

EuropeAid

**Press Pack:**

***Making a splash: EU work on water and sanitation***

Projects and stories from the field

World Water Week: 21<sup>st</sup> August- 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2011



**EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION**

## Background

For 1.2 billion people - nearly a fifth of the world's population - access to safe drinking water remains a distant dream. Women and girls are particularly affected - they walk miles every day, fetching and carrying water for their families, which means they miss out on opportunities to work and go to school.

Over 4000 people, mostly children under five-years-old, die every day from diseases associated with lack of access to clean drinking water, primarily because they don't have toilets, and cannot wash their hands at key moments such as after going to the toilet and before preparing food. More than 2.4 billion people are still without adequate sanitation.

Yet some progress has been made: The world, except sub-Saharan Africa, is on track to meet the MDG target on water, although the sanitation target is seriously off track (in fact it is the most off-track MDG target in Africa).

Added to this is the fact that by 2030 the number of urban dwellers is expected to be about 1.8 billion more than in 2005 (which constitutes about 60% of the world's population), it becomes clear that there will be even more demands on the world's water resources in the future.

**World Water Week, which takes place between 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August in Stockholm**, has been the annual focal point for the globe's water issues since 1991 – a forum where experts from around the world will gather together to discuss how they can make sure that people in some of the world's poorest countries can access water to drink and basic sanitation facilities.

You can find more information below about how the EU is making a difference, and helping to turn the tide.

## What the EU is doing on water and sanitation

Since 2000, the EU has been committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

Progress has been made. Of all the Millennium Development Goals, access to water is one of those that is most likely to be met (though sanitation remains way off track).

EU aid is making a difference - since 2004, more than **32 million people** have gained access to improved water supply and 9.5 million to sanitation facilities thanks to support from the European Commission.

EU Water and sanitation programmes, which help build infrastructure for drinking and waste water systems, and provide basic sanitation and hygiene, amount to almost €400 million per year and take place in over 30 countries.

## EU Water Initiative

The EU Water Initiative (EUWI) was launched by the EU member states and the European Commission in 2002. It was set up to help meet the MDG on drinking water and sanitation.

Since its establishment in 2002 the EUWI has had a significant impact globally in the water sector: Above all, it has helped to establish the **EU-ACP Water Facility**, providing €700m specifically to provide access to water and provide basic sanitation for some of the poorest people in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as to improve water management in these areas.

The facility is estimated to have enabled **14.5 million people** to access clean water so far.

Since 2002, EU support to water-related issues has amounted to €1.2 billion in total. The African-EU Infrastructure Trust Fund, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility and the Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership also contribute to fund water-related programmes.

## Stories from the Field - EU Water Projects in Action

### Providing access to drinking water to rural communities in Senegal

The rural community of Coubalan in the Senegal has one of the lowest levels of safe drinking water and sanitation in the country.

In order to address this situation, a project was set up to connect three hydraudalic systems to five wells, to provide access to more drinking water. 923 latrines were established in 13 rural villages, and in parallel, two campaigns were carried out in village schools, to help raise awareness of the importance of hygiene and sanitation.

In total this project (which has been funded by the European Commission, through the African Caribbean and Pacific Water Facility, and other EC partners) has helped over **17,324 inhabitants**, and provided access to water and sanitation in 13 villages.



Photo copyright UNICEF

### Connecting communities to water, Mozambique

Maputo is the capital and largest city of Mozambique and has a population of 1.8 million. The Maputo Water Supply Project aims to improve water supply services in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area by helping to develop and rehabilitate the city's water supply system. This will meet increasing water demand and increase service

coverage.

The results are expected to be impressive; coverage will rise from 670,000 to 1,500,000 people (or from 38% to 73% of the resident population). The project will also increase water production capacity by 4000 m<sup>3</sup>/hour, and reduce unaccounted-for water by 25% (from 62% to 40%).

The project is co-financed by the Commission, the European Investment Bank, the French Development Agency and the ORET programme of the Dutch Foreign Ministry. Total EU support amounts to over €95 million, of which €25 million is paid by the European Commission.

## Close Up

### **'The Sky is my limit' - Esther Etowa's Story**

Nigeria is the world's eighth most populous country, with some 151 million inhabitants. Of these, an estimated 103 million are not using improved sanitation facilities, and open defecation is rife.

Nigeria alone can account for 12 per cent of all child deaths under five. This means that every day nearly 3,000 children under five die in Nigeria. Most of these lives could be saved through low-cost prevention and treatment interventions.

As a women's organizer, Ms. Etowa's is used to helping sick children and mothers who have lost their children to water-borne disease.

In 1997, Ms. Etowa began mobilising women into discussion groups that she informally called 'woman talk.' Ten years later, so many women had joined her society that the official Women Empowerment and Rights Initiative was born.

Ms. Etowa's 'eureka' moment came in 2008, when she was invited to attend a workshop on a new programme aimed at bringing better sanitation and hygiene, as well as safe water, to the most vulnerable rural communities.

In recent years, however, a revolutionary Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach has been helping to achieve sanitation in areas like Cross River State. Communities are now discarding the commonly accepted doctrine of what constitutes an acceptable toilet – a cement slab-covered pit latrine with brick walls – and instead are endorsing more flexible definitions of latrines. The only requirement is that 100 percent of residents in targeted communities ceased open defecation once and for all.

The goal of CLTS is to have complete, unified commitment from communities. Often the CLTS programme begins at the local school, an approach that the district water board now includes in their overall policy. Children are taught to wash their hands after using the toilet. The children then take this message home.

From here, the water and sanitation partnership between UNICEF, the European Union, local government and community-based organizations helps move the project into homes and raise awareness in communities about the dangers of poor sanitation.

Using whatever materials are available locally, villagers then begin building their own latrines. They pitch in and support each other to ensure every family has its own facility. As a consequence of these low-tech interventions, child mortality in Nigeria has decreased between 1990 and 2008 by more than 4 per cent – a significant

accomplishment.

**In the six states supported by EU funding since 2008, more than 17,000 latrines have been built in 836 communities. More than 100 of these communities have attained the goal of being declared free of open defecation.**

Through this initiative, more than 1,000 communities and 60,000 schools have now received a sustainable supply of potable water. More than **1.2 million people** who never had access to clean water before now enjoy nature's most fundamental gift without fear of disease.

And the project has found its way into the heart of community mobiliser Esther Etowa. "[Women and children] are now healthy, and that there are now no more deaths," she said. "There is no record of cholera this year, no record of typhoid. I feel happy – it's like the sky is my limit!"

### **Improving access to water in Uganda**

Until recently, the Ugandan town of Mubende had a water supply system dating from 1925. Women and children had to walk long distances for clean water and hygiene was very poor.

In 2001, the European Commission-funded Mid-Western Towns Water and Sanitation Project was launched. By 2007, **25,000 people** in three towns, including Mubende, had access to water thanks to the project.

As one local resident now says:

"Our water is safe to drink, so my family no longer suffers from diarrhoea".

### **Improving water supply and sanitation in Cap-Haitien, Northern Haiti**

This project aims to increase the water flow in the town of Cap-Haitien, provide drinking water and sewerage services for the inhabitants most in need and improve the institutional capacity of the water sector.

Larger Cap-Haitien has a growing population of 500,000 people. Living conditions are becoming increasingly difficult due to poor drinking water supply and sanitation services, which have a major impact on public health and the quality of life of residents.

The project involves the rehabilitation of a gravity system that will provide drinking water to 3,000 people. A new pumping station with a production capacity of 35l/sec will be installed, together with a new water network to serve more than **100,000 people**. 42 toilets will be constructed in four different sites, which will serve residents in poor neighbourhoods. Four micro enterprises will be established for waste collection, providing services to 3,500 households.

The project further involves the elaboration of a strategic plan for the water and sanitation sector of the city of Cap-Haitien. The project has received funding of €4 million in total, of which the Commission is providing €3 million.

## Close Up

### Mary Kaoni's story - Women take the lead in water and management

The nomadic Samburu people in Northern Kenya—along with their livestock—are bearing the brunt of climate change. No longer able to move to new pastures, the European Union and UNICEF are ensuring that they have fresh, clean water.

Ms. Kaoni, a local teacher, became her village's water attendant in October 2009 after a major scandal in the community.

"Elders who were collecting contributions for pump maintenance and diesel purchases were found to have embezzled money," explained Community Organizer for Community Organization for Development Support (CODES) Mark Leagile. "With support from the EU and UNICEF, we came in and trained the community to understand their rights and know how to manage their water system.

"This prompted a group of women, including Mary Kaoni, to tackle the elders," said Mr. Leagile, himself a Samburu. "The women called a meeting of the community and argued that water is women's responsibility because it is them who collect it for the homestead.

"They asked the elders to give them a chance, offering to hand back responsibility if the community was unhappy," he added.

CODES has worked in the area since 2002, arranged training for Kaoni. The busy teacher now keeps books and has opened a bank account on behalf of the water committee. "In Lolpulelei, the people have turned things around ... we need every community to hand over water management to women."

Despite her extensive commitments and the long days she endures, Ms. Kaoni says she will continue in her volunteer role – chiefly because of the health benefits she has seen in her community.

"Since the EU gave us a generator last year, 600 families have benefitted from clean water," Ms. Kaoni explained. "There have been plenty of improvements – we can tell because one community not far from here is still drinking the same water as the animals and their children have coughing and vomiting and diarrhoea like we used to. "

**To see more on the EU's work on water:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/videos/water-is-life/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/videos/water-is-life/index_en.htm)

**EU-UNICEF Projects on Water and Sanitation:**

[http://www.unicef.org/ec/wash\\_1071.htm](http://www.unicef.org/ec/wash_1071.htm)

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