Progress on the ‘eThekwini commitments on sanitation’

Africa is off-track to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for sanitation. At current rates of progress the target – to reduce by half those without access to adequate sanitation by 2015 – will not be met until 2084. Securing progress on sanitation is critical to wider development efforts and in particular to accelerating progress against the health, education and poverty MDGs. It is estimated that 780,000 children die each year from diarrhoeal diseases in Africa. Poor sanitation – alongside unsafe drinking water – causes 88% of these deaths.

Recognising that 589 million Africans currently do not have access to safe sanitation, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation responsible for sanitation from 32 African countries came together at the Second African Conference on Sanitation and Hygiene (AfricaSan) to sign the eThekwini Declaration. Under this declaration, African governments pledged themselves to the ‘eThekwini commitments on sanitation’. The eThekwini Declaration was then endorsed by African Heads of State at the AU Summit in 2008 in the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration.

From 9 to 13 November, African government representatives will come together at the second Africa Water Week (AWW2) organised by the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) and the South African Department of Water and Environmental Affairs. In advance of this meeting, UNICEF, WaterAid, and the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) came together to map progress across Africa in implementing the ‘eThekwini commitments’.

The information presented overleaf represents the initial work done by these three agencies and is now shared in draft form to provide the basis for discussion and wider validation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Did they sign eThekwini, and who signed it?</th>
<th>Is there a national sanitation policy?</th>
<th>Is there one national plan to meet the MDG target?</th>
<th>What profile is given to sanitation within the PRSP?</th>
<th>Is there a principal accountable institution to take leadership?</th>
<th>Is there one coordinating body involving all stakeholders?</th>
<th>Is there a specific public sector budget line for sanitation?</th>
<th>Is 0.5% of GDP allocated to sanitation?</th>
<th>Is there a sanitation monitoring and evaluation (M+E) system?</th>
<th>Do institutional sanitation programs include gender aspects?</th>
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Red, yellow, green: Progress towards the eThekwini commitments

Green = Good progress (2 points)
Yellow = Some progress (1 point)
Red = Insufficient progress (0 points)
Grey = No data

Criteria available at www.wateraid.org/africawaterweek
Positive trends and areas for greater focus

On the basis of the draft information presented for discussion, important positive trends are discernible across many African regions and countries. These trends – showing real progress in ensuring the eThekwini commitments on sanitation are met – include the following:

1. There is a national sanitation policy.
2. There is one national plan to meet the MDG sanitation target.
3. Adequate profile is given to sanitation in the PRSP.
4. There is a principal accountable institution.
5. There is one coordinating body.

At the same time, areas that warrant greater focus are apparent. Across many African regions and countries, there has been less progress in ensuring the following eThekwini commitments are met:

1. There is a specific public sector budget line for sanitation.
2. 0.5% GDP is allocated to sanitation.
3. There is a monitoring and evaluation system for sanitation.

For more information relating to this paper please contact amcow2@yahoo.com or go to www.amcow.net, www.unicef.org, www.wateraid.org or www.wsp.org.

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2. WaterAid – adapted from JMP 2008 data
3. Progress to sanitation has been linked to all the MDGs but in particular to MDG 1 (Poverty and hunger); MDG 2 (Education); MDG 3 (Gender); and MDG 4 (Child mortality)
6. As stated in the eThekwini Declaration, ibid