

THE SDS G20 INITIATIVE
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A Commitment to Provision of Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation (SDS) to all by 2025
Prof John Okedi

Background to the Communiqué

- ❖ The G20 Group recognise the importance of safe drinking water and sanitation for the health and socio-economic development of the nationals of their countries. They also recognise the negative impacts of unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation on the economies of their countries. In developing countries, the poor of the rural, urban and peri-urban sections of the society form 80 per cent or more of the total population and they are the worst affected by lack of clean safe drinking water and unhygienic sanitation.
- ❖ The G20 countries have in most cases enshrined Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in their national constitutions. This Principle means that the citizens are entitled to a healthy and productive life. The G20 countries firmly believe that safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right for all peoples is an essential element for sustainable human development. In consequence, it ought to be a constitutional right for the citizens of the G20 countries to enjoy a healthy and productive environment with safe drinking water and good sanitation for all.
- ❖ Provision of drinking water in the rural areas of the developing world, particularly in Africa, is characterized by women and children as the dominant players. This is in addition to their other key domestic chores such as gardening, collecting fuel wood, cooking, cleaning, caring for the sick and the elderly. But due to societal and cultural norms, the women are marginalized and sidelined when it comes to decision making on issues of water resource management.
- ❖ The G20 group, therefore, needs to have a clear appreciation of who the major players in the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation are in their societies. In the majority of developing countries, the poor, the women and the children are key players in provision of drinking water and in sanitation. It is therefore imperative that all decisions on this matter must take cognizance of this fact.
- ❖ There are clearly huge global and localised problems in securing safe drinking water and good sensitisation for all in the G20 countries. Some of these problems impinge on availability of funds, lack of local capacity, complexities in technologies, global political implications, lack of access to viable water sources, poor transport and communication systems particularly in developing countries.

- ❖ In recognition of the importance of clean drinking water and sanitation to the health and socio economic development of our peoples, the leaders of the G20 Group commit our countries to put in place and to enforce intensified global and national efforts to create mechanisms through which our governments and peoples can effectively address unhygienic conditions in which our people are living and their inability to secure safe and clean drinking water. The G20 countries therefore commit themselves to abide by, and to implement in all their intent and purpose, the following strategies and mechanisms which are aimed at providing clean drinking water and safe sanitation to all our peoples by the year 2025.

The Proposed Communiqué

The G20 countries are committed to improving the delivery of safe drinking water and sanitation services to their people by the year 2025. This will be done through implementation of programs to provide;

- tap water where possible
- protected springs
- deep wells
- shallow wells
- gravity flow schemes
- rain water harvesting,
- good sanitation

The main aim of this is ultimately to improve the quality of life of the people and to alleviate poverty.

The Actions

Policy, Legal and Institutional Actions

The G20 Group asserts as the next two decades' development objective the improvement of the living conditions of their peoples through better access to clean and safe drinking water and safe and sustainable sanitation more particularly for the poor sections of the society in both the rural and urban settings of the populations. To achieve this objective, therefore, the G20 countries commit their governments to:

- enact legislative frameworks to enforce the implementation of Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development regarding the right of their citizens to enjoy a healthy and productive environment. In essence, the G20 will operationalize this principle by ensuring availability of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation to all their citizens. The G20 therefore directs all member states to achieve this by 2025.
- build organs and institutions to oversee all affairs of safe drinking water and sanitation at national, regional, district, county, sub-county, parish and village level. Where such organs already exist, to empower them and to ensure that

they are sufficiently well staffed and financed to enable them to operate smoothly.

- pursue new approaches to ensure the equitable participation of women in all decision making processes in safe water and sanitation programs.
- target the women, children and the poor whilst implementing investment projects in the water and sanitation sector. This will make them agents of change for maximum impact.
- direct their Ministers to institute strategies in the water and sanitation sector that will encourage gender equity and alleviate poverty through equitable and full participation of women in the control of resources for the development and use of clean safe water and sanitation within their communities.
- ensure that, in implementing safe water and sanitation projects, special activities will be identified to be performed by the women, children, the elderly and the disabled so as to meet their special needs and to inculcate maximum ownership of the projects in their communities.
- recognize that the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation for communities cannot be achieved single-handedly. The Group, therefore commits their governments to work in a broad cross sectoral collaborative manner, involving various government ministries, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, development partners, men and women, in order to achieve equitable usage of clean safe drinking water and sanitation for all by 2025.
- mandate their ministers to set medium term targets of 10 to 15 year frameworks within which best practices are recorded as lessons learnt for adoption in follow on programs meant for 100 per cent target achievement of the development goal by 2025.
- note that provision of safe drinking water and good sanitation to communities is one thing, but that the maintenance and repair of the services and the infrastructure is another. The capacity of service users to undertake routine maintenance will be dependent on such factors as the complexity of technology used, the quality of materials used for construction, the perceptions of local communities and the degree of user participation in decision making and operation and maintenance arrangements. Programs for sustainable management and use of safe water and sanitation facilities must therefore take these factors into due regard.
- use bottom up approaches to design, develop and implement, national, regional, district and community level policies and plans for safe water and sanitation including procedures for the establishment of benchmarks, monitoring and evaluation. It is imperative that budgets are drawn and finances are made available for the planned activities at all levels.
- establish cross sectoral Water and Sanitation User Committees at community and higher levels to oversee and coordinate management of the services. It is

important to ensure that the committees are all embracing and representative of all sections of the user community including NGOs, CBOs, development partners and women. The local authority and government should be represented as ex officio members of the committees.

- ensure that the committees meet regularly, that minutes are kept, that there is an accurate record of financial transactions and that an annual inspection be conducted for the activities of the committees and the performance of the service in question.
- Ensure that the committees work in collaboration with and with the help of the ministries of health, education, gender, water, environment, lands and others, the committees should track service user figures, awareness levels, quality of participation, improvements in patterns of water borne diseases including malaria, diarrhoea, typhoid and parasitic diseases.
- Require that the committees must produce reports annually on safe drinking water trends, hygiene and sanitation changes in their localities.

Build adequate capacity

The G20 group, recognizes the urgent need to develop and manage safe drinking water and sanitation facilities sustainably. The G20 countries, therefore, instruct that the following measures be instituted to ensure sustainable management of the safe water and sanitation facilities when these are put in place.

Build the capacity of communities to:

- to draw up plans and budgets;
- to select suitable and appropriate technologies;
- to manage the services;
- to select private operators to run the services;
- to carry out cleaning and repairs;
- to pay for the maintenance costs of the services;
- to package standardized hygiene and sanitation guidelines;
- to enforce guidelines;
- to organise service user welfare;
- to ensure quality of products and services;
- to lobby donor funding; and
- to make progress reports and account for funds received and spent.

Targets and Indicators

It has been amply demonstrated that lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation are one of the biggest health and environmental problems facing developing countries. This has caused high mortality and morbidity, raised medical bills and affects socio-economic development negatively.

The G20 group, therefore, directs that safe drinking water and suitable sanitation facilities must be established and provided to the populations of the member countries in accordance with the following targets and time frame. During implementation of these activities, indicators of success of the program must be provided along side the targets.

- **Rural Safe Drinking Water Supply**
The number of people with access to a safe or improved drinking water source within one km must be raised from the current 20-60 per cent in various countries to 100 per cent by 2025.
- **Urban Safe Drinking Water Supply**
The number of people with access to a safe or improved water source within 0.2 km must be raised from the current 20-60 per cent to 100 per cent by 2025.
- **Access to Sanitation in Rural Areas: Pit Latrines**
Current access to pit latrines in the G20 countries varies anywhere between 10% to 80%, according to the individual country. This must be raised to 100% access by 2025.
- **The ECOSAN Latrines**
The concept of the use of the ECOSAN Latrines (Ecological Sanitation Latrines) is becoming very popular. The G20 countries now require that all schools and public institutions adopt the use of the ECOSAN Latrines by 2025. ECOSAN latrines are efficient, ecologically sustainable and ensure re-cycling of essential nutrients into the ecosystem.
- **Access to Sanitation in Urban Areas**
Access to running water sanitation systems in urban settings in developing countries is a huge problem. The service is restricted to anywhere between 10-50% of urban populations. The rest of the population use anything from pit latrines to disposable polyethylene bags. The G20 now directs that all urban and peri-urban centres without access to running water build pit latrines to serve up to 50% of the population by 2025. The rest of the population in the urban areas without running water systems i.e. the other 50% are required to establish ECOSAN latrines by 2025.
- **Access to Hand-washing Facilities in Rural and Urban Areas**
The washing of hands after visiting the latrine or toilet is a very important and essential hygienic practice. It protects the population from infectious diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid and a host of parasitic diseases. However, this habit is little practised in many developing countries let alone the use of soap and water for washing hands after these necessary episodes. The G20 group, therefore, directs that where there is a toilet, pit latrine or ECOSAN toilet in either urban or rural areas, hand washing facilities be provided together with a wash basin, soap and water with bold instructions in a commonly understood language requiring users to wash their hands after the use of the facility. The hand washing facilities must be provided in all the identified locations by 2025.