



**International Conference in Copenhagen, 13 April 2007
Managing Water Resources Towards 2015
Copenhagen Initiative on Water and Development**

Conference Summary

Introduction

On 13 April 2007 an International Conference “Managing Water Resources Towards 2015 - Implementing Integrated Water Resources Management to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals” was held in Copenhagen, hosted by the Danish Government in co-operation with UN-Water. The Conference was attended by the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, the Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, the Water Sector Manager of the World Bank and some 50 high officials from developing countries, donor countries and international organisations.

The Conference noted that water is vital to the achievement of most of the Millennium Development Goals including those that address poverty, hunger, health, water supply and sanitation as well as environmental sustainability and gender equality. The importance of water management has been highlighted by the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other reports which have warned that climate change will have extensive impacts on water resources. In addition, the conference highlighted the increased stress and competition for water resources from changing diets, the introduction of large-scale biofuel production etc. Effective water management must thus be an integral part of all countries’ efforts to reach the MDGs by 2015 and sustain them beyond that. Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), an approach that takes account of competing water needs in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner, is widely recognised as the appropriate response to the challenges faced.

An IWRM roadmap towards the MDGs and beyond

The conference recalled that, in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) approved the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This included a target for all countries to have developed an IWRM and water efficiency plan by 2005, with support being offered to developing countries. One objective of this was to ensure that the water management interventions needed to support the achievement of other MDGs would be identified and implemented. By 2006, 25% of countries had completed their plans; in a further 50% the process was well underway while, for a variety of reasons, including a lack of both human and financial capacity and uncertainty about the approach and its objectives, 25% had not yet begun.

Recognizing the importance of water management’s contribution to sustainable development in general and the achievement of the MDGs in particular, the Conference considered how best to follow up the process. IWRM should be reflected in all national development planning instruments and budgets as well as the plans of sectors such as agriculture, energy, industry,

health etc. It proposed a “Roadmap for the Implementation of IWRM through 2015 and beyond”, with milestones to be reported in future UN World Water Development Reports. This is described in more detail in the Reference Document of the conference. The Roadmap and its milestones are not prescriptive but are intended to provide inspiration and guidance to countries.

Proposed milestones

Because countries are at very different stages of their water development and management, it would not be appropriate to establish a global set of time-bound targets. Instead, it is proposed that there should be regular reviews of progress on the key water resource management interventions that are necessary for the achievement of the MDGs. Specifically, it is proposed that:

- In 2008, all countries will report to Commission on Sustainable Development 16 on their progress in establishing their plans to implement IWRM and then implementing the MDG related water resource management priorities that they have identified;
- In 2009, a review will be made of the extent to which key enabling conditions for the implementation of these priorities have been addressed;
- In 2012, the progress of specific IWRM reform processes will be reviewed;
- In 2015, the extent to which the IWRM initiatives have successfully contributed to the implementation of the MDGs will be assessed.

Monitoring and reporting should be done in terms of the indicators currently under development by UN-Water. Attention should be given to the development of sector-based targets for the major user sectors.

The way forward

The Conference agreed that, to ensure that better water management contributes to the achievement of the MDGs; all actors should participate actively in the follow-up process. Specifically:

- Countries should be encouraged to continue to build on the momentum gained and continue to implement their IWRM plans in support of the MDGs with a focus on the priorities that they have identified.
- UN-Water, through the mechanism of the UN World Water Development Report, should continue to monitor and report on progress made; and
- The donor community should support the countries that require assistance to develop their IWRM plans and advance their implementation to ensure the sustainable achievement of the MDGs and report on the actions they have undertaken.

It was also agreed that it was important that all parties should work to strengthen the knowledge base, build on the lessons learned from the IWRM target, improve access to technical advice, capacity development etc, Continued advocacy to promote the concept and principles of IWRM is also required.

Adopted by the participants Copenhagen, 13 April 2007