

Towards Water Security: A Framework for Action

Executive Summary

Floods along the Yangtze river, drought in Africa, national disputes over the Jordan and the Nile, nitrates in groundwater in Western Europe, industrial wastes in the Volga and the Danube, cholera in Brazil, riots over irrigation in Gujarat, illegal water connections in Manila, subsidence in Mexico City: water-related problems take different shapes and forms in different corners of the world. Taken together, these problems add up to a looming water crisis, for which the World Water Vision exercise has accumulated a wealth of evidence. The myriad components of these water-related problems, as manifestations of interconnected pressures on one fragile global water pot, need to be addressed by governments and peoples acting together. Without such action, our children and our children's children may confront a planet running dry.

In the words of the World Water Commission: 'Business as usual is not an option'. Alternative approaches are needed – approaches which deploy both tried and experimental solutions in a visionary, dynamic and courageous way. The range of actions needed is as diverse as the problems large and small, and the settings in which they are found. Innovation is needed in institutional arrangements, in technologies and in financing. To plan and implement these actions requires a dramatic change in attitudes governing water-related policy and decision-making, and in the availability and application of investment funds. The World Water Vision exercise has generated an impressive level of interest in countries and regions all over the world. The challenge now is to transform this interest into committed action to avert the looming water crisis.

To tackle this challenge, the world must work towards 'water security' as an overarching goal – as endorsed by the World Water Commission. Water security, at any level from the household to the global, means that every person has access to enough safe water at affordable cost to lead a clean, healthy and productive life, while ensuring that the natural environment is protected and enhanced.

The essence of water security is that concern for the resource base itself is coupled with concern that services which exploit the resource base for human survival and well-being, as well as for agriculture and other economic enterprise, should be developed and managed in an equitable, efficient and integrated manner. Achieving water security thus requires co-operation between different kinds of water users, and between those sharing river basins and aquifers, within a framework that allows for the protection of vital eco-systems from pollution and other threats. Water security is also a pre-condition of any effective poverty reduction strategy, and of effective environmental sanitation, wastewater management and flood control.

“Every human being, now and in the future, should have enough clean water, appropriate sanitation and enough food and energy at reasonable cost. Providing adequate water to meet these basic needs must be done in a manner that works in harmony with nature.”

World Water Commission

Mobilising the political will to act

The Dublin principles and internationally agreed conventions provide a basis for water security. These principles and norms must be translated into practice. The Framework for Action, summarised here, provides a structure for doing this.

Efforts to achieve water security – at all levels – constitute a key component of strategies to meet agreed International Development Targets for 2015 related to reducing poverty, improving health, eliminating malnutrition and maintaining a healthy environment. A key step in meeting these targets would be the universal adoption of specific water security targets. These global targets can only be achieved if each country sets its own national water security targets and a timetable for achieving them. Clear definitions and indicators will need to be developed for each target and a detailed assessment of the resources needed required to achieve them, as well as a monitoring system to measure progress.

The message of water security, must be brought to the attention of those at the highest political level.

Indicative Global Water Security Targets

- Comprehensive policies and strategies for integrated water resources management (IWRM) in process of implementation in 75% of countries by 2005 and in all countries by 2015.
- Proportion of people not having access to hygienic sanitation facilities reduced by half by 2015
- Proportion of people not having sustainable access to adequate quantities of affordable and safe water reduced by half by 2015
- Increase water productivity for food production from rainfed and irrigated farming by 30% by 2015
- Reduce the risk from floods for 50% of the people living in floodplains by 2015
- National standards to ensure the health of freshwater eco-systems established in all countries by 2005, and programmes to improve the health of freshwater eco-systems implemented by 2015.

As the 21st century opens, many urgent issues compete for the attention of the public and politicians. The message of water security, and recognition of its pivotal role in sustainable development, must be brought to the attention of those at the highest political level. Inevitably, it is the poorest countries and the poorest people (usually women and children) within those countries who suffer the worst effects of the water crisis. Most water-related problems manifest themselves at the local level, although they interconnect with water problems elsewhere and cannot be solved independently.

Integrated sets of solutions are required to address the water concerns of different sections of the community, with a particular focus on the needs of poor people, and meet the wider national and international interest. People and resources need to be mobilised at community, national and international levels, and political will harnessed to do the following:

- make water governance effective;
- generate water wisdom;
- tackle urgent water priorities; and
- mobilise investment for a secure water future.

National Programmes of Action need to be established to ensure that the World Water Vision and Framework for Action translate into concrete results on the ground.

Making water governance effective

The water crisis is often a crisis of governance: a failure to integrate policies and practices related to the management of water resources. Good water governance exists where government bodies responsible for water establish an effective policy and legal framework to allocate and manage water in ways responsive to national social and economic needs, and to the long-term sustainability of the resource base.

To achieve good governance for water it is necessary to create an enabling environment which facilitates the following: efficient private and public sector initiatives; a regulatory regime which allows clear transactions between stakeholders in a climate of trust; and shared responsibility for safeguarding river and aquifer resources whose management affects many people but at present is the responsibility of none.

Four things to do to make water governance effective:

- ▶ Governments to establish water policies, laws and regulatory frameworks, devolve decision-making, and encourage better service delivery by autonomous public sector agencies and private sector operators.
- ▶ Governments to set policies and establish institutional structures for managing river basins and aquifers and processes to overcome conflict over water allocation.
- ▶ Governments to facilitate the realignment of economic and financial practices, including full cost pricing for water services – with appropriate mechanisms to protect the poor.
- ▶ Governments, with the help of international partners, to establish mechanisms for strengthening river basin management and establishing transboundary water agreements allowing for equitable utilisation of shared waters.

Putting integrated water resources management into practice

Integrated water resources management (IWRM) is a critical element in achieving good water governance. Government should focus on its responsibility for policy and regulation and the creation of an enabling environment, while the private sector (local and international) and communities assume responsibilities for providing and operating services. Broader involvement by a range of stakeholders, including female stakeholders, requires capacity building and resource mobilisation. Transparent and participatory decision-making processes are also required to prevent corrupt and opportunistic behaviour by service providers, consumers and others.

The IWRM Toolbox currently under development by the Global Water Partnership is intended to assist the introduction of IWRM by providing a menu of options on a wide range of measures based on existing best practice.

Reform and development of institutions

Institutions involved in water resources management and services tend to be numerous, fragmented and lack co-ordination. The remedy is to establish 'apex' bodies or co-ordinating committees for water resources management. Co-ordinating mechanisms are similarly needed at lower administrative levels to which decision-making is devolved, so that discipline, efficiency and transparency are not casualties of the decentralisation process. Better co-ordination at all levels allows

“In order to achieve integrated and sustainable management of water resources, investment tools must be developed – including private sector participation.”

South American Vision

for more equitable and acceptable allocation of water resources, and resolution of upstream-downstream and rural-urban conflicts. It is important that these 'apex' management bodies respect the subsidiarity principle, and do not, for instance, interfere in the day-to-day business of water service providers and irrigation agencies.

Water resources should be managed on the basis of the river basin or aquifer. The management structure should envisage a high level of autonomy for the body responsible for river basin management, allow for stakeholder participation in decision-making – for example through 'water parliaments' – and generate and disseminate information. Where appropriate, specific river basin and catchment organisations should be set up, or their capacities enhanced. Where waters are shared, action should be taken to build confidence among riparian states, enabling them to accept some form of restricted sovereignty concerning their common resource, based on the principles of equitable utilisation and on regional co-operation. Mechanisms between riparian states in all major river basins should be developed and shared waters agreements formulated by 2015. Where 'water diplomacy' is needed to help prevent conflict, the mediating or adjudication capacity of UN or other bodies may be utilised.

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Realigning financial and economic practices

If IWRM is to be successfully introduced, it is crucial that water be treated as an economic good and financial practices be realigned accordingly. Sound and fair financial management – based on full cost pricing – is needed to improve the efficiency of services, provide additional resources for reinvestment, encourage demand management, and promote pollution control and prevention. Governments must introduce pricing of water and pollution charges to support investments in water resources, while protecting the poorest citizens. Where water is scarce, this will also require the formalisation and clarification of property rights for water. Mechanisms should be in place by 2015 to establish full cost pricing for water services in all countries.

Generating Water Wisdom

Generating water wisdom among all stakeholders is a precondition for improved decision-making. Raising public awareness on the importance of water and what must be done to achieve water security, and building and sharing knowledge about water, are the key challenges.

Raising awareness of water issues

A coalition of interested parties must embark on a *Water Awareness Initiative* to highlight the problems, present practical solutions and promote water-wise behaviour. The initiative should be vigorously directed to young people through improved education; farmers; industrial companies; and manufacturers of water-related consumer goods. Special efforts should be made to involve women, and to ensure that messages are gender-sensitive.

Investing in people – capacity building for effective water management

Knowledge alone is not enough to bring about change. Enabling individuals to use knowledge will require training and capacity building. Institutions involved in water resource management will have a primary responsibility in emphasising interdisciplinary approaches to water resource management, and generating and disseminating knowledge on 'best practices'. Approaches should include networking, curriculum reform, and affirmative action to ensure that girls and women are encouraged to undertake training and provided with employment and decision-making opportunities.

Four things to do to generate water wisdom:

- ▶ World Water Council and partners to follow up the Vision exercise and orchestrate water awareness campaigns involving people from all walks of life.
- ▶ Governments, donors, private sector and NGOs to invest in people through a range of capacity building programmes.
- ▶ Donors, private sector and governments to focus on institutional, technological and financial innovation by investing in targeted research, development and demonstration. Critical issues include climate change, biotechnology and bio-remediation, environmental assessment, environmental needs, and water saving technologies.
- ▶ UN organisations and governments to establish mechanisms for data collection, information gathering and sharing, with open access to data and support from international water community – professional associations, donors and operators.

“A massive awareness raising and advocacy programme must be instituted to increase public understanding concerning water resources and heighten awareness of the inter-relationships of population, resources and environment.”

Southeast Asia Vision

Targeted research, development and demonstration

Research must be directed towards problem-solving, especially in poorer countries. Action research is needed to improve the productivity of water, and the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research should be strengthened to carry out more water water-efficient agricultural research. A better understanding of freshwater eco-systems is needed. New techniques must be designed for advancing cost-effective, sustainable and low-pollution systems, especially for the urban poor. More cost-effective solar power and desalination systems should be developed.

Improving information generation and sharing

Thorough and accurate information is needed about all aspects of the water domain based on the collection of appropriate data. Data standards and protocols should be developed and made freely available to ensure that services and infrastructures meet quality standards. Information gaps on groundwater systems, water saving technologies and beneficial aspects of biotechnology should be filled. Networks should be established to facilitate efficient access to information.

Tackling urgent water priorities

Five urgent water problems should be given priority: protecting and restoring water resources, achieving water-food security, extending sanitation coverage, meeting the challenge of rapid urbanisation, and managing floods.

This is not an exhaustive list but a prioritisation of problem areas which have been relatively neglected and under-resourced, and which have emerged consistently through the many regional and sectoral Vision consultations. Actions such as the spread and maintenance of rural drinking water supplies, drought management and preparedness, and rural development are also very important in many countries.

Protecting and restoring water resources and eco-systems.

Protection of the water resource base lies at the heart of future water sustainability. Surface and groundwater quality, and the threats posed by pollution, are problems both for people and for the eco-systems on which all life depends. Governments should take the lead and provide incentives; but everyone must also take some responsibility.

The environment movement has had a powerful influence in establishing the need to improve water quality: everyone in our increasingly crowded world lives downstream. Water quality is affected by many aspects of social behaviour, including sanitation and waste disposal, industrial discharges, agricultural pollutants, and saline waters from irrigation.

The environment movement has helped establish the need to improve water quality: everyone in our increasingly crowded world lives downstream.

Four things to do to protect and restore water resources:

- ▶ Governments, with the help of donors and others, to establish a major *Groundwater Initiative* using a bottom-up approach to build the legal, institutional and technological basis for sustainable aquifer management at global and local levels.
- ▶ Governments, with the help of UN organisations and expert bodies, to establish realistic water quality standards for eco-systems, strengthen institutional systems and build capacity for monitoring and enforcement.
- ▶ Research and human resource development institutions to develop and promote environmentally friendly agricultural inputs.
- ▶ Industry, with financial and demand management incentives from governments, to develop and apply cleaner production methods to minimise waste and prevent pollution, based on certification for sound environmental practices.

Standards for healthy eco-systems must be established and enforced by all governments. Such standards must logically take account of the widely varying financial resources available in different settings. Immediate clean-up programmes for highly polluted and populated areas should be set in motion. At the same time, communications campaigns should be directed at behavioural change, without which there will be no prospect over the longer term of reducing pollution load and maintaining a clean, healthy and productive environment.

Achieving water-food security

Agriculture uses more water than any other area of human activity. Food and water security are therefore inextricably linked, and can only come from concerted action to achieve more crop productivity from every drop of water used for agriculture, especially in the light of population growth. Increased water productivity is a key element in achieving both water and food security. However, production is only part of the story and food security in many countries will increasingly depend on food trade. This highly political and complex international issue needs to be given urgent attention and include the critical linkage to water security.

Three things to do to achieve water-food security:

- ▶ A Task Force should be established under the auspices of the GWP to reconcile divergent views and develop a programme for water-food security.
- ▶ Governments to set policies, reform irrigation institutions and devolve more responsibilities to farmers, with help from NGOs and the private sector.
- ▶ A consultative group should be established to address food trade issues and the impact of existing food trade patterns on poor and/or water scarce nations.

Rainfed agriculture has a considerable untapped production potential. Improved plant nutrition, better moisture control at field level and drought resistant varieties can increase production significantly even without horizontal expansion. In addition, the Water for Food Vision sustainable scenario estimates that the area under irrigation must increase by 10% percent over the next 25 years, according to Vision food security estimates.

Irrigated agriculture, the source of much of the additional food needed, must in addition be modernised. Institutional structures, cost recovery, subsidies, and operation and maintenance systems all affect water use efficiency and productivity. Devolving responsibilities to water user groups is part of the solution, but it is a complicated process requiring grassroots understanding to which NGOs can contribute. Such groups require the support of efficient and responsive irrigation agencies. As in urban water services, the introduction of the private sector can be a major stimulus for improving accountability, transparency and service quality.

Divergent perceptions of irrigation – on the one hand essential for food production, on the other a wasteful and polluting water user – must be reconciled. Groups holding different views must work together to develop a common strategy. A Task Force under the auspices of the GWP should be established to bring about this convergence.

Extending sanitation coverage and hygiene education

Service coverage for the effective disposal of wastes, especially human wastes, is inadequate in most developing countries – a situation which needs to be urgently addressed on grounds both of public health and human dignity. Concerted action is needed to reduce the proportion of people without sanitation facilities by half by 2015 – an achievable target given the right incentives and investment.

Three things to do to improve environmental sanitation:

- ▶ Governments to make environmental sanitation and hygiene education a priority and establish policies and measures to promote a national drive for sanitation.
- ▶ Governments, NGOs and international and local bodies to establish effective public health education campaigns, especially in schools.
- ▶ Local communities and women's groups, with the help of NGOs, to implement collaborative self-help programmes for installing appropriate sanitary, drainage and waste disposal systems.

Without adequate facilities, the whole community suffers from heightened exposure to disease, a squalid habitat, and economic losses at household and community levels in days lost to work. Women often call for improved sanitation facilities although their demands are often unheeded. The promotion of sanitation on the basis of a 'healthy environment', a broader and socially more attractive concept than excreta disposal, can achieve a higher response rate than exclusive emphasis on sanitation as an add-on to drinking water supply programmes. Such programmes must involve all stakeholders, particularly at the household level.

Appropriate policies and institutional frameworks are of vital importance. Governments should establish laws and policies that promote environmental sanitation, and accompany these with programmes of support to local communities and authorities. Sanitation awareness campaigns and hygiene education programmes should deploy social mobilisation techniques and gain endorsement from political and religious leaders.

Meeting the challenge of urbanisation

Almost 50% of the world's population now live in towns and cities and this proportion is rapidly rising. By 2025 nearly 4 billion people will live in urban areas. The pace of urbanisation is exacerbating problems of urban water management, especially because the countries in which the process is most dramatic are those with relatively few resources.

Much more must be done to ensure that urban water and waste management is seen as a vital key component of urban planning.

Four things to do to meet the challenge of urbanisation:

- ▶ Governments, UN organisations and donors to strengthen and expand existing initiatives such as the *African Water Utilities Partnership*, *Sustainable Cities Programme* and *Cities Alliance*.
- ▶ Municipal authorities to integrate water planning with urban spatial and economic planning.
- ▶ Governments to set policy incentives for, and designers to develop, innovative technical solutions such as solar power, desalination and bio-remediation.
- ▶ Municipal authorities to prepare plans for wastewater and solid waste disposal and treatment close to the source of pollution with maximum financially feasible involvement of the stakeholders.

Much more must be done to ensure that urban water and waste management is seen as a vital key component of urban planning. At a practical level, public-private partnerships, and cost-efficient and demand management practices are required. The provision of urban services needs to move away from a model where public water service authorities provide all services, to a structure where different parties, including non-formal operators and communities, provide and manage them. Levels of service should be differentiated according to capacity and willingness to pay.

The costs of wastewater treatment can be astronomically high and there is a history of failure to meet unachievable wastewater standards in many countries. Technical information, and an approach for its application, are needed to enable users and basin authorities to define financially feasible basin-level wastewater objectives and ensure that every dollar is spent where its benefit is greatest. UNEP is, appropriately, taking the lead in developing such an approach.

The *Sustainable Cities Program* of Habitat/WHO, the *Cities Alliance* and other initiatives provide mechanisms to tackle urban challenges. Such initiatives, and the proposed *City Alliance Trust Fund*, should embrace urban water management as a priority and provide support for financing, planning, management, operation, and training.

Improving the management of floods

Floods are the most common natural disaster and cause more deaths and damage than any other type. Yet floods also sustain aquatic life and riverine biodiversity, recharge aquifers, enrich soils and, in some of the world's poorest areas, provide an important means of irrigation. The challenge is to reduce the negative impact of floods on human lives and livelihoods. Approaches should be holistic, integrated with other planning spheres at the catchment level, and also address the fact that many poor people live in high risk locations.

Three things to do to improve the management of floods:

- ▶ Governments, with donor support, to establish flood management plans to reduce the dangers to people living in floodplains.
- ▶ Governments, local communities and others to work together to establish flood forecasting and warning systems.
- ▶ Governments to promote, and community groups and NGOs to establish, watershed management programmes.

In areas of particular hazard, action to integrate flood warning systems, catchment management, disaster impact mitigation and post-disaster support measures is required. Flood management measures should be complemented by awareness campaigns that inform about flood risks and provide practical advice. Flood management should maximise positive impacts on fishery, farming and ecosystems.

Investing for a secure water future

To meet the challenges of the Framework for Action and realise the Vision, the current level of investment in water resources must double. The key challenges are to increase significantly the level of investment in water management and services and to improve the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of investments.

The scale of the investment needs for achieving water security is hard to estimate. There are no comprehensive statistics available on financial flows in water and much discrepancy between data. Estimates indicate that the total annual investment in water in developing countries is around US\$70–80 billion per year. To achieve the *Vision* implies an increase in investment in developing countries to some US\$180 billion per year. These high costs emphasise the importance of establishing optimal decision-making patterns to ensure resources go where they are most needed.

Bridging the gap

To close the current resource gap requires mobilising new sources of investment from government budgets, donors, and the local and international private sector. Appropriate policies, regulatory frameworks and incentives are needed, and service development should be integrated with the local consumer economy to generate enterprise and employment.

At present the largest investor in water services is government, often supported in developing countries by external support agencies. The balance between different investors has recently been changing in many countries, shifting to the corporate sector. Encouraging and sustaining this pattern will be increasingly important in the future if the resources gap is to be bridged.

Securing additional investment

Most international private flows have so far focused on Asia and South America. Donor funds must continue to support the poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This must be done with the objective of attracting in, rather than crowding out, private sector investments. The key is to identify the role in which each type of investor can best operate – synergy rather than competition – to produce the best results.

“In the Central and Eastern European region the ability of water resources to meet human and eco-system needs has been seriously threatened by continuing degradation of resource quality.”

Central and Eastern
Europe Vision

Targets, milestones and indicators are vital to the drive for global water security. They also boost water's political visibility.

Four things to do to ensure adequate resources for a secure water future:

- ▶ GWP to determine more accurately investment needs to achieve the Vision.
- ▶ Governments and partners to adopt measures to encourage increased domestic private investment and international private flows.
- ▶ Governments to improve the management of scarce domestic investments for the benefit of all, in particular the poorest.
- ▶ Donors, governments, civil society and private investors to work together to increase and improve the utilisation of donor funds.

A better analysis of financial flows should be undertaken in order to budget national Programmes of Action efficiently. Possible measures to secure international private flows include gaining recognition for water investments among the 'ethical investment community' (*Blue Funds* to complement *Green Funds*), and the possible establishment of an *International Water Research Foundation* or *Water Innovation Fund*, supported by private sector companies. Possible measures needed to secure domestic private investment include the development of micro-credit facilities at community level (as pioneered by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh), and the development and promotion of water-efficient products.

Measures needed to improve government investment include: the use of funds released by debt relief for investment in water services; developing guidelines for best practice; human resource development and capacity-building; and channelling environmental funds into eco-system protection. Governments must also set aside budgetary allocations to ensure access to water services for the poor and marginalised groups through welfare systems, water stamps or other means.

Measures needed to improve the utilisation of donor funds include: encouraging full cost pricing for water services – with protection for the poorest – to make water investments attractive to private investors; introducing polluter charges; and ensuring stakeholder and community participation in planning water and waste management services.

The way forward

Implementation on the ground is the only true measure of success of the Vision to Action process. The Framework for Action is a first step. Everyone concerned with the future management of the world's water – governments, international organisations, NGOs, representatives of civil society, even householders – has a role to play.

Agreeing water security targets

Targets, milestones and indicators are vital to the drive for global water security. They can boost water's political visibility, assist the mobilisation of funds, and enable programme outputs and impacts to be monitored. The indicative global water security targets will be taken forward for consideration by the OECD/DAC. Based on these indicative targets, each government is urged to develop their own national water security targets and milestones as the cornerstones of national Programmes of Action, with a full range of indicators for each target.

Completing the FFA mandate

The Global Water Partnership, an independent global network working to translate water principles into action, is committed to complete its Framework for Action and help develop Regional and National Programmes of Action. The GWP Financial Support Group will be strengthened and broadened to help mobilise external resources. The GWP will work with the growing number of coalitions and partnerships working towards water security to help sustain international water momentum. Full political commitment and adequate funding for the Programmes of Action must be secured by the Rio+10 conference in 2002.

“The challenge is how to launch an upward spiral in which water resources development and economic development become mutually supportive.”

Africa Water Vision

Four things to do to ensure immediate follow up to the Forum:

- ▶ The international community to adopt the indicative global water security targets and indicators and governments to use them as a basis for developing national targets.
- ▶ Based on the Framework for Action the GWP, in collaboration with others, to provide a co-ordinating role to help countries to develop Programmes of Action by August 2001 to feed into the Bonn conference (Dublin+10) in January 2002.
- ▶ Governments, with stakeholders, to prepare and cost national Programmes of Action and national targets for the Rio+10 conference in 2002.
- ▶ United Nations to set up a monitoring system, and report on these indicators and targets by March 2002, for inclusion in the first edition of the proposed *World Water Development Report*.

Preparing National and Regional Programmes for Action

The global FFA launched at the Forum aims to catalyse international action as a first step, but the essential action must take place primarily at national level. The GWP regional groups should continue and prepare regional Programmes of Action and assist the development of national Programmes of Action with specific targets, logical frameworks and timetables. This process will be designed between April and August 2000 and the aim is to have Programmes for Action completed by August 2001 to feed into the Dublin+10 water conference in Bonn in January 2002 and the UN Rio+10 conference later that year.

The preparation of these Programmes of Action requires commitment from governments. This is thus the first test of national political will to confront the water crisis facing their own societies and the world at large. Governments are encouraged to prepare programmes with the widest possible involvement of stakeholders and include actions for civil society, community-based partners and the private sector.

Actors for the implementation of the Programmes for Action

Progress towards achieving water security will primarily lie with governments, sub-national administrative bodies and local communities. Support will be needed from many actors, including NGOs, donors, international organisations, research and training institutes, consultants, municipal authorities, private suppliers and operators, financing institutions, professional associations, and private charitable bodies. Complementary and mutually supporting bottom-up and top-down approaches will be required.

“Co-operation strategies need to be developed on common water resource management. The Mediterranean region should also increase regional co-operation on water transfers and regional and global co-operation – not only on water but also on energy and market factors.”

Mediterranean Vision

Governments are invited to establish the required policies, laws and regulatory frameworks. Many need to revise their roles whilst opening up new roles for other actors. Support for **community management** will enable local people to take the lead in making decisions that affect their lives and design services that actually meet their needs. The **private sector** can be a force for change, introducing efficiency while generating new funds and risk-sharing ventures.

Many **external support agencies** and **intergovernmental organisations**, have an important role in supporting actions at the country level. UN organisations and multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors will have a special role. . The very large number of actors in the water domain means that **alliances and partnerships** will be needed to tackle problems holistically. Such alliances should be built around existing networks and structures at regional, national and local level.

To sustain the momentum of the Second World Water Forum there will need to be a recurrent focus on world water issues. The proposed biennial United Nations *World Water Development Report* will provide a regular up-date on progress in meeting water security targets.

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The Vision and Framework for Action – a broad-based process

The need to alert people and politicians to the fragile status of the world's water resources has led to the development of a long term Vision for Water, Life and the Environment for the 21st Century, and a Framework for Action. The Vision – an initiative of the World Water Council – was prepared under the guidance of the World Commission for Water in the 21st Century, and the Framework for Action by the Global Water Partnership.

The Vision to Action process has been designed to be as broad-based as possible and the building blocks for the development of the Vision and Framework for Action were constructed through consultations with the principal stakeholders in the major regions of the world. Through regional meetings and workshops this consultation process brought many stakeholders together – government agencies, water practitioners, UN organisations, donors, the private sector, NGOs and representatives of civil society – to establish a shared view.

The process has led to the development of many Visions from different regions and sectoral groups. All this energy and enthusiasm culminates in the World Water Forum in The Hague in March 2000. The full Framework for Action report, on which this Executive Summary is based, will be launched at a special Framework for Action day on Tuesday 21st March, 2000. The aim is to generate commitment to continue the process and develop the essential national Programmes of Action.

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