

Session Report Cover Sheet

SESSION CODE: POVE-02-2-nd session of the afternoon	
Name of Convener(s): Shareen Latif	
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Contact information in Japan	Accommodation: Room D
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1. Key Issues

While only one of the MDGs mentions water specifically, all of them are impacted by access to water in one way or another. For instance, halving worldwide hunger heavily depends on better water management. Secure and easy access to drinking water frees women and girls from a heavy physical burden and allows them more time for productive activities and education. While better water management on its own is insufficient to alleviate poverty, none of the MDGs can be achieved without better water management.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) now play an important role in directing national and international development activities. Some people are in favor of focusing on PRSPs, while others believe that a separate strategy is needed to address the Millennium Development goals. Most agree that in the PRSPs there is too much emphasis on the economics and too little on the social sector indicators.

There was a lot of discussion on the PRSPs. Participants pointed out that in many cases they were not produced in a participatory way. Panel members agreed that participation of the people and civil society in drafting the PRSPs is crucial. They pointed out that outside agencies cannot do much to effect this process but that the local people have to put pressure on their governments to make the process more participatory.

There was disagreement on the need for large scale interventions. Some participants were in favor of large projects arguing that they have helped create wealth in many countries. Others emphasized the negative impact of many of such project on the poor.

2. Key quotations

Dirk R Frans (Water and Poverty Initiative)

To ensure pro-poor water resource development, government and donor agencies must use pro-poor indicators.

Man-made disasters, such as displacement due to building large dams (40-80 million in the last

century), must be prevented as much as possible. If there is not other option people affected should be properly compensated.

Empowering local communities by implication means the present power-holders (government agencies and donors) must give up some of their power.

Robert Lenton (Columbia University)

We must look at all the Millennium Development Goals as a set. We want to capture the synergies and do not want to achieve one target at the expense of the others. Water has a key role to play in all the 8 MGDs. We need a more integrated approach so that one approach does not negatively affect other goals.

Belinda Calaguas (WaterAid)

We know that access to water and sanitation is linked to achieving the other poverty reduction goals. Yet, there is a historical under-investment in water and sanitation and those investments are ineffectively targeted at the poor and inefficiently used.

There is a discontinuity between the water reform agenda and the strategies. For example one of the reforms focuses on demand-responsive approaches. To achieve that, communities need to be assisted so that it can make their demands heard. But very little of the strategies address this point.

The different actors in the water sector need to work together and reach out to other sectors to work to reduce poverty.

Sir Richard Jolly: WSSCC

Economic growth is not a prerequisite for achieving other development goals. Yet to sustain action in achieving the Millennium Development Goals you need economic growth.

People themselves are already doing fantastic things. However, we need to change the laws as the poor are waiting for a space to get on. They are not waiting to be mobilized.

In some schools there is competition between classes to keep latrines clean and they are. But to do so, they need water.

Henri Smets: (Academie de l' Eau Francais)

Local solidarity between the rich and the poor to reduce water cost for the poor is financially bearable for the rich and socially useful to the poor. However in very poor communities this is not possible because there are too many poor and they need outside help... international solidarity is needed.

Aswald M. Chanda: Zambia

Partnerships in urban water supply and sanitation have worked. If you involve people right from the start, then you have success.

Rokeya Ahmed (DSK)

In 2002 Dhaka Water And Sanitation Agency started to scale up the water supply to the poor project with the help of International NGOs.

Richard Leete: UNFPA

Population pressures are neglected in the 3-rd WWF, though its impacts on demand across the board. The human development index shows a clear inverse relationship with total fertility rate per women.

3. Actions

4. Commitments

5. Recommendations