

WASH – STREAMS LATIN AMERICA CONSULTATION Bogotá, Colombia, 30th September and 1st October 2004

RESULTS

At the Latin America Consultation between 29th November and 3rd December in Dakar, Senegal, a vision for the Global WASH Forum was created, with the aim of “to accelerate action in water, sanitation and hygiene towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan.”

38 people from 10 different countries participated in the Latin American consultation. Seven of the countries are part of the region –Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru¹- and three are from other regions –the Philippines, the Netherlands and South Africa. Among the participants, there were individuals linked to governments, and professionals from national and international organisations who work on finance, information, science and technology (See Appendix A – Participant List).

The final consensus on recommendations to achieve the MDGs using regional experience was reached after listening to speeches and work in five groups on the following aspects: financing, alliances, local government and public policy. A fifth group worked on suggestions for improving the Council's work in Latin America.

The Consultation participants supported the proposal that the next Collaborative Council meeting of the Latin American Chapter be held in Honduras, the new Water Capital. The results of the work carried out during the Consultation are summarised below.

Equity, disasters, residual water and service quality: challenges in Latin America

Despite being the region with the highest average coverage in water and sanitation after North America and Europe, there is great inequality between countries in Latin America and within the countries themselves. The poverty of the majority of the population and external debt² are structural problems that affect the region. The least developed locales are the smallest, which make up the majority of populated areas. In the mid 1990s, there were 14,028 municipalities in 19 Latin American countries and 74% had less than 20,000 inhabitants.

Rural populations and inhabitants of marginal urban areas, especially indigenous people and black communities have the worst conditions. In the year 2000, people living in rural areas represented 27% of the population but made up 63% of the people without access to drinking water and 56% of those without access to safe sanitation. This inequity is more accentuated in indigenous communities. For example, in Colombia, where the national water and sanitation coverage were 70% and 61% respectively in 2002, in the rural zone, only 14% of the population had safe water and 45% had sanitation. For the 84 indigenous groups native to Colombia, who are a little more than 2% of the total population, the situation is no better. For instance, 6% of their water supply systems had a treatment plant.

Two other problems must be urgently tackled in Latin America and the Caribbean: urban residual water treatment and the sustainability of water and sanitation systems when natural disasters occur.

¹ There was participation from representatives of countries from each of the three subregions: the Southern Cone, the Andean zone, and Central America. There was also good representation from agencies that work in the region

² Colombia has approximately 44 million inhabitants, has approved a budget for 2005 of 93 billion pesos (\$35 billion USD) of which it will spend 32 billion pesos (\$12.3 billion USD) on external debt payments. The national revenue through taxes is 40 billion pesos (\$15.4 billion USD).

In 1988, approximately 600 m³/s of residual water was produced, of which 516 m³/s, or 86% was dumped into rivers and seas with no treatment or was reused. Especially relevant to public health issues is the fact that approximately half a million hectares under agriculture in Latin America are watered directly with untreated residual water, and more than a million hectares are watered with residual water that has not been sufficiently treated or has been diluted. In addition, between 1999 and 2003, natural disasters caused losses of almost \$400 million USD in water and sanitation systems³.

For reference, Tables 1 and 2 show the investment made in the region during 1999-2000 and the estimates for meeting the Millennium Goals by 2015.

Table 1. Investment made in 1999-2000 (million USD)

	Urban	Rural	Total
Drinking water	1,894	516	2,410
Sanitation	1,443	60	1,503

Table 2. Estimated Investment Needs 2000-2015

	Investment (million USD)		Beneficiaries (million)
	Period 2000- 2015	Per year	
Drinking water	16,454	1,097	121.4
Improved sanitation	22,019	1,500	140
Residual water treatment	17,732	1,181	289

Source: OMS/OPS (2001), *Regional report on the year 2000 evaluation in the Americas Region – Drinking water, the current state and perspectives. (Informe regional sobre la evaluación 2000 en la región de las Américas – Agua potable y saneamiento, estado actual y perspectivas)*, Washington, D.C, OPS.

IDB (2003), *The Millennium Goals and investment needs in Latin America and the Caribbean (Las metas del milenio y las necesidades de inversión en América Latina y el Caribe)*, SD.

Towards alliances that systematise and socialise learning

Establishing alliances within countries, both sectorial and intersectorial, between countries in the region and between these countries and agencies from other regions of the world, has been a key factor for making progress on the MDGs. Through efficient and flexible administrative structures, community participation, low cost experience exchange, the chance to access financial sources has been facilitated, and national borders have been transcended. Successful alliances have happened when the partners have complementary specializations and when programme and project formulation is worked on with the beneficiary communities.

It is recommended that clear indicators as well as follow-up and impact evaluation systems are established for work in alliances. Setting up intersectorial alliances was suggested, which include the Health Ministries of the countries, as well as establishing regional alliances (Southern Cone, Andean Zone and Central America) which would work as networks and take on the responsibility of systematising good practice in the water and sanitation sector, generating conditions for institutionalization. The results of the work in groups is shown in Appendix B.

³ In Honduras in 1998, during Hurrricane Mitch, because of floods and river overflows, as well as innumerable landslides, 1,318 aqueducts were damaged, 3,130 manual water pumps lost, 51,435 latrines were both lost and damaged, which meant around 4.5 million Hondurans (75% of the total population) had deteriorated or suspended water and sanitation services.

Financing: focusing on the poor and recognising the need for subsidies.

The first observation that came up in the work group was that the quality of information for taking decisions on costs in order to meet the MDGs should be improved (See work group results in Appendix C). Therefore, the sector's financing runs into structural problems like high levels of debt in the countries and most of the population's low ability to pay. Another very common problem in the region is the marked tendency to allocate economic resources to urban areas, which affects rural zones and smaller towns, and therefore, they have lower coverage indicators.

The positive elements highlighted were that governments have improved their economic valuing of water resources, and work experiments with low-cost alternative technology have been consolidated. Local and national governments, and in some cases, international cooperation agencies, have participated in financing for these projects.

The experiences in the region show that although the sector's financial base is the tariff, this should include subsidy mechanisms with clear controls so that resources get to the poorest. Technology selection processes must obey minimum cost analyses and environmental regulation must be directed by sustainable human development guidelines.

Local governments: legally responsible, but without enough resources

Latin America has made progress on decentralisation, which has generated, amongst other positive elements, better organisation and participation of communities. The majority of Latin American countries now have resources for water and sanitation allocated by law.

However, there is a series of obstacles that limit better performance from local governments: legal frameworks favour large urban areas, institutional organisation and technical capacity is still weak, especially in the smallest municipalities, and in many cases, the financial resources and support from other territorial entities are not proportionate to their responsibilities.

It is considered very important to focus on the role of local government in meeting the MDGs, but this global initiative must be explained to them. Equally, new management and contracting models for service supply must be created, financial resources for municipalities must be improved, the roles of their stakeholders within the decentralization process must be defined more clearly, and the legal frameworks must be adjusted to conditions for small urban areas and rural zones.

There has been progress on documentation and access to electronic information like the PAHO/CEPIS Virtual health Library, but there are severe problems with access to information by local stakeholders in small urban and rural areas. Strengthening the role of national resource centres through proposals such as those put forward by IRC o Streams of Knowledge has been recommended to overcome these problems.

Opportunities for good practice exchange between local governments need to be improved, as has been mentioned in this Consultation. The work group results are shown in Appendix D.

National public policy that integrates the MDGs and is directed at the poorest populations

National governments in the region are improving their knowledge on water and sanitation issues. This can be seen in national policies that value water resources and lobby for integral management with a business ethos, in which, for example, the concrete responsibilities of operators when dealing with river basins, are taken into account.

As regards the MDGs, in general, there is no relation between national policy and meeting the MDGs beyond the rhetoric, especially in terms of setting targets and finding financing for achieving them.

There should be clarity not only in terms of the responsibilities of each territorial level, but also of the financial strategies and resources for their achievement and of the follow-up and evaluation mechanisms. The guidelines and strategies for serving different ethnic groups and populations in marginal urban areas, small urban areas and rural areas must be made explicit in public policy. Equally important is explaining strategy on institutionalising the right technology for these contexts and participation and empowerment of the communities that operate and maintain the systems. This should guarantee technical, financial and environmental sustainability. National policy should include issues like hygiene education, rational water use and service payment. Linking the media to these initiatives is considered very important for public awareness and policy socialization. The results of the work group are shown in Appendix E.

Route map suggested to the Council in Latin America

The group proposes that, using the MDGs as a guide and with poverty and inequality eradication, service quality improvement and sustainable use as priorities, guidelines must be developed that aim at (see Figure 1):

- Strengthening key stakeholders to provide services for the poor, which implies improvement of information and training mechanisms, stakeholder empowerment and their insertion in decision making processes.
- Development and use of technology and management models associated with the bottlenecks that make service to the poor difficult in the region. This implies technological adaptation, innovation and cost minimising.
- Coordination with other key stakeholders in society linked to poverty reduction goals.

With respect to improving the Council's action strategy in the region, the following is proposed:

- Increase the number of Council regional facilitators to three, so that the Southern Cone, the Andean Region and Central America are represented.
- Identify a group of between 9 and 12 people who serve as immediate interlocutors for the facilitators. The individuals would be selected from those recognised for their work in favour of the MDGs, and would come from different countries and sectors (government, NGOs, users, service providers, research, development and training centres, etc.)
- Take advantage of the existing networks and promote information exchange between them.
- Promote and expand the meeting sessions (both virtual and physical) of these groups, including people associated with technical and financial cooperation agencies from the United Nations system, donors, and international NGOs active in Latin America.

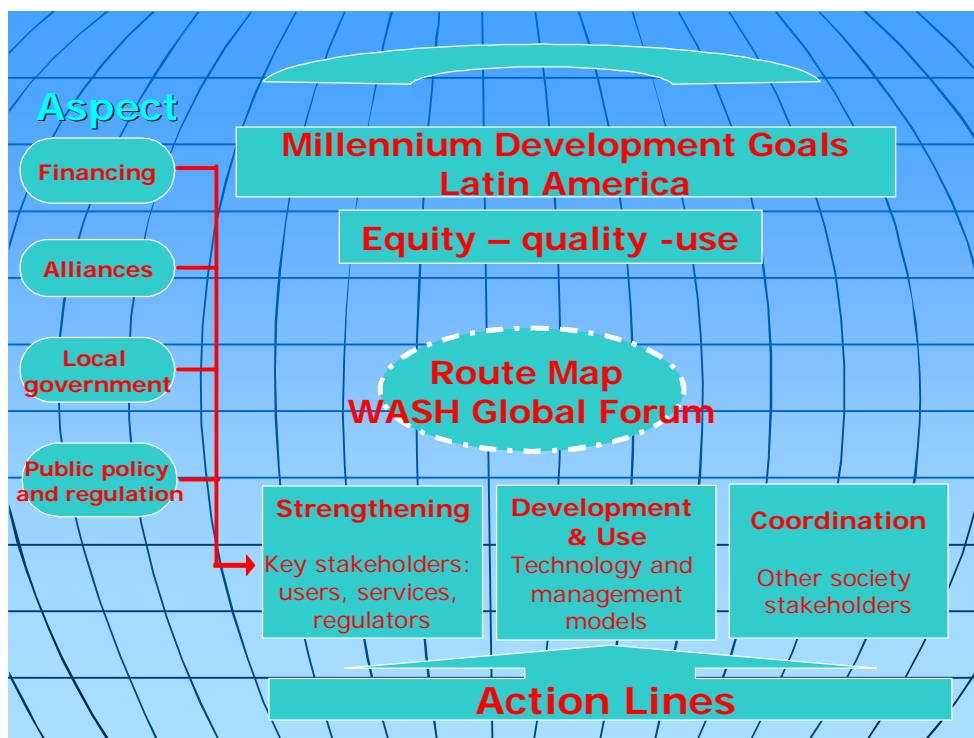


Figure 1. Suggested action plan for Council work in Latin America

Appendix A: Participants list

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Appendix B: Alliances (work group results⁴)

Strengths/Potential	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of several stakeholders with different skills working for a common goal - Community participation (is facilitated) - Efficient and flexible administrative structures are set up - The structure of many alliances allows for rapid growth, in all countries and regions - Transference of many resources is not needed between the allies to achieve the goals - Work through alliances facilitates access to external resources - With alliances, great progress can be achieved in little time, and in a context of limited resources. A greater impact is achieved with the same resources, in comparison with isolated work of each ally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alliances with isolated goals, sometimes short-term, without taking sustainability into account - Sometimes alliances are established with a political focus or criteria, or because of the demands of certain groups - Institutions have different work rhythms and dynamics - Instability in the staff and authority of some of the allies - Many alliances lack indicators and processes to measure the success of their work
Lessons learned	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work jointly with the final beneficiary or community in planning projects or programmes - Interconnection of the partners can be used to advantage (internet, communication) - More success is achieved when organisations complement each other in their specialisations - Alliances can be established in the short, medium and long term. - Alliances can give important support with respect to activities complementary to the MDGs - Alliances that have worked successfully in Latin America are, amongst others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAHO/CEPIS/GTZ PAAR (Water Supply Project for the Rural Zone, Valle del Cauca, Colombia) SODIS Network School Sanitation, Colombia, UNICEF PRONASAR (Water and Sanitation in the rural zone, Perú) Resource Centre in Cochabamba, Bolivia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain sustainability, universality, equity and efficiency criteria, with constant gender, cross-cultural and community participation focuses - Clearly establish the common goals, commitments, and roles of each entity - Define the goals in coordination with the allies - Aim to optimize the (financial and other) resources of each ally - The alliances have to evaluate their work regularly with established indicators and feedback the findings among themselves - Evaluate project or programme impact and refocus them if necessary - Search for inter-sectorial alliances or agreements - Impulse work by projects and through networks - Establish a network (regional alliance) that finds good practices in the water and sanitation sector, which systematises, validates and socialises positive experiences, and supports institutionalism - Permanent awareness and training in concepts for beneficiaries and stakeholders - Health Ministries can give important support in alliances with respect to increasing access to safe water - Recognise water as an economic, social and environmental public good

⁴ **Work group:** Erma Uytewaal (Coordinator), José Aviles M., Ricardo Dianderas, Francisco Burbano and Matthias Saladin

Appendix C: Financing (work group results⁵)

Strengths/Potential	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governments have improved their (economic) valuing of the resource - Experiences on economic regulation can be shared in the whole continent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Precise information is required in each country to define the investment needs to reach the MDGs - Low valuing of the resource and the service by the population - Low ability to pay in the population - Strong tendency to assign resources to urban zones - High level of debt in the countries - Weak institutions in the countries and incipient legislative development
Lessons learned	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sector's financial base is the tariff, which should include subsidy mechanisms - The tariff is limited by ability to pay and subsidies, or the difference between the service cost and ability to pay is the State's responsibility - Service supplier modernization is a condition for the resources assigned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service supplier modernization is directed by economic regulation strengthening in the countries - Environmental regulation must be rationalised based on sustainable human development - Subsidy assignation must be focused on the vulnerable population - Technology selection must obey a minimum investment cost analysis and ADM - The service operation risk should be linked to construction works

⁵ **Work group:** William Carrasco (Coordinator), Carlos Mira, Claudio Osorio, Omar Almdarez, José Barragán Bauer, Jorge Ángel Gómez, Verónica Valencia.

Appendix D. Local government (work group results⁶)

Strengths/Potential	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The municipal level is closer to local realities than central government - The countries of the Latin America region are in decentralisation processes - The constitutional and legal framework grants responsibilities to local government - There are resources assigned by law to local government - Use of local resources and capacities for local development - Greater space for community participation and organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the departments (provinces, states, regions) is not clear or has not been fulfilled - Municipalities have received many responsibilities without greater support - The process of decentralization does not have enough transference of financial resources - Most investment is disproportionately concentrated in urban rather than rural areas - Investment in dispersed rural areas has limitations in terms of economy of scale - Great heterogeneity in the profile of local governments (localities, size, fiscal capacity, urban/rural) - Many successive political changes within local government - Public service management capacity is very weak - Short-term management, little long-term vision - In many places, management models are inefficient - The problem is institutional and technical - The processes of institutional and sectorial restructuring have weakened existing capacities in the water and public health sector
Lessons learned	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local governments have responsibility for public service management - Local governments have great potential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals - There is a great need for developing new management models - There are new possibilities for financing systems - The process of decentralisation should be strengthened, including new financial and human resources and an adequate legal framework - Sectorial regulation does not respond to the local reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define roles and tasks for the different stakeholders within the decentralisation process - Ensure sectorial articulation for meeting the Millennium Goals - The fundamental role of local governments in the sector's development must be recognised for meeting the Millennium Goals (Information and knowledge management) - Divulge the MDGs in local government - Create spaces for exchange of successful experiments among the region's countries - Systematize successful experiments and exchange them in the region - Develop pilot projects with national impact (such as PROPILAS in Perú). - Develop management and contracting models for water and sanitation service supply (Enterprises, cooperatives, councils, etc) - Develop financial and tariff systems that guarantee investment sustainability - Strengthen planning, management and follow-up capacities in the municipalities - Strengthen the participative planning process with a gender focus that guarantees attention to the community's demands

⁶ **Work group:** Francois Brikke (Coordinator), Alvaro Campy, Guillermo Leclair, José Maria Marmolejo, Mariela Garcia V., Nelly Guapacha, Patricia Rodezno.

Appendix E: National public policy (Work group results⁷)

Strengths/Potential	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This type of events raises awareness of the commitment. The interest in having participation from stakeholders who have decision making capacities and who influence the same is clear: e.g. vice ministers from Bolivia, a regulator from Honduras, a vice minister from Colombia. - Progress on knowledge and information management in the countries, also awareness of the need to continue with efforts to strengthen acquisition of reliable information - There is an aware seed group in each country - Awareness of the need to have institutionalisation as regards supply operators and diversity of management models - Institutional assignation and arrangements. The definition of roles and responsibilities has begun - Citizen and community participation is evidenced - Efforts need to be channelled - Definition of a integrated policy framework - Water resource management integration - Operator responsibility for river basins - Guarantee tariff system viability - Regulatory framework - Recognition of the value of water - Management optimisation focuses and enterprise development have happened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of goal divulgation. Some of the presentations showed the MDG framework and associated country targets - There is a lack of component integrity - The source to finance plans is not clear - The MDGs are not explicit as a clear policy component - There is no sign of strong political support - The MDGs are dealt with on the technical level; they have not transcended to the political level - Efforts in agencies, both State and NGO, are not coordinated - Policy aims, strategies, actions are suggested, but are not put into the context of targets - There are no clear strategies in rural and marginal urban zones - The commitment to assign resources and funds is not clearly stated - It has been evidenced that efforts, resources, institutions and alliances are a path to achieving impact of the solutions - Revision of integrated policy was not clearly mentioned. The development of financial policy in Bolivia was discussed. Prioritisation and resource assignation in Brazil was mentioned. - The Brazilian representative showed that the current government has already established its policy - Global service problems and focus groups were mentioned - Aspects of education and hygiene were not mentioned - Policy for marginal areas was not mentioned - Deficiency in awareness raising through the media
Lessons learned	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water resource management must be integrated - Impact has happened to the extent that policies have been integrated: environmental, financial and decentralisation - If there is not a correct and consensual definition of public policy, there are no results - There should be an (economic) valuation of water resources - There are important efforts being made in urban areas, but a lot of work must be done to serve rural areas and ethnic minorities - There is a definition of service level associated with technical solutions in the rural and marginal urban zone - Transfer of responsibilities and skills accompanied by strategies that support the responsibility taken on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support public policy definition in terms of content, stakeholders, people in charge, time and resources - Strengthen policies, strategies and programmes that support decentralization and local decision making - Put to work the institutions set up - Revise and analyze the convenience of integrated water management as a resource and as a service under one institution and organization structure - Public policy should involve guidelines and strategies more explicitly for rural and small urban areas as well as ethnic minorities - Establish universal access criteria for services and coverage measurement in rural, marginal urban and small urban areas, and for ethnic minorities - Emphasise increasing coverage in intermediate cities that receive migrant populations

⁷ **Work group:** Carriña Moreno (Coordinator), Bibian García, Carlos Alberto Pérez, Katia Ern, Julio Cárcamo.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Commit to rational water use and payment to guarantee sustainability- Strengthen financial policy mechanisms based on internal resource generation and joint efforts- More emphasis on the issue of hygiene - Maximize resources to support achieving goals through use of low cost and high result technology. Examples: Multi-stage filtering (MSF), Home water quality management, SODIS, condominium sewers, etc. - Involve and increase participation of the media in divulgation of the MDGs - Organised involvement of the international community, cooperation agencies and NGOs in developing instruments, policy components, programmes, strategies and technical assistance. - Establish spaces for follow-up and evaluation
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