

## Statement on Water and Poverty for the Ministerial Conference of the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum

### **Key Issues: What role can improved water management play in poverty reduction?**

The links between poverty and water security are widely understood and are enshrined in goals agreed in the Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Achieving these goals will bring immediate and lasting benefits in poverty reduction through improved health, productivity and dignity for poor people.

Improved water management can also make the livelihoods of poor people more productive and sustainable. Water is a key input into many livelihood activities such as agriculture and home-based enterprises and is critical to large-scale economic development. Water management plays a critical role in conserving and sustaining the natural resource base and is pivotal in reducing the vulnerability to hazards such as floods and droughts that impoverish so many. Improved water management can play a key role in promoting gender and social equity.

### **What actions can improve the water security of the poor?**

- The delivery of improved water services (including both the quantity and quality of water), sanitation and hygiene and the management of water resources, guided by good policies and governance that improve equity and target the most vulnerable in society.
- The specific needs and opportunities of poor people identified and targeted as a priority in water management, even where this may affect other development objectives.
- Empower poor people, and especially women and other highly vulnerable groups, to be meaningfully involved in decisions over services and the management of water resources.
- Governments should include pro-poor water management as a key element in national poverty reduction strategies and associated programs with external support agencies.
- Improve the access of poor people to water resources by better governance to secure the rights and entitlements of the poor, especially for women, through reforms to laws, policies, institutional mandates, and participatory processes for decision-making.
- Higher investments in water infrastructure and services that meet poor people's water needs, supported by capacity building in poor communities and service providers.
- Improve advocacy for, awareness of and knowledge on pro-poor water policies and management by active campaigns that involve all stakeholders.
- Define and put in place strategies to achieve clear targets and indicators, based on international commitments for poverty reduction and water security

### **Recommendations: Pro-Poor Partnerships for Water Security**

Meeting these challenges will require all stakeholders to be active participants, through partnerships that are based on common but differentiated responsibilities to improve the water security of poor communities. Such partnership arrangements will create a basis for water and poverty action initiatives that bring early and tangible benefits at local levels to achieve major improvements to water security for poor people.

These water and poverty action initiatives should support effective national policies and strategies for poverty reduction and water investments: water management alone will not solve poverty problems and poverty will not be reduced without improved water security for the poor.

This draft statement results from preparatory consultations of the Water and Poverty Initiative (WPI) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum. Comments are welcome and can be sent to John Soussan, Water and Poverty Theme Coordinator, at [johnsoussan@hotmail.com](mailto:johnsoussan@hotmail.com), with copy to Wouter Lincklaen Arriens, WPI Coordinator, at [wlincklaenarriens@adb.org](mailto:wlincklaenarriens@adb.org), or through feedback at Water for All - [www.adb.org/water](http://www.adb.org/water).