

Press Release

New reports highlight opportunities to improve water and sanitation aid efficiency in Africa

Stockholm, Sweden – Despite increased aid commitments from European countries, water and sanitation remain dramatically underfunded across Africa, claims new information presented by the EU Water Initiative's Africa Working Group during the 2011 World Water Week in Stockholm.

The policy brief, "Improving Aid Effectiveness for Water and Sanitation in Africa" based its findings of three comprehensive reports on the distribution and impact of European aid to African states and offered recommendations to enhance the impact of aid investments.

Africa receives 60 per cent of all EU aid in the water sector. Total annual aid disbursements to African states for improved water supply and have nearly doubled, increasing from 500 to 950 million USD between 2005-2009 and accounts for 59 per cent of all development aid for water supply, sanitation and hygiene in sub-Saharan Africa.

The brief pointed out an uneven distribution of aid between recipient nations, citing that 18 countries that receive aid from at least six EU countries, while eight other nations only receive aid from only two donors. It also noted the aid has become increasingly fragmented, with increased numbers of smaller disbursements that can lead to more administration and less performance on the ground.

"Donor nations and organizations must improve the distribution, coordination and efficient use of aid and ensure that more cost-effective disbursements reach fragile states", said Dick van Ginhoven, from Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) and Co-chair of the EUWI Africa Working Group. "We must strengthen the linkage between EU water sector aid to African countries and their actual needs."

Aid for leadership needed

According to the World Health Organization, 60 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa lives without access to clean drinking water and almost one-tenth of the global disease burden could be prevented by improving water supply, sanitation, hygiene and management of water resources. Still, several countries continue to rely almost exclusively on aid for building sanitation systems and few of the nations that receive aid have fulfilled their aspiration to allocate 0,5% of GDP for sanitation and hygiene, as committed in the 2008 eThekweni declaration in South Africa.

"If we are to accelerate progress and human development, African leadership must increase priority on water and sanitation. Donor countries should provide more focused support to build capacity to drive their lead," said Bai-Mass Taal, Executive Secretary of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) at the World Water Week in Stockholm.

The policy brief is available at www.euwi.net/wg/africa

About the EU Water Initiative African Working Group

The EU Water Initiative Africa Working Group is a joint platform working on water-related development issues that seeks to make an effective joint (Africa – Europe) contribution to the achievement of water and sanitation related Millennium Development Goals. It consists of representatives from the Technical Advisory Committee of the African Ministers' Council of Water, EU Member States, the European Commission, civil society and the private sector.

Publication launch, 24 August, 13.00-13.30:

At the EUWI-AWG publication launch at the EUWI Exhibition Stand (EH 06:49), World Water Week

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