

OWG – Session "Water Supply and Sanitation" (May 23, 2013)
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Talking points

Introduction

Representing the International Water Management Institute whose mission is to improve management of land and water resources for food livelihoods and the environment. Remarks prepared in consultation with colleagues from several other water stakeholder organizations including, GWP, Water Aid America, Aquafed, the World Bank, World Water Council, WWF and draws on the brief that has been prepared by UN Water.

Comments

Will raise a few points around three themes:

- learning lessons from the MDG experience;
- what the world is facing going forward and;
- the need for a stand - alone goal

The MDG Experience

(Sanitation story)

The first Water and Sanitation Decade was launched in 1981 after Mar del Plata and despite good intentions, was basically about water supply; indeed some called it the international water supply decade!

The world has met the MGD target for water supply, although regional and national challenges remain. Sadly, the UNICEF/WHO JMP notes that unless there is urgent action, in 2015 one third of the world's people (2.4 billion) will still not have access to improved sanitation. Well into the 21st Century no one should be defecating in the open! When are we going to say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH and take real action - today in the 21st century, 1 billion women, children and men should not still be defecating out in the open. Water and Sanitation are a human right!!

(As President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf said in the forward to the Wateraid publication everyone, everywhere – a vision for water sanitation and hygiene post 2015, there are many challenges facing the world today and some are particularly challenging because we do not know how to tackle them. This cannot be said of water supply and sanitation.)

We are learning more and more about ourselves and our world. Who would have thought that there would be such a strong linkage between sanitation, nutrition and stunting in growth of children, yet a 20 percentage point reduction in open defecation is associated with about 4 mm increase in height for a healthy four year old. And open defecation explains 54% of international variation in child height. In contrast, GDP only explains 29 percent.

(Wateraid/World Bank)

FIRST SLIDE – Water security is Central to the MDGs

Water is a resource that is vital for the success of the other MDGs. The slide here is a reminder of what we often take for granted. It is not comprehensive, but gives an overview. A key lesson we can learn, is that given the role water plays in development, indeed in life, we should not take it for granted, but should manage and develop it sustainably.

During these MDG years, we, govt., private sector, NGOs, IFIs... all the development sectors have missed opportunities because we have not worked consistently and collectively, and in a coordinated way towards achieving the goals. Everyone has pretty much done their own thing.

During these MDG years, we, all the development sectors working on achieving their goals, have basically worked in isolation, sometimes re-inventing solutions except where we have been made (by government leaders) to come together to contribute, for example to IWRM and water efficiency planning.

During these MDG years, we have slowly come to recognize that water, as a resource has been taken for granted and now we are in trouble, and our children's children too, unless something drastic is done. This has happened in part because of concerns about water availability for development and survival purposes and addressing the other MDGs have begun to increase. *{More than 700 million people face increasing water scarcity today and as water becomes more scarce, we are seeing the numbers rise increasing difficulty in managing it as a shared resource within countries, among nations, within regions and globally}.*

So, we have had trouble working together on cross cutting issues

We have been “unisector” focused – reinventing the wheel

We have finally realized that water cannot be taken for granted – or have we?

What the world is facing going forward;

Four brief reminders about population, urbanization, climate change and leadership.

In 1950, Just 60 years ago, there were only 2.5 billion people in the world, 10 years ago there were 6 billion people on the planet. By 2020 there are expected to be 7.5 billion of us. And, current growth rates, we are projected to reach over 9 billion beyond 2030. Let's think for a minute about this – more people means more demand for natural resources and services.

In just two years, it is projected that there will be 33 mega cities – cities of over 10 million people of which 27 will be in the developing world. Close to 60% of all people will live in cities by 2020. All those city dwellers will want basic services and will produce increasing amounts of wastewater.

Already many cities the world over are struggling to deliver sustainable water supply and sanitation services to their people, while attempting to tackle increased pollution of their water resources wastewater. Many are not coping and the result is increasing levels of

polluted receiving waters around major towns and cities. The combination of high density poor urban neighborhoods, and increasing pollution of water in and around cities is daunting.

The latest WWDR states. “ ***Water is the only medium through which major global crises (food, energy, health and climate change, as well as economic crises) can be jointly addressed***”. *Explicit trade-offs may need to be made to allocate water to uses which maximize achievable benefits across a number of developmental sectors. This is a critical challenge, but one whose achievement is difficult and complex in practice”*

Climate change is having an impact on the world. One of the key ways people will feel the effects is through water. – too little water – droughts, too much water – storms, floods... hence the importance of adaptation plans being water smart!!

In today’s world, there is an increased number and increased intensity of water-related disaster events linked to the effects of climate change. {*Between 1900 and 2006, water-related disasters accounted for 70% of occurrences, 48% of deaths and 72% of damages. Everywhere we look, we hear about tornados, droughts, floods, hurricanes, landslides....*}. Water – related disasters are truly pounding the world’s people. Livelihoods are being destroyed by water or its absence. And scientists tell us that the risks and vulnerability to these disasters will increase. Flooding and drought are now expected in some countries on a regular basis in many regions of the world.

So, population increase, urbanization, climate are all linked with increasing demand for water resources for development and management of wastewater produced.

On leadership – Leaders of today have a tough job. Real leadership and collective action are needed to deal with today’s global challenges whilst addressing sustainable development concerns in response to increased demand for basic services, food, water, sanitation, health, education, jobs... , taking into account all voices. It is not going to be easy. Hard decisions are going to have to be made - and we will have to work differently. We cannot address such important development issues piecemeal and we can no longer address the management of water resources in an ad hoc, piecemeal way.

Finally, SDG - on Water Security

SECOND SLIDE – Water security is Central to the SDGs

The Stakeholders consultations on supporting the post 2015 development agenda conducted by GWP and partners highlighted three key needs:

- Achieving improved water resources management using an integrated approach with planning based at the system level;
- Achieving safe and reliable drinking water supplies and sanitation for all people in urban and rural areas with adequate treatment of wastewater to reduce or prevent pollution and;

- Managing risk with operational plans and actions to mitigate impacts of extreme events and climate change.

In discussing the issue of the post 2015 agenda, the high level forum held on world water day this year, noted that The availability of clean water managed sustainably, is required for access to water, sanitation and hygiene, food, and energy production, disaster risk reduction , industrial development and healthy ecosystems.

UNSGAB calls for a “comprehensive global goal on water” and suggests that because of the need to build synergies and address trade-offs between water and other sectors, that water efficiency targets be included in other post 2015 goals *This would be an excellent way to monitor how water is being handled in the development sectors, providing inputs into the work under the comprehensive water goal.

The water community is clear about next steps and converging on ONE Water SDG goal, with 3 possibly 4 actionable targets, each with clear, simple, easy to measure and monitor indicators is working hard to get indicators that will be applicable globally.

The water issue is broader than sanitation and water supply for domestic use. This has to be clearly acknowledged, not just footnoted! **Proposal to call the water goal a water security goal which encompasses all water-related issues.**

I will say a few words about “water security”. First of all when we talk about food or energy security, it is clear to all that we are talking about reliable access to food or energy. Water security is different one has to consider both the benefits and protection from the destructive aspects - both the presence and absence can be a threat to people.

Water Security has been defined as the availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, ecosystems and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks to people, environments and economies”.

UN Water has been thinking through this issue has a breakdown of a what water security is about as they work with others on establishing a clear definition for the UN. These elements (adapted) are:

- Access to safe and sufficient drinking water at an affordable cost in order to meet basic needs, including sanitation and hygiene, and safeguard health and levels of well-being;
- Protection of livelihoods, human rights, and cultural and recreational values;
- Preservation and protection of ecosystems in water allocation and management systems in order to maintain their ability to deliver and sustain functioning essential ecosystem services;
- Water supplies for socio-economic development and activities (such as agriculture, energy, transport, industry, tourism)
- Collection and treatment of used water to protect human life and the environment from pollution;

- Collaborative approaches to transboundary water resources management within and between countries to promote freshwater sustainability and cooperation;
- Increased resilience/protection from water-related disasters (such as droughts and floods);
- Capacity to implement all the above, monitor progress and adapt accordingly.

The one water security goal, would have 3, maybe four clear global targets addressing the following areas:

- Sanitation ,water supply and hygiene for all (with their own sub-targets and indicators)
- Pollution management, wastewater treatment and reuse (with their own sub-targets and indicators).
- (A possible fourth target) Increased resilience to water related disasters such as floods and droughts.
- Management and development of water resources taking into account social equity, economic efficiency and environmental considerations (with their own sub-targets and indicators).

Country and regional action will vary. In terms of developing the targets, all are making progress although the sanitation hygiene and water supply sector is the most advanced.

I hope that you will support the Water Security SDG goal. Thank you.