

Multistakeholder Forum - Stockholm World Water Week 15th August 2004
Report on Mediterranean Component

It was noted that the Mediterranean component area is a very heterogeneous geopolitical region with resources - including water - spread very unevenly. Historically, as a water scarce region, water has always been a political priority. In recent years there has been an even stronger political commitment to provision of water and sanitation following agreement on the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation derived at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. In the Mediterranean water has proved to be an agent of close co-operation and many co-operation mechanisms existed at a general level in the region prior to the EUWI. However **better co-operation is still required between the various initiatives and networks on shared objectives and also on the use of existing funds**. The Mediterranean component action plan is based on synergies with these networks but it is clear that **processes need to be better demand driven and results orientated**.

The plan has six themes and eight objectives the latter being notable for including items not included in other geographical components - the relationship between water, agriculture and ecosystems; non-conventional sources of water; and education.

There has been, and continues to be, a good involvement of civil society which is important as ngos are close to the problems on the ground, more so than those in positions of authority. However there is a perceived **need for a greater involvement of a wider grouping of government agencies beyond those that traditionally deal with water such as agriculture, education and finance.**

A specific example was presented concerning private sector involvement in **Casablanca** which is based on six years experience. In this example the service provider - Suez - provided not only water and sanitation but also electricity and it was the latter that provided the driving force behind provision of services to the informal settlements that according to the existing law could not officially exist and therefore could not be provided with services. A **participatory approach provided local solutions**, initially for electricity supply, and subsequently for water provision. These practical solutions have lead to policy changes which in turn have brought about changes in the legal situation and subsequent further practical solutions. **It was noteworthy that cost recovery proved to be better in the informal settlements than in the formal settlements in the rest of the city. This raises questions around the willingness to pay and the ability to pay which would bear further investigation as part of the EUWI processes.**

It had been decided in the case of Casablanca that there would be **no provision of water without a concomitant provision of sanitation. This would seem to**

be a useful principle for more general agreement and use in the EUWI and would bear further investigation.

It was suggested that **NAMCOW** was a very useful process for integrating activities in a sub-region and **should be considered as a model for other sub-regions in the Mediterranean component**

There was some discussion on the potential for the use of the EU Water Framework Directive as a model for use in the context of the EUWI which would be subject to further more detailed discussion during World Water Week and during a seminar to be held in Brindisi, Italy during September 2004.

A view was expressed that the EU is failing to play a significant enough role in the Middle east especially in relation to water peace and security as given in the subtitle of Water for Life the background document for the EUWI.

There was some discussion around the relationship between the Mediterranean Free Trade Agreement and possible links to the EUWI. It was noted that there was an ongoing study of the impact of the Agreement on the environment which included water.

Funding - or lack of it - was a big issue if not *the* big issue in this component. Although the EU provides significant funding for water related projects in the region it is not currently integrated into the EUWI process and there have been **no additional dedicated EU funds provided to this component.** There is a clear **need for integration and co-ordination across all providers of finance in the region.** There was a feeling that there was a **need for greater urgency in dealing with the issue of finance for the component with an urgent reconsideration of bureaucratic procedures** with the credibility of the Initiative at stake. Expectations have been raised within the region and it is incumbent on those responsible to tackle these matters with a degree of urgency. Although there has been a consistent increased political commitment as noted above this does not seem to be being converted at a practical level with increased funding for the sector.

Dr Chris Tydeman - 16/08/04