

Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation for All by 2025

Alexandria, December 1-2 2004

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS

Is the Safe Drinking water and Sanitation (SDS) Initiative an appropriate agenda item for a G20 Leaders meeting? Is there another more urgent issue for human security? It is obvious that human kind is facing so many threats. Lack of safe drinking water and sanitation, with its catastrophic consequences for billions of human beings, is one of the most urgent to resolve. When I got your invitation, I thought “Hum, a pertinent issue and a world-wide priority indeed!”

After so many international fora, conferences, summits, ministerial meetings with formal declarations by top level world authorities; after a World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals, have we noticed any reduction in poverty, any improvements in human development, in safe drinking water provision and sanitation for the poor?

Several decades have passed. Many United Nations efforts, resolutions, summits and declarations have not yet resolved the acute challenges faced by billions of humans all around the world, mainly in poor countries. Hunger, poverty, exclusion and conflicts are not decreasing. Mortal diseases kill millions of people, mainly children, women and old people, suffering from malnutrition, parasitic, infectious and water born diseases. Wars, local conflicts and excessive power have shown the limits and the inefficiency of efforts to promote peace, develop democracy and initiate a sustainable human development trend in several parts of the world. Billions of human beings have very limited, but mostly no access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Living in these conditions increases poverty, illiteracy and illegal activities.

Fed up with declarations, can we believe that a Leaders’ G20 meeting will launch some efficient impetus for action? We cannot deny that world-wide awareness of the seriousness of the situation already exists. Principles, goals, objectives and targets are defined, financing is assessed, but some inertia limits the requested implementation time frame. Limited progress has been made, but we still remain very far off track to achieve safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025.

Nevertheless, the framework is set, the players are on the playground, but the team has never been at the level of our hopes. Maybe our leaders need more training and a new regime, to give the best of their capabilities? Will this unusually prepared Leaders’ G20 initiative be the first step for a fundamental mentality change? For a new vision and an adequate approach in international relations? Is it the beginning of a new era of peace based on solidarity, equity and justice? Will it be efficient and productive, or just a new forum to appease their consciences? Let us, once again, be optimistic. Dreams and hopes may come true. So why not a Leaders’ G20 meeting?

My agreement, expressed as a question, is not a sign of resignation. I believe in the necessity of continued dialogue, between nations and people, for solving any kind of conflict. I believe in human capacity to face any challenge, and tackle urgent issues.

My agreement for a Leaders' G20 initiative means, in my opinion, that the time has come for the international community, as a whole, to endorse and implement an efficient and realistic strategic action plan for safe drinking water and sanitation for all, by 2025. A feasible implementation schedule, based on local participative proposals, adequately funded, consistent with national, regional and international sustainable human development, will be approved and enforced at all levels of authority. Eligibility criteria, to access to the action plan programs, will help applicants to initiate the necessary political changes towards democracy, sustainable human development strategies, and civil society participation.

The time has come to mobilize the international community to implement pertinent declarations and to achieve the goals adopted, to reduce poverty, to expand justice and equity and to achieve better governance among nations, and among people in their own countries.

The Leaders' G20 initiative for a particular Water Action Plan reflects the urgent need for effective and intensive actions, within the framework of the UN declarations and Development Summits, and a strong willingness to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, for safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

DRAFT COMMUNIQUE

Taking into consideration and adopting the declarations, principles, objectives and goals that have been adopted by United Nations General Assembly, Conferences, Summits and Security Council in the last decades, relating to the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation for all, to the reduction of poverty and illiteracy, to the sustainable use of natural resources, to conflict resolution and the promotion of peace and to combating illegal activities, corruption, crime and terrorism;

Considering that we have not yet succeeded to reduce poverty, hunger and inequity among half the world's population, particularly among the poor;

Considering the huge human damages -millions of deaths, billions of frustrated lives- caused by illiteracy, conflicts, poverty, hunger, lack of safe drinking water and sanitation;

Taking into account our Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting, on the 25th of February 2005 in Geneva, and the adopted agenda for our G20 summit, planned for 2006;

Taking into account the G20 summit preparatory ministerial meetings and international concerned institutions (Finance, Interior, land planning, agriculture, World bank, IMF...) held in Brussels, Cairo, Dakar, Johannesburg, London, New York, Paris, Washington, and the draft Water Action Plan proposed to the approval of the G20 Summit;

Taking into account the declarations of several G20 members' parliaments, urging Heads of State and Governments to take appropriate measures to implement the development goals and objectives adopted by different summits and international conferences;

Taking into consideration the "Monterrey Group New Consensus Declaration", adopted on April 1st, 2005, for an improved financing for human development, particularly to reach our unequivocal goal to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025;

Taking into consideration the declarations adopted by international financing institutions (World Bank, IMF,...) at their last meetings of March 2005, related to a renewed financing policy for safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025;

Taking into account the observations of United Nations' Agencies regarding our draft Water Action Plan;

Taking into account the will of international civil society, as expressed on numerous occasions, to humanize and to adapt the trends of globalization to the needs of our societies, for a better equity, to eradicate hunger, poverty and improve human development, particularly for the poor;

**WE, HEADS OF STATE, MEMBERS OF G-20 GROUP
DECIDE**

We, Heads of State, members of the Leaders' G20, meeting in Marrakech on the 21st and 22nd of February 2006, recognize that lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation is the world's greatest humanitarian, social and developmental challenge to be urgently and adequately addressed.

We, the G20 Leaders, approve the World Wide Water Action Plan, designed by our technical and ministerial committees, to provide safe drinking water and sanitation, especially for eligible developing and less developed countries. The countries' applications will be implemented, as soon as they are accepted by the ad hoc technical and ministerial committees.

We, Heads of State of the developed countries, members of the G20 group, recognize that the ways and approaches that we have tried so far to tackle these challenges have proved inadequate, considering the billions of people still living in non humane conditions, and the catastrophic diverse consequences of this situation for the future of human kind.

We, G20 Heads of State, engage and commit ourselves to promote, in an appropriate and compatible way for each situation, the necessary political changes to lead to democracy, transparency, better governance of public affairs, and to combat corruption and all illegal activities.

We, the G8 members, recognize the inappropriate level of our Official Development Assistance. For the purpose of achieving our objective, to provide safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025, we decide to increase our contributions as it has been stated by our Meeting of Ministers of Finance, held in Paris on the 14th and 15th of April 2005.

Our contribution for 2006, as proposed by our Ministers of Finance, is 0.7% of our GNP. According to the financial situation of each State, it will reach a level between 2% to 4% by the year 2010.

We, G20 Heads of State, adopt the specific and multipurpose ministerial and technical meetings proposed, to monitor and assess the implementation programs for safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025, and to resolve all conflicts through bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

We, G20 Heads of State, ask the United Nations to adopt the World Wide Water Action Plan and its implementation programs, and to contribute, by all means possible, to help potential applicant countries to meet the eligibility criteria.

Marrakech February 22nd 2006.