



## IPM-CSD-13 on Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements

New York, February 28 to March 4, 2005

### Speaking Points Number 2

**Subject:** Thematic Session on water:  
1) Access to basic water services

**Date and Time:** 12.4 : 11:30 – 13:00 Conference Room 1

Dieter Rothenberger

Mr. Chairman

Switzerland would first like to thank you for your comprehensive summary of our discussions during the IPM. Switzerland fully supports the practical measures listed under the item “Access to safe drinking water”. The few points highlighted below, refer to this comprehensive concept, and should ideally be reflected in the negotiated policy decisions.

### Position of Switzerland: Water

- Starting Point is the fact that only technically effective and financially viable operations of the systems which also take into account ecological and social requirements will ensure lasting achievement of the MDGs.
- Hence, key for sustainable water and sanitation services are professional operating structures. This implies, that there is a strong requirement to separate **sector oversight** (regulation) from **service operation**. Without role separation we continue to see a lack of **accountability** and **transparency** – which are two major sources for underperformance in the sector.
- The Chairman’s summary rightfully mentions – as does the report of the Secretary-General of December 2004 – that the involvement of the private sector, e.g. via Public Private Partnerships, is **one option amongst others** to tackle the challenges in the sector. We fully support this view. Yet, we would also like to highlight three issues: First, governments should not only “promote” public involvement in monitoring and evaluation, but should as a partner in a PPP negotiate the objectives and ensure the monitoring, since they will **ultimately remain responsible** for the sector. Second, in order to increase **public acceptance**, but also the suitability of a PPP, **local stakeholders** must become **actively involved** already in the planning process and all the way through to the implementation. Setting up **Stakeholder Committees** as key sources of local knowledge and local attitudes towards a PPP becomes an

**indispensable ingredient** of a PPP. Related to that, transparency of the process – again from planning to tendering and implementation – is required to ensure effective and accepted processes. Summarizing, we would like to state that if governments decide to enter into a PPP, they should structure the process around some **key principles** and use available tools like **Guidelines** which might help to avoid major stumbling stones.

- Water projects – independent if private or public – must have a **strong poverty focus**. While efficient operators can reduce the overall costs, prevailing **affordability issues** for the poor will have to **tackled by the state**. This holds true whether the operator is a **private** or a **public entity**.
- Concerning the finance issues, we would like to support the view that improved national level coordination increases the effectiveness of government and donor spending. It is obvious that the **developing countries** should be in the **lead** for the formulation of sector plans and objectives. Yet, improving donor coordination through a lead-country approach will require a **transparent selection** of the leading country based on **clear and jointly set criteria**, and also the unambiguous definition of **monitoring mechanisms** for the donor-funded activities.

#### **Crosscutting issues: Culture and Gender**

- Finally – as asked by the bureau - we would like to highlight the importance of two crosscutting issues that play a pivotal role in the provision of access to water:
- The success of water programs depends crucially on the recognition of the gender specific roles in water management – both on sector as well as on household level. Concerning the latter (household level), there seems to be a need for more analysis about the effect policy decisions taken at a higher level have in the end on the specific relations structuring the families, mainly also between men and women and between generations. Programs to improve water-use efficiency on household level therefore will have to deal with gender specific roles, and new ways of water provision might influence gender specific acceptance and usability.