

## **AMCOW / EUWI**

### **The EU WSS-Af Working Group**

### **Proposal to Accelerate Progress on National Policy Dialogues**

#### **Background**

Under the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) a Working Group on Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa (WG WSS-Af) was created in Ouagadougou in October 2003. This WG agreed in December 2003 in Addis Ababa that the focus of the work in the sector should be on country level dialogues, that ten countries, two from each sub-region, should be chosen as pilot countries for the exercise, and that one EU Member State (MS) should be identified to lead the process in each of those chosen countries.

The immediate aim of the country dialogues was to

- raise awareness about the EUWI,
- identify policy issues and institutional bottlenecks that impede investments in WSS, and
- set up a participatory approach to define country actions consistent with the MDGs and the WSSD targets.

In the long term the dialogues were supposed to contribute to

- harmonization of donor procedures,
- joint donor-supported programmes for capacity building,
- piloting of innovative financing mechanisms, and
- generally to a better socio-economic justification for increased spending on water sector development.

#### **The Problem**

The above aims remain valid and should still be pursued. However, it has become clear that progress has been too slow, and that a different approach is needed. It should be kept in mind

- that progress toward the water-related MDGs is basic to reaching also other MDGs, for example those on education, health and gender, and is therefore at the heart of all the MDGs, and
- therefore, that progress in the work of the WSS-Af WG is fundamental to how the EUWI is perceived, and that lack of such progress would reflect badly both on AMCOW and on the EU.

The reasons for the lack of progress to date include the following:

- the purpose of the dialogues was not well understood by all stakeholders involved,
- lack of communication on the objectives of the EUWI and the country dialogues with the selected countries,
- there was no prescribed format or blueprint for how the dialogues would be conducted,
- it has proven cumbersome to bring the parties together in the ten countries selected,
- the dialogues could become quite time consuming both for the governments involved and for the EU MS missions, and
- the dialogues were not seen as action oriented and the outcomes envisaged (value added) were not clear.

## The Solution

To address this problem the following is being proposed by the European and AMCOW TAC co-chairs of the WSS-Af WG:

- Organize the dialogues as multi-stakeholder fora with all water stakeholders (the government, local government, municipalities, parastatal agencies, civil society, the private sector, donors etc.).
- Mobilize a strategic partner, such as the Water & Sanitation Programme, to help facilitate these multi-stakeholder fora and prepare the supporting documentation.
- Stipulate that the purpose of the multi-stakeholder fora is to agree on the roadmap to achieving the water-related MDGs. The roadmap should meet the aims set out above and should identify a broad financing strategy;
- The facilitating organization should prepare a first draft of the roadmap to reach the MDGs, based on available government and donor reports and other material, for discussion at the multi-stakeholder fora.
- The EU MS involved in each country will be expected to
  - approve the selection of the facilitating organization, whether it be WSP or anyone else, in consultation with the government involved and supervise its work
  - act as convenor for the multi-stakeholder forum
  - lobby with other donors concerned for harmonization of support for the MDG roadmap and water resources development
  - coordinate with the government and with the Finance Working Group of the EUWI on the broad financing strategy
  - host and organise a roundtable (consultative group meeting) and invite bilateral donors, NGO's, CBO's, private sector and international financing institutions, to coordinate funding of the roadmap.
- The multi-stakeholder fora should be repeated annually to review the roadmap and monitor progress toward the MDGs.
- For each annual multi-stakeholder forum the government will need to prepare an annual water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) report on progress.
- This will need to continue until 2015 in many countries.
- Consideration could be given to the appointment of a roving EUWI ambassador to improve communication with the selected countries.
- Exchange of experiences between the ten pilot countries should be facilitated within the EUWI framework.