

The Major Water Initiatives

a The United States *Water for the Poor* Initiative

The United States made an announcement of its five “signature partnership” initiatives at WSSD, one of which was the Water for the Poor Initiative. This initiative sought to expand access to clean water and sanitation services, improves watershed management, and increases the efficiency of water in industrial and agricultural activities. The US initiative proposed to invest \$970 million over three years, with the intention of leveraging private resources to generate more than \$1.6 billion for water related activities globally. While there is some discussion of new US funds for the water initiative over and above existing commitments, these are yet to be forthcoming.

A year later after the WSSD announcement, the situation had evolved such that the US, through USAID, would:

- Invest \$510 million on projects intended to: enhance access to clean water and sanitation services, including water and sanitation projects, to serve the urban poor in South Africa; instigate small scale potable water supply and sanitation programmes for poor rural communities in Ghana, Mali and Niger through the West Africa Water Initiative; and establish an innovative financing programme that has supported a safe drinking water system in India.
- Invest a further \$400 million over three years to provide increased protection of watersheds by integrating management activities for surface water, groundwater and coastal resources, and work within an international alliance to produce a state of the art GIS system to improve watershed management capabilities.
- An additional \$60 million over three years was to be used to ensure that industrial and agricultural water use is as productive as possible, with examples from fisheries and farmlands in Bangladesh, an agriculture development programme in Mali, and the promotion of sustainable aquaculture in Colombia.

b The West Africa Water Initiative

The West African Water Initiative (WAWI) is not a separate initiative but sits embedded within the overall US Water for the Poor Initiative. The goals of the Initiative embrace the institutional perspectives of the twelve individual partners. It is based on an original initiative proposed by the Conrad N Hilton Foundation in conjunction with an NGO, World Vision, and other partners working in Ghana to provide rural water and sanitation as the entry point for community development. The United States provided \$5 million to the already committed \$36 million from the other partners. The intention is that WAWI works with communities and governments in Ghana, Mali and Niger to:

- Increase the level of access to sustainable safe water and environmental sanitation services among poor and vulnerable populations.
- Reduce the prevalence of water borne diseases including trachoma, guinea worm and diarrhoeal diseases.
- Ensure ecologically and financially sustainable management of water quantity and quality.

In addition WAWI hopes to promote a new and potentially replicable model of partnerships and synergies that encourage technical excellence, programmatic innovation, and long term financial, social and environmental sustainability in water resources management.

c The European Water Initiative

The European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) was launched as a multi-stakeholder partnership involving the European Commission, the 15 Member States, business and industry, and environment and development non-government organisations (NGOs). The original concept was announced in March 2002, and a number of subsequent formal meetings have taken place.

The Initiative was launched on the basis that it provided a platform for strategic partnerships to implement the programmes of action for the WSSD as well as contributing to meeting the Millennium Development Goals on water. The Initiative identified four key areas for action:

- Reinforce political will and commitment to action. As the global water crisis is not on the agenda of many political leaders of the world the Initiative seeks to support governments in understanding the links between water, poverty and sustainable development and to help translate this into firm commitments for action.
- Make water governance effective and build institutional capacity. Making water governance effective is an essential step in supporting healthy and productive lives and safeguarding the environment.
- Improve co-ordination and co-operation. A vast range of water-related activities are currently underway or planned but their inter-relationship is not always apparent.
- Increase the efficiency of existing EU aid flows. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals will require considerable financing efforts. The Initiative seeks to make the most of available funds by using official development assistance as a lever for other forms of finance, including user finance and private finance.

The arrangements for the structure and co-ordination of the EUWI, and indeed its overall goal and objectives, remain very unclear, and a review process was initiated at the 8th multi-stakeholder meeting in Athens in June 2003. This review is still continuing.

It was explicit from the outset that the EU Water Initiative was less about new money and more about political commitments and awareness and improved co-operation and co-ordination. However, it is obvious that new money will be required, and in April 2003 President Prodi proposed a €1 billion Water Fund. This Water Fund would only be available for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries covered by the Cotonou Agreement (the latter two not being components in the EUWI) and be for one year. This proposal was not greeted with the greatest of enthusiasm by member states, nor by a number of NGOs, who saw it as a means of extending privatisation of water supplies. The proposal was referred back to the Commission and a new proposal, for what is now called a Water Facility, has been made in January 2004. At the time of writing it is understood that agreement has been made on a compromise proposal for €500 million over two years. However the exact relationship between the Facility and the Initiative remains unclear.

d Canada's Water Initiatives

Following the G8 Summit in June 2002, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced a major Canadian initiative to support African development with water management one of the focus areas. While the Initiative pre-empted announcements at WSSD, it was reiterated in Johannesburg. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was interested in supporting policy/strategy development and building capacity for the implementation of policies and plans for sustainable water resources management in Africa, and a number of proposals have been announced:

- CAD\$10 million was committed towards collaboration with the African Development Bank to develop financially viable water projects.
- CAD\$20 million was committed to support the African Water Facility in partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) to provide grant investment support for water resources management and water service provision in Africa.
- CAD\$5 million was directed to the AfDB to support the application of its IWRM policy, to improve AfDB's capacity in the water sector and to promote good water management practices.
- A further CAD\$15 million was committed to UN Habitat's Water and Sanitation Trust Fund to assist committed African cities and communities to promote investment in water and sanitation with a focus on the very poor.

e The United States and Japan's *Clean Water for People Initiative*

At WSSD the United States and Japan launched the Clean Water for People Initiative, a joint endeavour to provide safe water and sanitation to the world's poor, to improve watershed management, and to increase the productivity of water. The Clean Water for People Initiative is set within the context of the US-Japan Partnership for Security and Prosperity announced by President Bush and Prime Minister Koizumi in June 2001. The intention is that the two countries strengthen their cooperation and pursue joint or parallel projects wherever possible. Focal areas for the Initiative appear to be West Africa and Asia.

Useful references

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