

Fair and Smart Ways to Reach Universal Access

**Special Session on Equitable Access to Drinking Water
and Sanitation**

Dr Graham Alabaster, UN Habitat
25 November 2013, Oslo

A Changing World

- **Global population growth:** fastest in the fifty least-developed nations. By 2050, it has been estimated that 86% of the world population (almost eight billion people) in the less developed regions
- **Age structure:** by 2050, approximately two billion people will be aged 60 or over
- **Urbanization:** 60% of the world population will live in urban areas within the next 25 years.
- The main growth will not be in big Cities but in secondary urban settlements (> 500,000 – 1m)
- Currently 62% of the worlds urban population live in slums (72% Africa, 46% Asia, 30% LAC, 10-20 % ?? EURO)

A Changing World

- Changes in Climate and in particular extreme climate events have and will increasingly affect access.
- Countries and regions in conflict will move backwards in terms of access to basic service coverage
- Those affected most, will be the urban poor, with a particular impact on the very young and elderly
- Impacts will not only be on the poorest countries but also the developed world

The Slum Challenge

- Unprecedented slum growth: **18 million** new slum dwellers per year during 1990-2001
- Projected growth: **27 million** people a year (2005/20)
- Slum growth = **38%** of the world's urban growth
- Slum growth will no longer be confined to the poorest regions. Within Europe, migration will have a significant impact



Secondary Towns and the Urban Sprawl



Often, the spatial expansion of cities is faster than population growth, which translates into a reduction of density.

As a consequence, secondary urban centers show the highest per capita cost, which reflect the need to apply urban solutions while having densities still not high enough to benefit from significant economies of scale in the delivery of services.



As a result, the already high costs for infrastructure in low income countries will increase with further sprawl, further hindering the affordability of basic services.

Why has access to Water & Sanitation been neglected ?

- The provision of adequate water and sanitation services as a basic foundation for good health has been neglected
- Local level structures designed to monitor and feedback information on key public health issues have diverted their attention to disease outbreak control and other priority diseases
- Information is aggregated to a level where inequities are masked
- Urban sprawl has resulted in greatly increasing costs. Defining « urban » is difficult

Providing water & sanitation, what are the key challenges ?

- Provision of information and data further disaggregated to highlight inequities. Community participation is critical to support the process
- Understanding that provision is about reaching the poorest first. Policies must focus on provision in low income peri-urban areas and poverty pockets hidden in cities
- Understanding that the poor and disadvantaged should and can have sustainable access to networked systems. The key is to provide basic facilities which can be readily upgraded

What does this mean for the post 2015 development agenda ?

- Current discussions on the SDG « water goal » must be guided by effectively integrating the three « streams » of water and sanitation (WASH), wastewater management and water resources management
- Strengthen the « health goals » to recognize the importance of water & sanitation as a cornerstone of health
- Ensure sustainable urban development is enhanced and not impeded by provision of water, sanitation and wastewater services

Issues for the EURO region ?

- Water and wastewater quality will become increasingly relevant. New toxic and hazardous substances will find their way into the water cycle (Priority pollutants, Anti-microbial drug resistance AMR).
- WQ monitoring will need to be enhanced.
- Definition of « safe » and « adequate » will need to be reviewed
- Critical issues in access to services for migrant populations
- Intra- regional differences will be masked by inadequate data. A significant move towards more and better data is imperative

Conclusions

- Recognize we are living in a changing world which will greatly impact on service provision: urbanization, climate change and conflict.
- Plan for sustainable urbanization
- Encourage resilience profiling for climate change
- Recognize the need to develop special approaches for regions in conflict



Conclusions

- Seek better data and information to recognize inequities which are masked
- Understand the critical contribution water and sanitation makes to health improvement
- Many of the instruments developed by the Protocol can greatly assist the challenges of understanding marginalised communities needs and participation in the solutions

