

A Global Framework for Action on Water and Sanitation

Campaign briefing



What do we want?

End Water Poverty is calling on world leaders to agree to establish a *Global Framework for Action* on water and sanitation in order to accelerate coverage for the 2.5 billion people without access to safe sanitation and the 900 million without access to clean water.

Why is a Global Framework needed?

On the one hand, a *Global Framework for Action* is needed to respond to the deep failures of donor and developing country governments to provide the money and political will needed to fulfill the most basic rights of citizens to sanitation and water. It is also needed to rectify the failures of national and international institutions to monitor, coordinate and drive progress. The results of these failings include:

- Low levels of finance to the sector from developing country and donor country governments¹, reflecting weak government priorities.
- The targeting of most aid away from low-income countries and communities².
- An absence of a mechanism or forum for donor and developing country governments to review progress and formulate policy responses.

Underpinning all of these is a failure of political will at all levels, and a failure to recognize that sanitation and water are key building blocks of development.

More positively, a Global Framework is needed to tie together a wide range of recent and positive commitments at national, regional and international levels³ into a coherent structure that ensures delivery on the ground. It also seeks to learn from similar frameworks in other sectors such as health, education and agriculture.

What is needed?

To overcome the failures of the status quo, there is a strong and urgent need to firmly establish a *Global Framework for Action* that facilitates concerted measures at national and international levels to improve national planning processes, enhance aid effectiveness, increase investments, and tackle capacity constraints.

A WaterAid and Tearfund report in September 2008 called for a *Global Framework for Action* to be introduced that provided “focus, authority and accountability”⁴ to the sector. Such a framework must be built on principals of mutual accountability, strengthened political will, and a single annual focus. Ultimately, the end result must be greatly accelerated progress to achieving safe sanitation and clean water for all.

¹ The share of total aid going to water supply and sanitation has been in decline since the mid-1990s (WaterAid and Tearfund, *Why we need a Global Framework for Action*, September 2008).

² Just 24% of aid for water supply and sanitation goes to least developed countries (*ibid*).

³ Examples of such commitments include the *eThekweni Declaration* at AfricaSan (Feb 2008), the *EU Agenda for Action on the MDGs* (Jun 2008), the G8 Communiqué (July 2008) and the *Delhi Declaration* from SACOSAN (November 2008)

⁴ WaterAid and Tearfund, *Why we need a Global Framework for Action*, September 2008

What would the Global Framework for Action look like?

In brief, the *Global Framework for Action* would be an agreement between donor governments, developing country governments and multilateral institutions in which:

- 👉 **Developing country governments** develop credible national plans to provide sanitation and water for all⁵, and invest more in their implementation⁶.
- 👉 **Donor governments** support the development of these plans⁷, and provide the funding to ensure that no credible national plan fails for lack of finance
- 👉 **International systems** are developed to monitor and drive progress, including a *global task force*, an *annual review* and an *annual high-level meeting*

The 3 main elements of reformed international systems would be to establish:

- 👉 **An Annual Review of the sector** to report on donor and developing country government spending, effectiveness and performance. It should diagnose key bottlenecks and structural failures behind the current crisis, including funding gaps. UN-Water's Global Annual Assessment on Water and Sanitation (GLAAS) report would be a good starting point, but would require further development.
- 👉 **A Global Task Force** to distil priority areas for action, based on the findings of the annual review, and to prepare for the High-Level Meeting. It could act as a secretariat for the Global Framework, and monitor, review and progress-chase on commitments made by donor and developing country governments. It could engage in strategic dialogue with other sectors around areas of mutual concern.
- 👉 **An Annual High-Level Meeting** to provide a political focus for the sector, attended by high-level experts and politicians from the largest bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as representatives from the most off-track regions (Africa and South Asia). The meeting would assess global progress and agree remedial policy or financing actions on specific issues identified by the Annual Review and Global Task Force.

Who currently supports the Global Framework?

The End Water Poverty coalition has been promoting this idea since 2007, and in September 2008, at the United Nations, the Governments of the UK and the Netherlands announced their support for such a framework. The World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Bank and the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) have reacted positively to the concept, while UNICEF have also agreed to host the first Annual High-Level Meeting on water and sanitation in September or October 2009.

A call to action!

To really establish the Global Framework and make it a success, however, we need many more countries - including key groups like the G8 and African Union - to support it, we need more countries to fund it, and we need more countries to build the political will to ensure it delivers sanitation and water for all.

Visit www.endwaterpoverty.org/2009campaign for more information on actions you can take.

⁵ A briefing on what might constitute a credible national plan will be available soon.

⁶ The 2006 UN Human Development Report recommends that countries spend 1% of GDP on water and sanitation, while in the *eThekweni Declaration* (Feb 2008), African Water Ministers promised to spend 0.5% of GDP on sanitation alone

⁷ One proposal being examined currently is whether the framework should include a pooled fund to support the development of plans and overcome capacity constraints.