

**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB) AND
THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL'S ADVISORY BOARD ON WATER AND
SANITATION (UNSGAB)**

1. Lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation is a global concern. It is a specific concern in Asia and the Pacific where about 700 million people, mainly poor, lack access to safe drinking water and nearly 2 billion to sanitation.¹ Managing Asia's water resources efficiently, providing access to those who are unserved, or inefficiently served, investing in safe and sustainable sanitation, and using nature's most life-sustaining resource wisely are key issues in the water and sanitation sector. These issues need to be urgently addressed if Asia is to achieve Target 10 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving the number of people without access to safe water and sanitation by 2015.

2. The key concerns in water and sanitation include (i) the financing of rehabilitation and expansion projects for both water and sanitation, and (ii) investing in structural reform of water and sanitation utilities and in building their capacities to enable international quality performance. To address these concerns, the Asian Development Bank has, in 2006, announced a significant Water Financing Program to double its investments in water to over \$2 billion annually and to correspondingly increase its technical assistance to help prepare feasibility studies and to undertake long-term capacity building programs across the sector.² ADB has also established a Water Financing Partnership Facility to support WFP. Currently targeted at \$100 million, the facility will provide resources that augment knowledge development and capacity building efforts.³

3. UNSGAB's Hashimoto Action Plan⁴ (HAP) spells out six specific actions to help achieve MDG targets relating to water and sanitation with which international financial institutions need to be concerned : (i) Water Operators' Partnerships, (ii) Financing of water and sanitation projects, (iii) Sanitation, (iv) Monitoring and reporting, (v) Integrated water resources management, and (vi) water and disaster.

4. UNSGAB is mandated to promote global action on water and sanitation issues. It comprises members who are distinguished in their field and are noted for influencing government policy and actions, working with the private sector, media, and civil society, and in mobilizing awareness. It supports the global water agenda and provides individual agencies with a forum for enhancing opinion formation and action development.

5. ADB is well placed as a regional development finance institution, with a strong comparative advantage in the water and sanitation sector, to not only enhance the volume of direct investments in the sector but also to leverage considerable additional resources from official and private sources. Also, ADB is positioned to provide significant policy advice and promote capacity development that will enable the sustainable development of water resources for improved access.

¹ ADB, UNDP, UNESCAP, WHO. 2006. *Asia Water Watch 2015*.

² <http://www.adb.org/Water/Operations/WFP/default.asp>

³ <http://www.adb.org/Water/WFPF/default.asp>

⁴ UNSGAB Compendium of Actions (March 2006)

3. Given the commonality of objectives and purpose of UNSGAB and ADB in regard to water and sanitation, the both bodies have agreed to collaborate in a number of areas listed below: In taking these actions, both will take cross cutting issues such as health, gender and environment duly into consideration.

- (i) ADB will actively promote the Water Operators' Partnerships (WOPs) program in Asia and the Pacific and will also support Global WOPs. It will help establish water utility networks and situate WOPs within them with financial and technical support. WOPs will endeavor to visibly promote improved utility performance by utilities learning from each other, and through incentive-based, performance-related partnerships on not-for-profit basis. Regional programs will be established. UNSGAB will support ADB in accessing resources to finance WOPs and to provide a much needed bridge to similar networks and partnerships across the world.
- (ii) ADB will enhance the volume of official development assistance to water and sanitation through its Water Financing Program and will support this program through the Water Financing Partnership Facility. UNSGAB will assist ADB in accessing resources for this facility and in liaising with donor governments on the continuing results of the program and the facility.
- (iii) ADB will enhance its attention and focus on sanitation through both specific and general capacity building programs that address wastewater management, hygiene and household facilities as well as rural sanitation needs and re-use oriented approaches as actions in support of the International Year of Sanitation and beyond according to its Objectives. ADB will also work with UN-HABITAT to develop specific programs on capacity building for sanitation in the region. UNSGAB will support ADB through accessing knowledge and good practice, and in leveraging resources for enhanced programs in sanitation.
- (iv) As stated explicitly in ADB's Water Policy, ADB will continue to promote integrated water resources management (IWRM) as best practice in sustainably harnessing and exploiting Asia's water resources. UNSGAB will support ADB in its dialogue with governments, and multilateral organizations that address transboundary water management issues, so as to focus rapidly and increasingly on the development and implementation of comprehensive IWRM plans taking into consideration the fact that the UN USG invited all countries to report progress of plans and implementation of IWRM at CSD16 in 2008.
- (v) ADB will proactively monitor and report on the outcomes of its investments in water and sanitation. It will also support national and local governments in establishing improved monitoring and reporting systems. Such monitoring and reporting will also extend to WOPs, and other water-related initiatives supported by ADB. UNSGAB will assist ADB in disseminating its reports and in consolidating the Asian picture in water and sanitation.
- (vi) ADB will enhance its involvement in helping countries in the region to be better prepared for water disaster and swift provision of water during and after disaster taking into consideration increasing risk due to climate change. UNSGAB will support these actions through advocacy and high level dialogue with governments in the region. ADB will also support UNSGAB's initiatives on water and disaster.

- (vii) ADB will provide information to UNSGAB for monitoring the actions taken in the Asian region with regard to HAP. Based on that, UNSGAB intends to suggest concrete plans to implement HAP in the Region with achievable time line and budget to set examples for other regions to show that they can be done in reasonable budget and time frame in sustainable ways, thereby paving concrete ways to achieve MDG 7 and Target 10.

7. UNSGAB will also support ADB in organizing select expert group meetings to review and advise on the actions listed above, and to help persuade stakeholders to accept and implement recommendations. UNSGAB will also make known the actions taken as above as appropriate input to international dialogue processes such as CSD 16 and the 5th World Water Forum in 2009 so that Asian experiences on HAP are broadly shared with international community thereby benefiting the other Regions. Similarly, UNSGAB will also collaborate with ADB in supporting the newly established Asia-Pacific Water Forum that is targeted at creating a more effective network of water agencies in Asia to stimulate knowledge development and action in key result areas. Both UNSGAB and ADB will periodically review the progress of their joint work.

8. UNSGAB and ADB expect that this collaboration will add value to their joint objective of helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals related to water and sanitation in Asia. They look forward to working together effectively in the future.

For the Asian Development Bank

Signed

Ursula Schaefer-Preuss
Vice President
Asian Development Bank

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For the UNSGAB

signed

H.R.H the Prince of Orange
Chairperson
UNSGAB