

## WaterAid Nepal's contribution to submission on Water Service Delivery

- 1) With the preparation of a ToR for sector stakeholder group at Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MPPW), and with the regularization of bi-annual meeting, the sector co-ordination has made some progress recently. It is, however, in its nascent stage and needs robust leadership from the Government for enhancing cooperation, collaboration and developing synergy within the sector. Nevertheless, there is a lot of hope as it provides an opportunity and a single platform for the Government for policies and programmes to be discussed and debated, and ideas and information exchanged.
- 2) During the latter half of 2005 under their new water and sanitation strategy DFID Nepal, with the support of WAN and other sector actors, develop a concept for an umbrella arrangement under MPPW termed the Sector Alliance, which was proposed to build on current support to three well established specialist NGOs. These are the Gurkha Welfare Scheme, Nepal Water for Health and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board, with other implementing agencies able to join over time.
- 3) The Alliance aimed to coordinate member inputs to improve service delivery coverage across the country, with an emphasis on the un-served regions in Nepal. It was envisaged that the Sector Alliance would consist of a central pool of resources with performance based fund allocation, joint monitoring using standard indicators, identification and mainstreaming of best practice and cross-learning.
- 4) In addition, and drawing on recent and successful DFID-Nepal experience in the Ministry of Education and DFID-Uganda experience in the National Water and Sanitation Support Programme, a specialist sector advisor was proposed to be based within the MPPW to facilitate functioning of the Alliance, liaise with other major donors (notably the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) and help prepare a full or partial Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) for implementation in 2009. The technical assistance role would help to address sector governance issues around accountability, transparency, responsiveness and collaboration. Further responsibilities such as supporting MPPW's monitoring and evaluation unit to meet Mid Term Expenditure Framework objectives, track progress against Poverty Reduction Strategy /10th Plan and MDG targets, and monitor project impact on the lives of poor and excluded people were also envisaged. The strategy was sound and would address a major lacuna in the sector.
- 5) During the first quarter of this year DFID development assistance to Nepal was significantly reduced. While the reasons for this have not been publicly shared, it is likely that this is linked to the political situation in Nepal. Despite the high priority DFID in London, place on water and sanitation sector, budget lines in this sector were cut disproportionately. As a result DFID placed the Strategic Alliance "on hold" and a significant reduction was made to their planned investment in the sector in the coming years. Need and predictability of aid, as committed to by DFID through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, should underpin allocation decisions and not political expediency. Where decisions to withdraw planned aid is inevitable DFID needs to be accountable to the poor for such decisions by publicly announcing, including to parliamentarians and through the local media, the reasons for withdrawal and the triggers for re-engagement. DFID also needs to work very closely with other donors to increase their commitments to ensure that sector plans are not negatively affected.
- 6) Since then Nepal has taken several steps to reestablish democracy and sustain peace, including the removal of the King from power, the reformation of parliament and ongoing peace talks between the conflicting parties. Despite the changing and relatively more stable context, DFID have not taken action to rekindle the Sector Alliance initiative, which WaterAid believes to be crucial for the increased effectiveness of the sector in future years.

**WaterAid – water for life** - The UK's only major charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education.

- 7) The continued weakness and undemocratic nature of government at the local level results in a lack of proper coordination and scrutiny on the ground. This has made the need for increased communication and dialogue within the sector at a national level imperative, in order to more effectively plan and monitor implementation of water and sanitation activities. WaterAid Nepal strongly recommends that DFID, in the participatory manner in which the Alliance was conceived and developed, revives the plans for the Sector Alliance, in order to address the crucial issues of governance, accountability and effectiveness of all stakeholders in the sector.