



Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)

Consejo de Colaboración de Abastecimiento de Agua y
Saneamiento

Conseil de Concertation pour l'Approvisionnement en Eau et
l'Assainissement



**MESSAGE FROM ROBERTO L. LENTON, WSSCC CHAIR
on the occasion of
"World Water Day", 22 March 2006**

Each year, some 1.6 million people in the developing world die from preventable diseases caused by the lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Although water has received the priority attention that it deserves, the same is not true for the other two elements in the WASH trinity - sanitation and hygiene. The first Global WASH Forum in Dakar, December 2004 called for a '*Sanitation and Hygiene Week*' to be celebrated annually through 15-21 March. Strategically placed to lead-up to "World Water Day" on 22 March, 'Sanitation and Hygiene Week' emphasizes the fact that without a priority on improved sanitation and hygiene, the impact of safe and improved water will never be successfully achieved for reduction of morbidity and mortality of children. Lack of sanitation is also one of the biggest polluters of the water environment.

With the major target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sanitation by 2015 looming large, now is really the time for action. The scene of action is the local level, where households and communities need support to improve their surroundings, their living conditions, and their well-being. '*Sanitation and Hygiene Week*' can play a key-role in combining global advocacy with local action.

On this World Water Day, we call upon organisations and communities around the world to engage in activities to raise awareness, to educate, to build capacity and institutional strength, and to change behaviour towards improved hygiene and increased sanitation coverage at the local level. Activities such as neighbourhood clean-up actions, school sanitation and hygiene education programmes, hand-washing promotion, training workshops and media campaigns will feed into a worldwide WASH movement, toward the achievement of the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The WSSCC is committed to making every effort to draw the world's attention to the issues of sanitation and hygiene as a vital part of integrated water resources management, poverty eradication and the efforts of many countries to achieve the MDG on water and sanitation by 2015.

Roberto Lenton
Chair, WSSCC

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