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Ensuring global co-operation to allow
universal access to clean water



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Introduction

Clean water is essential to live a healthy life and is therefore seen as a necessity to realize human rights. However, by far not everyone on this planet has access to clean water. Around 750 million people worldwide lack access to clean water, which are approximately 1 in 9 people. Every year, millions of people, predominantly children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supplies, poor hygiene and incompetent sanitation. Although over 70% of the earth consists of water, most of the water is not clean enough to be used as potable water.

This year, 2015, is the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals. A part of the Millennium Development goals is target 7C, which calls on countries to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Moreover, 2015 is the last year of the 'Water for Life' decade, a programme to encourage the international community to make bigger efforts to increase access to water and sanitation for everyone.

It is a big challenge to provide all 7.125 billion human beings on earth with the access to clean and fresh water. This is also a challenge linked to governance, as we cannot accomplish universal access to clean water if all member states do not co-operate and find feasible solutions for this global problem, together.

Definition of Key Terms

Clean Water



Clean water, also known as fresh water, can be defined as water which is safe to drink, to cook with or to use for basic sanitation. Thus, there are no dangerous bacteria in it.

Governance

Governance is an establishment of policies by the members of the governing body of an organization, in this case the United Nations. It enlarges and better illustrates what Governments should be focusing on. Governments are required to enhance the prosperity and viability of the organization. Governance ensures accountability, fairness, and transparency.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defined governance as “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences”.

Improved water source

An improved water source is defined by the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) as one that, by nature of its construction or through active intervention, is likely to be protected from outside contamination, in particular from contamination with faecal matter.

Improved sanitation facilities

The Millennium Development Goals define an improved sanitation facility as one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact.

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals, abbreviated MDGs, are the eight international development goals that were established by the United Nations in 2000 following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which was adopted following the Millennium Summit the same year. The MDGs focus the efforts of the world community on achieving significant, measurable improvements in people's lives by the year 2015.

Water well

Water wells are excavations or structures created in the ground by digging, driving, boring, or drilling to access groundwater in underground aquifers. The water is drawn using a pump or containers such as buckets that are raised mechanically or by hand.



General Overview

Access to clean water and the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals in general

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established following the Millennium Summit in order to eradicate worldwide poverty. In September 2000, 189 member countries of the United Nations signed and subsequently adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. By signing this declaration, they committed to help achieve the eight Millennium Goals. The original declaration can be found in the appendices.

The eight Millennium Development Goals are as follows:

- Goal 1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2. Achieving universal primary education
- Goal 3. Promoting gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4. Reducing child mortality
- Goal 5. Improving maternal health
- Goal 6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7. Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Goal 8. Developing a global partnership for development

Keeping in mind that the issue is about ensuring co-operation to allow universal access to clean water, we will mainly concentrate on Target 7C and the 8th Millennium Development Goal.

Target 7C

Target 7C is a part of Millennium Goal 7, through which the United Nations strives to achieve a higher availability of clean water on a global scale. Target 7C calls on countries to “halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation”. The world has met the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water, five years ahead of schedule. Between 1990 and 2012, 2.3 billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources. Over a quarter of the world’s population has gained access to improved sanitation since 1990, yet one billion people still resort to



open defecation. The vast majority (82%) of people practicing open defecation now live in middle-income, populous countries. In 2012, 748 million people remained without access to an improved source of drinking water. Despite progress, 2.5 billion in developing countries still lack access to improved sanitation facilities.

Millennium Development Goal 8

The 8th Goal of the Millennium Development Goals is to develop a global partnership for development, which can be achieved through good governance. And since our goal is to allow universal access to clean water, which is impossible without good governance combined with global partnership, MDG 8 plays a major role in our debate.

MDG 8 built on language from the Millennium Declaration which is conducive to development. It also “provided a simple, transparent and easy to understand framework”. However the 8th Millennium Goal is widely seen as a ‘weak’ goal, because it “lacked precise goals to fill or benchmarks”.

Progress on the Millennium Development Goals

In 2015, 91% of the global population is using an improved drinking water source, compared to 76% in 1990. 58% of the global population nowadays enjoys this. Globally, 147 countries have met the drinking water target, 95 countries have met the sanitation target and 77 countries have met both. This is a huge progress since the establishment of the MDGs.

However, there are still a lot of countries who have not met those targets, which means that action is still needed. And ensuring global co-operation is key to allow universal access to clean drinking water.

Clean water as a Human Right

Through General Assembly Resolution 64/292, the United Nations recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. By seeing water as a human right, and by expressing the willingness to live up to this right, the international community and governments are encouraged to enhance their efforts to satisfy basic human needs. This consequently also contributes to meeting Target 7C of the Millennium Development Goals.

Water Scarcity and population growth



Water scarcity is defined as a lack of sufficient water, or not having access to safe water supplies. The scarcity of water is increasing dramatically, as it is a daily basic necessity to a population that is growing continuously.

Clean water is an essential element to the daily life of humans and other living organisms, however 1.2 billion people lack access to clean water. The need for water grows directly proportionally to the human population growth. As the population continues to increase, there will be a higher demand for fresh water. According to The World Wildlife Federation (WWF), two out of three people of the world's population may be facing water shortages by 2025. Available freshwater supplies worldwide continue to abate. It is expected that the demand for water will increased by 40% in the coming years.

The 'Water for Life' decade

In December 2003, the United Nations proclaimed the years 2005-2015 as the "International Decade for Action 'Water for Life'". With this programme the UN wants to encourage the international community to continue, and intensify their efforts to increase access to water and sanitation. This decade aims to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015, placing special emphasis on the involvement and participation of women in these efforts.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations has tasked the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) with monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals relating target 7C, through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP). The JMP monitors the proportion of the population using improved drinking-water sources and the proportion of the population using improved sanitation facilities.

The programme uses data collected through, for example, surveys to assess the national use of improved drinking water and sanitation facilities. Furthermore, the WHO and UNICEF offices function as regional and national points of contact. They seek to work in cooperation with all major organizations involved in the water supply and sanitation sector to contribute in the efforts made to reach the MDG as well as to deliver sufficient data.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The lowest drinking water coverage levels are found in Sub-Saharan Africa. There are only three countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea) where less than half the population have access to an improved drinking water source.

Although Sub-Saharan Africa is not predicted to meet the MDG drinking water target, significant progress has been made. Since 2000, approximately 24% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa gained access to an improved drinking water source. Reaching this goal

in Sub-Saharan Africa is difficult due to internal conflicts and political instability, as well as high rates of population growth. Nevertheless, decentralizing responsibility and ownership, and providing choices of

service levels to local communities effectively accelerated the rate of

progress. It remains to be challenging to further improve the situation at hand, as financing these measures has proven to be difficult. 7 out of 10 people without access to improved sanitation facilities worldwide live in rural areas, and therefore especially these regions require proper water and sanitation systems.

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa are not on track to meet the MDG drinking water target

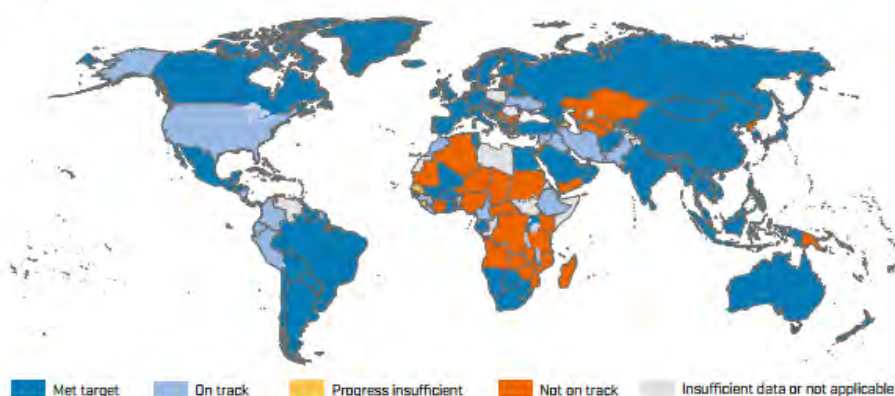


Fig. 7. Progress towards the MDG drinking water target, 2012

Progress towards MDG Drinking water target. Digital image. International Monetary Fund. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Aug. 2015.

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2012/06/picture.htm>.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
2005-2015	Water for Life Decade
2000	Establishment of the Millennium Development Goals
2010	The Right to water formally recognized.
	2010 was the year that the right to water and sanitation was officially recognized

and was officially seen as a part of the international law by the United Nations. This is an important step, since States can no longer deny their responsibility to provide safe water and sanitation for all individuals.

2015

Deadline of the Millennium Development Goals

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The United Nations have set up several projects and programs to allow universal access to clean drinking water. The most important are the Millennium Development Goals and the Water for Life decade. The Human Right to Water and Sanitation has also been a milestone.

- United Nations Millennium Declaration, 18 September 2000 ,(A/RES/55/2)
- The right to water, 20 January 2003, (General Comment No. 15)
- The human right to water and sanitation, 28 July 2010, (A/RES/64/292)
- International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, 23 December 2003, (A/RES/58/217)
- Water and the internationally agreed development goals, 5 March 2010, (A/64/694).
- Declaration of 2013 'International Year of Water Cooperation' 11 February 2011, (A/RES/65/154).

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As mentioned previously, the United Nations has been an active party in solving the issue at hand.

The Water for Life Decade was reviewed for the last time in 2010 during the 2010 Mid-term review, which took place in New York from the 8th to the 9th of June 2010. The primary objective of the conference was to undertake a mid-term review of the activities under the Water for Life Decade and chart a course for the remainder of the Decade. The review has demonstrated that there was a significant organisational response to the start of the Decade: two programmes were already created to support it. The report also depicts that the activities by UN-Water members are fully overlapping with the activities of the Decade for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.



The Millennium Development Goal 7 target 7C which the function of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation will not be achieved by 2015. An estimation of the 2013 report on the MDGs was that the target would be missed by 8%. Although there have been major advancements made and improvements towards achieving all goals before the deadline of 2015 initiated, the progress has been imbalanced between the member states.

In 2012 the United Nations Secretary-General established the "UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda", bringing together more than 60 UN agencies and international organizations to focus and work on sustainable development after the 2015 deadline of the MDGs.

Possible Solutions

Providing access to clean water, especially in the rural areas, can be achieved by drilling water wells. Setting up water wells is not very costly individually, but the expenses add up to a large sum of money, if a positive change it to be made on a global scale. Thus, funds need to be raised to financially support either existing projects, or to initiate new ones. The financial support required to fund these projects can be collected by raising awareness on the issue at hand in all member states. This would provide a simple and effective short- and long-term solution.

As mentioned previously, people living in rural areas have little access to clean water. A large part of their day is often spent walking to another water source to collect water for their daily basic needs at home. Women in such areas walk 6km on average every day, to collect water for their families. This clearly illustrates the lack of a proper water distribution system. Consequently a major step in making drinking water accessible is improving the infrastructure and building pipelines. Once the pipelines are built, it is still of major importance to monitor and control the water quality regularly. 2 million humans die yearly because of diarrhoea disease caused by poor drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. Frequent water tests should be made and experts on the issue should be consulted, by working in close collaboration with local authorities, governments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Good hygiene practices and access to sanitation facilities are critical to achieving sustainable improvements in community health. If clean water is available in households and hygiene practices are routinely followed, health benefits will be significant. Without a good



understanding of how to maintain proper hygiene and prevent infection by water borne diseases, the health benefits of safe water and sanitation can be easily lost. Therefore inter alia good education is required.

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