

Chapter 18

Guiding Principles

The purpose of this chapter is to take a step back and see the big picture, so that the messages in this book may be viewed against broader perspectives.

- *We neglect history at our peril. Lord Raleigh once observed that a lack of understanding of history meant that the heights of technical achievement were reconquered again and again at great intellectual expense.*
- *Sensitivity and compassion must be at the root of any development project.*
- *Success in the past came because the people who ran (an undertaking) had a stake in it.*
- *Security of supply is important.*

Bob Norman, past President, Institution of Professional Engineers, New Zealand. *Engineering Heritage: Artifact or Instrument?* Keynote address, ALGENZ Conference, Dunedin, New Zealand. (Norman, 1998)

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- *In just the first 10 weeks of the cholera epidemic in Peru, losses from reduced agricultural exports and tourism were estimated at \$1 billion, or more than three times the amount invested in water and sanitation services in the whole country during the 1980s.*

John Briscoe, World Bank. *When the Cup is Half Full. Article for Environment—Water and Sanitation Success Stories.* (Briscoe, 1993)

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- *Our voice must be for those whose access is always threatened—the poor, the slum dweller, the dispossessed.*
- *We know that women are the key, even if we don't use the key yet. Women must be written into the water equation. It takes courage to break the mold.*

- *Data is not information. Information is not knowledge, and knowledge is not wisdom.*
- *There is enough water. It is only that we do not use it wisely enough.*

Margaret Catley-Carlson, former Chairperson, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. (Catley-Carlson, 1997)

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- *What we did in Curitiba was essentially a partnership with the people.*
- *We planted one million trees.*
- *Separate used water. This represents a colossal economy and the possibility of treating effectively all the city sewage, avoiding river pollution.*
- *What will make cities different is their ability to reconcile with nature and their inhabitants.*

Mayor Jaime Lerner of Curitiba, Brazil. *Intervention in Curitiba, Brazil. Paper presented at the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council Meeting, Rabat.* (Lerner, 1993)

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- *The Asian vision requires urgent action to reach the underserved and unserved population.*
- *It requires good governance and compassion for transparency and accountability and corruption-free practices.*
- *We agree on a gender-sensitive, people-centered, and self-reliant development model that promotes consultation and dialogue between and among all stakeholders, empowering those who are socially and economically disadvantaged.*

Vision 21 of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, 2000)

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We need a water ethic, a guide to the right conduct in the face of complex decisions about natural systems we do not and cannot fully understand. The essence of such an ethic is to make the protection of water ecosystems a central goal in all that we do. It is no more radical a notion than suggesting that a building be given a solid foundation before raising it 10 storeys high. Water is the basis of life and our stewardship of it will determine not only the quality but the staying power of human societies. Living by such an ethic would mean using less whenever we can and sharing what we have. The challenge is to put as much human ingenuity into learning to live in balance with water as we have into controlling and manipulating it. The last oasis is conservation, efficiency, recycling, and reuse.

Sandra Postel. *Last Oasis—Facing Water Scarcity*. (Postel, 1997)

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Guiding Principles in a Nutshell

- Learn from history. Success in the past came because the people who ran an undertaking had a stake in it.
- Partner with the people and civil society.
- Plant a million trees.
- There should be a sustainable water ethic for all.
- Good governance is at the core.
- Target the underserved and those not served.
- Remember the epidemics.
- Write women into the equation.