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Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning

USAID WATER AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: 2013-2018

Globally, over 780 million people lack access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion people lack access to sanitation. A growing population and rising food demands may increase the water demand associated with agriculture, which already constitutes 70 percent of the demand on freshwater resources. Projections are that by 2025, two-thirds of the world's population could be living in severe water stress conditions. Ensuring the availability of safe water to sustain natural systems and human life is integral to the success of the development objectives, foreign policy goals, and national security interests of the United States. To address global water-related development needs, the *Water and Development Strategy* provides increased focus for USAID's water programs, emphasizing approaches that are sustainable, well-targeted, informed by past effort, work through host country systems, and use emerging science and technology.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of USAID's *Water and Development Strategy* is **to save lives and advance development through improvements in water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs, and through sound management and use of water for food security**. To achieve this goal, the Strategy sets two Strategic Objectives:

- Water for Health: Improve health outcomes through the provision of sustainable WASH; and
- Water for Food: Manage water for agriculture sustainably and more productively to enhance food security.

The Strategy's operating principles provide the foundation of how water issues will be integrated into USAID programming. These principles, consistent with the *USAID Policy Framework*, are essential to improving the outcomes of water programming. To achieve these objectives, this Strategy advances activities consistent with the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 including establishing criteria to designate high priority countries for increased investments to support access to safe water and sanitation.

Operating Principles

- **Support host country ownership** to strengthen local and regional capacity and align with country priorities.
- **Build in sustainability from the start** to promote governance, technical and financial capacity.
- **Apply integrated approaches to development** to optimize impact and sustainability across sectors.
- **Leverage "solution holders" and partner strategically** to develop innovative approaches and enhance financial investments.
- **Promote gender equality** and female empowerment to address the needs and opportunities of both men and women.
- **Leverage science and technology** to address development needs in a more rapid and cost-effective manner.
- **Measure and evaluate impact** to identify and disseminate lessons learned and best practices.
- **Achieve resilience** to better prepare countries for the impacts of climate change and other shocks and stresses.

What's New about this Strategy?

This is USAID's first global *Water and Development Strategy*. Historically, USAID water activities have been typically reported in three major categories: WASH, water productivity, and water resources management. While these categories will continue to be used to describe USAID's work, new focus will be placed on two strategic objectives: Water for Health and Water for Food. The Strategy:

- Applies Agency reform principles of selectivity and focus and sets criteria for determining priority countries, based on a combination of country needs and country opportunities. Specifically:
 - Water for Health: WASH programming will focus in countries where the need for increased access to safe water and sanitation and hygiene improvement is the greatest and where such assistance provides opportunities to have the maximum impact.
 - Water for Food: Water programming in agriculture will align with the focus countries for Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative.
- Supports longer-term monitoring and evaluation of its water activities in order to assess sustainability and impact of project funds beyond the typical life-of-project and to enable reasonable support to issues that arise subsequent to post-completion of project implementation.
- Emphasizes the need for increased investments and expanded attention to sanitation that translate into broader health and economic benefits.
- Addresses the competing demands of multiple water users - including households, communities, agriculture, and industry - and takes into account the impact of energy requirements, technology and gender on achieving objectives.
- Sets explicit targets of minimum numbers of people to be reached over the 5 year strategy period: 10 million with sustainable water services and 6 million people with sustainable sanitation services.
- Promotes close cooperation with non-governmental and civil society organizations that undertake the critical front-line responsibility of developing and implementing water and sanitation programs to address the global challenges of water and sanitation.

USAID's *Water and Development Strategy* elevates the importance and visibility of water as a development priority within the Agency and highlights its importance to meeting the development imperatives of improved health and increased food security. Improving human health and welfare, and maintaining the sustainability of natural systems, requires a coordinated global response to the challenges of water and sanitation access for present and future generations. This Strategy reflects the commitment of the U.S. government to work in partnership with the global community to meet these challenges.

For more information:

- Visit our website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/water-and-sanitation>
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