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NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED FOR 12:00AM GMT, AUGUST 21

News Release
2012/XXX/SDN

Key to African Water and Sanitation Access Lies in Completing Transition to Country-Led Service Delivery

STOCKHOLM, August 22, 2011 – According to a new report released today by the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) at the World Bank, African countries that transition to taking a leadership role in safe water and sanitation service delivery to the millions of people without access have an unprecedented opportunity to drastically reduce these numbers by 2015.

The report, *Pathways to Progress: Transitioning to Country-Led Service Delivery Pathways to Meet Africa's Water Supply and Sanitation Targets*, says economic growth, debt relief, and increasing political stability have opened up new opportunities for many African countries to take charge of their water supply and sanitation sectors and to develop sustainable service delivery pathways.

"Political stability has heavily influenced progress in improving access to water and sanitation," said the report's author and Senior Financial Specialist **Dominick de Waal**. *"Stable countries have outperformed the fragile ones by making greater increases in water supply coverage and in reducing open defecation in rural areas more markedly. They have also been more successful in keeping coverage levels up with population growth in urban water supply, and achieving more equitable access to water supply and sanitation services."*

The frontrunners have robust 'service delivery pathways' that use country systems and institutions to translate funding (donor and domestic) into actual higher numbers of people with access to services, the report says.

The report - a collection of 32 country status overview reports and a regional synthesis report - found that in these countries access to water is up by 13 percentage points since 1990 to 58% of the population in the 32 countries studied, with sanitation up by 11 percentage points to 36% of the population.

Reaching national goals for these 32 nations will require 42 million people per year to gain access to safe water, and 61 million people to access sanitation.

The report notes that accelerating progress across the countries analyzed requires increasing current funding levels by at least \$6 billion a year by raising both domestic and donor financing flows to the sector. The gap is the difference between total needs to meet these countries' targets of \$15 billion, and the anticipated finance from governments, donors, civil society organizations, and households of around \$9.5 billion per year.

"With development aid funds unlikely to meet the gap, countries will need to engage their ministries of finance," said Principal Regional Team Leader for Africa **Wambui Gichuri**. *"Analysis suggests a share of 5% of domestic revenues is an appropriate benchmark and advocacy target for domestic spending on water supply and sanitation."*

The opportunity to accelerate progress, the report says, lies in completing the transition to country-led service delivery that:

- draws on all available capacity - civil society, private, public and consumers - to implement and sustain services; and
- harmonizes and aligns aid flows with domestic and user finance, routed through country systems and institutions.

"Countries in Africa are at different stages of being able to deliver progress towards the 2015 water and sanitation goals for improved water and sanitation access," said World Bank Director for Transport, Water, and Information & Communication Technologies **Jose Luis Irigoyen**. *"Within countries, the sub-sectors (rural water, urban water, rural sanitation, urban sanitation) are at different stages of evolution, making it a challenge to target the right form of development assistance to the right place. This report provides an innovative look at the bottlenecks in subsector service delivery pathways within countries and offers recommendations on how to fill that gap."*

The report offers action steps to closing the gap. Water-related ministries can put in place and strengthen country-led, nationwide service delivery and use appropriate analyses and studies as evidence in advocating for needed financing.

Development partners can respond to needs and reward efforts by tailoring technical assistance and aid modalities to the various stages of development outlined in the report.

Ministries of finance can incrementally increase the sector's share of the domestic budget to 5% of domestic revenue and collaborate with water and sanitation ministries to link sector processes with core-government systems like budget and expenditure management.

Finally the African Ministers Council on Water can advocate for enhanced external support for water supply and sanitation and foster regional learning among peers.

The report was commissioned by the African Ministers' Council on Water. Development was led by WSP in collaboration with the African Development Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank and the World Health Organization. The report was prepared in consultation with the governments of the countries studied and other stakeholders.

"The country status overviews will enable African governments develop a deeper understanding of how progress can be accelerated in the water and sanitation sectors", says Bai-Maas Taal, Executive Secretary of AMCOW. *"There is already demand for peer-to-peer exchanges between countries to focus on common solutions for specific sector challenges."*

The Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) is a multi-donor partnership administered by the World Bank to support poor people in obtaining affordable, safe, and sustainable access to water and sanitation services. WSP's donors include Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and the World Bank

For a copy of the full report, click here: <http://www.wsp.org/wsp/content/pathways-progress-status-water-and-sanitation-africa>

Contacts:

In Washington: Christopher Walsh, +1 (202) 473-4594, or (202) 494-2456 (mobile), cwalsh@worldbank.org

In Stockholm: Sara Sultan, +1 (703) 474-2355, ssultan1@worldbank.org

In Nairobi: Toni Sittoni, +254 02 322 6316, person@worldbank.org
For Broadcast Requests: Natalia Cieslik, +1 (202) 458-9369, ncieslik@worldbank.org

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