Asia, which brings together **Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Thailand** and **Viet Nam** to cooperate on environmental challenges along the coasts and in the watersheds of the seas. In another UNDP-supported Strategic Action Programme, **Angola, Namibia** and **South Africa** join forces to preserve the endangered fertility and productivity of Africa's Benguela current.

■ *Attention to Gender in Water Governance*

To leave gender out of water resource management is a critical mistake. It is so often women who are in charge of caring for the health of their families, who collect, store and treat the water used in the household. But when village committees are established to operate and maintain water systems, too often they are composed only of men. When development agencies sponsor local meetings to consider water-related challenges and solutions, too often it is only men who attend. UNDP works actively to involve women and raise awareness of gender issues, whether in the context of national strategic planning or local development and implementation. The resulting projects are more effective, sustainable and equitable and have far greater development impact.

A new Resource Guide on gender and water, launched on the occasion of the 2003 World Water Forum in Japan, offers development practitioners a collection of resources on the key role women play in water management.

In **Malawi**, for example, in the village of Nyamawende, integrating gender-related issues as part of mainstream development planning was a deliberate strategy employed by UNDP's Sustainable Livelihoods programme in the mid-1990s. Access to clean water was one of many topics not even raised in discussions with men alone in the village. UNDP facilitators noticed that when women were present, they spoke up more and even prodded men to participate more. Thanks to their involvement, the community's ultimate list of action plans was far-reaching and comprehensive, calling for, among other things, provision of "safe drinking water by boiling and filtering water and adding chlorine, drilling bore holes, digging trenches, laying pipes and installing taps."

■ *Cap-Net: An Information-sharing Network*

Capacity development at diverse levels—local, regional, national and global—is promoted by the Capacity Building Network for Integrated Water Resources Management (Cap-Net), a project implemented by UNDP together with GPW and UNESCO's Institute for Water Education. The networking and information-sharing made possible by Cap-Net helps promote access to global, regional and national resource centres, training and resource materials. The programme supports 12 regional and national networks of water-management capacity-

building institutions around the world, each network consisting of hundreds of member institutions.

In **Malaysia**, the Department of Irrigation and Drainage has committed five participants per year to a master's level course on integrated water resources management, established with the participation of 10 Malaysian universities. In South Africa, meanwhile, a Cap-Net network called WaterNet is using its members to develop a regional master's programme in water management to take advantage of the skills and experience of network members across the region.

For more information on UNDP and the drive to bring safe water and sanitation to the poor, visit www.undp.org/water or contact:

Alvaro Umaña
Leader
Energy and Environment Practice
E-mail: alvaro.umana@undp.org
Tel: +1 (212) 906-5705
Fax: +1 (212) 906-6973

Ingvar Andersson
Senior Freshwater Adviser, Water Programme
Energy and Environment Practice
E-mail: ingvar.andersson@undp.org
Tel: +1 (212) 906-5858
Fax: +1 (212) 906-6973

Håkan Tropp
Water Specialist
Energy and Environment Practice
E-mail: hakan.tropp@undp.org
Tel: +1 (212) 906-5866
Fax: +1 (212) 906-6973

Media inquiries:
Trygve Olfarnes
Communications Office
Office of the Administrator
E-mail: trygve.olfarnes@undp.org
Tel: +1 (212) 906-5382
Fax: +1 (212) 906-5364

United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

www.undp.org