



## Vision 21: Water for people in the 21st Century

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The WSSCC is a participating network of over a thousand members. Membership is free of charge.

In 1997 the WSSCC decided to undertake a vision for water supply and sanitation; it was named VISION 21. It was to be a vision for water, life and the environment in the 21st Century.

Water problems started about a hundred years ago when populations began to grow exponentially, leading to congested cities, needing large amounts of water and having to take care of large amounts of waste.

Now about 1.2 billion people in developing countries lack access to safe drinking water. Nearly three billion do not have adequate sanitation. Africans, mostly women and children, spend an estimated forty billion hours a year hauling water. Twenty African and Middle Eastern countries already experience water scarcity, defined as less than 1700 cubic metres per person per year. More water is needed for food. Whole ecosystems are dying from water scarcity.

There is also good news. Population growth is slowing. Less expensive energy may reduce the cost of desalination. Biotechnology may enable food to be grown with less water. Better governance may lead to increased stakeholder participation. Roles of women are recognized. Remote sensing may help locate unknown waters and track rainfall. Experts now agree that 'business as usual' is no longer enough.

Three sector Visions are now developed as a response: Water for People, Water for Nature and Water for Food. Regional Visions are being put together (including amongst others Arab Countries, Mediterranean, Southern Africa and West Africa). Panels are studying energy technology, information and communication technology, biotechnology, and institutions, society and the economy. Scenarios are also being developed: business as usual; technology, economics and the private sector; and values and lifestyles. The last mentioned topic would particularly lead to desirable results.

In March 2000 the World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference will hear the Vision results. Subsequently the Global Water Partnership (GWP) will help implement a Framework-for-Action.

In view of the focus of this WEDC Conference: "Integrated development for water supply and sanitation", this talk will further concentrate on Vision 21, which is at the same time the Water for People component of the World Water Vision.

### Vision 21

A vision is needed to increase progress, to respond to change and to ensure enough water. Vision 21 has been designed to put an end, through shared effort, to the backlog in universal access to water supply and sanitation, while recognizing the needs of other water stakeholders. VISION 21 will draw a practical picture of the water supply and sanitation future that we collectively seek to create. It will outline the ways how to get us closer to that future. It will focus on the question which changes in attitudes and approaches are needed to make that future possible and the steps that are required to realize these changes.

Thus, a statement of VISION 21 will show what we need to do today, against a background of visionary and long-term thinking, to reach a future that we all desire. The process is participatory the outcome is shared.

There are the following priorities on water supply and sanitation:

- water supply/environmental sanitation as the entry-point for development;
- services for the poor;
- safeguard services for the "haves";
- ensure water for industrial, commercial and administrative uses in developing and middle-income countries;
- safeguard services in industrialized countries;
- ensure water for industrial, commercial and administrative uses in industrialized countries.

The target audiences, in order of priority, are the population, politicians and professionals (both public and private).

The shared vision which came out is "a clean and healthy world: a world in which every person has safe and adequate water and sanitation and lives in a hygienic environment". Three thousand women, men and children contributed to this work and have ownership of this vision.

Vision 21 argues for the following changes.

- Building on people's energy and creativity at all levels — empowering and building the capacity of people in households and communities to take action, and applying technologies that respond to actual needs.
- Holistic approach — acknowledging hygiene, water and sanitation as a human right and relating it to human development, the elimination of poverty and the integrated management of water resources.

- Committed and compassionate leadership and good governance — changing long-accustomed roles, leading to new responsibilities of authorities to support households and communities in the management of their hygiene, water and sanitation and being accountable to users as clients.
- Sustained dialogue and synergy among all partners — encouraging shared commitment among users, politicians and professionals; requiring professionals within the water and sanitation sector to combine technical expertise with an ability to work with users and politicians and with health, education, environment, community development and food sectors.

The core points of vision 21:

- put people first!
- the human right to basic services;
- entry-point to human development and poverty elimination;
- leadership and governance;
- synergism;
- hygiene and sanitation as a revolution;
- gender equality;
- increased attention to the urban poor;
- institutional reform; affordable water and sanitation services.

The following goals are recommended for meeting the basic water, sanitation and hygiene requirement—40 litres per day of water as a minimum (depending on circumstances), a latrine and hygiene awareness.

2015:

- percentage of people who lack safe water halved;
- percentage of people who lack adequate sanitation halved;
- 80% of primary school children educated about hygiene;
- all schools equipped with facilities for sanitation and hand washing;
- diarrhoeal disease incidence reduced by 50%.

2025:

- 95% of people with safe water;
- 95% of people with adequate sanitation;
- 95% of primary school children educated about hygiene;

- diarrhoeal disease incidence reduced by 80%.

The Vision 21 strategies are the following:

- encourage local people to take responsibility for local development;
- improve collaboration;
- promote hygiene and environmental sanitation;
- prioritize basic services when allocating water resources;
- mainstream gender;
- accelerate urban innovation;
- set goals and indicators, and monitor achievements;
- ensure equitable financing and cost recovery;
- develop suitable legislative and institutional arrangements;
- change the emphasis from projects to services;
- promote appropriate technology;
- emphasize operation and maintenance;
- prepare for special situations.

Already this year Visions have been discussed and formulated at local, sub-national and national levels. Knowledge has been synthesized. In July the first draft of Vision 21 was prepared. Now Visions at sub-regional and regional levels are being prepared ready for a shared global Vision.

A World Water Forum will be held in March 2000.

Following this, strategies will be developed.

Up to August 1999 these countries were participating in the Vision 21 social mobilizing process or their vision statements were in preparation. Other countries will be invited to follow.

- Africa: Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.
- CEE/NIS (Group 29): Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia.
- Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Ecuador.
- South Asia: Bangladesh, India (Gujarat), Nepal, Sri Lanka.
- South-East Asia: Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand.
- Small Island Countries: Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad.

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