Defining moments for multi-lateralism

Over the past few years institutions of multilateralism have taken a pounding on many fronts. Many of the organizations date back to the end of the Second World War, the need for reform of these to cope with a world that no longer is bipolar would seem obvious. Has the United Nations, the world’s preeminent multilateral institution, has been disempowered to such an extent that it is unable to adequately deliver the commitments placed on it?

To resolve some of the current global problems governments have committed to a number of conflicting and competing agendas on trade, finance, development and peace and security, all of which are on collision course for 2005.

In agreeing to a high-level Summit in 2005 to facilitate a five-year review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the UN General Assembly is expected to put the final bit of the equation into place, making 2005 a critical year for the international multilateral system.

Legacy of the 1990’s

Throughout the 1990s the UN facilitated a number of UN Conferences and Summits. These started with the Rio Earth Summit and was followed by the Copenhagen Social Summit, Cairo Population Conference, Beijing Women’s Conference, Istanbul Human Settlements Conference, Rome Food Summit and finished with the Millennium Development Summit in 2000. These Summits each succeeded in bringing together ambitious Head of State Declarations and delivering impressive Plans of Action.

However, a critical problem arose in the implementation of these action plans. Governments consistently failed to provide adequate resources to enable the full and effective delivery of the agreements they had committed to. In real terms international development aid actually fell between 1991 and 2002.

In answer to their continued failure to deliver, donor governments have turned to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and trade as a way of potentially releasing more funds for developing countries. However over 70% of FDI has been focused in only ten developing countries. The liberalization of the trade agenda, at least until the 4th WTO Ministerial in Doha, was weighted heavily in favor of developed countries’ agendas.

Stakeholder Democracy

The ’90s also saw the rise of globalization, the reduction of the role of the State, and the growth of other stakeholders. As the ’90s progressed these stakeholders demanded greater involvement at international government negotiations and, by 2004 many UN bodies were adopting a model to bring stakeholders into their discussions. This critical stage in the transition must be about defining the norms and standards of a stakeholder democracy.

Trade

The collapse of the 5th WTO Ministerial in Cancun last September was a real wake up call for the international community. By December, things seemed back on track with the EU recommitting to WTO and the US accepting WTO ascendency.

The Doha Development Round is scheduled for completion in 2005. However, with negotiations only just recommencing following the de-railing of the process last September in Cancun, it seems likely that this deadline will be missed.

Peace and Security

In November, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appointed a High-Level Panel on Global Security Threats and Reform of the International System. The Panel is to report to the General Assembly in 2005. It will produce a comprehensive review of the international system and recommend how it should be reformed in order to tackle the challenges of this century.

There is deep divergence not only on the range of challenges facing us but also on the role that collective security mechanisms have to play in resolving them. The Panel will enable a creative dialogue to start to address a new way forward on these critical areas.

(Continued on page 2)
Development Summit

The Millennium Summit in 2000 agreed a range of necessary targets for the world to achieve, mostly in 2015. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) comprise 18 targets and 48 indicators. The targets presented are quantified, specific and time-bound. Although many might argue that these agreements did not go far enough, they do give a clear direction for the governments to focus on. Since the Summit, the UN system has slowly been reorganizing itself around these targets. To help prepare for the implementation of the MDGs the UN created the Millennium Project, directed by Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs of Columbia University. The Project’s research will focus on identifying the operational priorities, organizational means of implementation, and financing structures necessary to achieve the MDGs and will be reporting to the Secretary General on progress.

Governments have started to recognize the need to reorganize their machinery to deliver the MDGs. One of the missing links between the targets and their delivery is perhaps that of parliamentary oversight. Of course the MDGs are only soft law commitments, governments are therefore only morally obligated to deliver them. Parliaments could play a critical role in keeping donor governments focused, it is therefore critical that they become fully engaged in the MDG implementation programme.

The decision of the UN General Assembly to hold a Special Session in 2005 to look at the progress on the MDGs as well as the follow-up to the UN Conferences and Summits of the 90’s would be a time to have national mechanisms such as these in place.

Institutional and Financial Reform

What kind of international architecture does the twenty-first century need and what can it achieve? What role should the nation state play? How should stakeholders be integrated into global institutional policy discussions?

During 2005 we will see the appointment of a new World Bank President. This will result in a change of direction of the Bank. It may see it reduce its global reach, concentrating more on Africa.

Also during 2005, the UN will look at how it addresses and manages environmental issues. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), has been poorly funded. However, even in this position it has overseen the creation of a considerable amount of international environmental regulation and standard setting. These successes have led to calls to strengthen the environmental pillar of the UN. The idea of a World Environment Organisation was brought to the 1997 Special Session of the General Session of the General Assembly to review the Rio Summit. However, the proposal did not receive significant airtime. In July 2003, the French Government released a proposal to reform UNEP into a United Nations Environment Organisation. This proposal is receiving more attention by the international community. The UNEP Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Korea 2004 discussed International Environmental Governance.

In 1997 there wasn’t the political will to address the issue, but perhaps now, with an increasing number of stakeholder and governments turning their attention to the power imbalance between environmental and economic governance, discussion on the creation of an UNEO will stand a better chance of being properly addressed. Some people see an architecture, which would have the WTO, ILO and a new UNEO arbitrating over issues of dispute in the trade agenda.

In an era of globalization, when the ability of all but one national state to influence global concerns is small. It could also provide a bridgehead to a restructured UN with real power, based upon a set up values that would protect the weak and make the world a safer place.

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

International water experts press for change in global food production and consumption patterns

In a report released today at the 12th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 12), experts warn that if more is not done to use less water while concurrently producing more food, the international community will face great difficulties in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015.

The Report, entitled “Water – More Nutrition Per Drop” was initiated by the Swedish Government and was produced through a unique collaboration composed of leading international water experts from the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

“Water scarcity is a harsh reality that affects billions of people in many parts of the world,” says Lena Sommestad, Swedish Minister for the Environment. “Attitudes to water development and management must be addressed and changed if we are to reduce the number of malnourished people. We need practical solutions that benefit poor farmers as well as global solutions that address trade barriers and agricultural subsidies”.

Outreach 2005

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As 840 million people remain undernourished across the world, the report highlights how the challenge to find sustainable solutions towards feeding the world’s population is an issue that requires urgent attention from the international community. It identifies five innovative policy-oriented recommendations which, if followed at national and international levels, could greatly enhance humanity’s future food security and nutritional needs.

The recommendations include finding ways to produce more food using less water and ensuring that these new technologies and methods are made widely available to groups that range from farmers to policy makers. Another recommendation highlights the need to identify and influence unsustainable food production and consumption patterns that require excessive water usage.

“One of the key findings of the report is that today, unlike during the "Green Revolution" of the 1960s, it is consumers - not producers - who are driving global food production. With massive urbanisation and increasing wealth, food preferences are changing with significant increases in the demand for meat and dairy products. It takes 550 liters of water to produce enough flour for one loaf of bread. This is a fraction of the up to 7000 liters of water that is used in developed countries to produce 100 grams of beef.”

Improving the quality of nutrition, per drop of water, in food produced, is also addressed in the Report. The World Health Organization (WHO) calls malnutrition “the silent emergency” and says children are its most visible victims, as malnutrition is an accomplice in at least half of the 10.4 million child deaths each year. At the other end of the malnutrition scale, obesity is one of today’s most blatantly visible – yet most neglected – public health problems, particularly in the developed world. Trends in imbalances in the “food basket” can also be seen in developing countries, especially its expanding megacities and urban areas. Measures are needed on many levels if millions of people should not suffer from an array of serious health disorders.

“An overriding challenge today is to identify the path towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and to design incentives and other policy measures that can help us achieve these goals” says Professor Jan Lundqvist of SIWI, a main author of the report. “Practical sustainable solutions mean balancing environmental, economic and social concerns”

Production of food is a highly water-consuming activity. In developing countries agriculture accounts for 70-90% of available freshwater supplies. SIWI Senior Scientist Malin Falkenmark says that astonishingly huge volumes of water are transformed into vapour during the food production process. “With prevailing land and water management practices, a balanced diet requires 1,200,000 litres of water per year - 70 times more than the 50 liters per day used for an average households domestic needs,” she said.

The report recommends the need to safeguard aquatic ecosystems against water depletion by identifying the minimum ecological service criteria for their protection. In river basins representing 15 percent of the land area of the world, river depletion has already exceeded the need for committed environmental flows to protect aquatic ecosystems such as wetlands.

“Between the late 1990s and 2020 world cereal demand will have increased by 40% but the world has a finite supply of water,” says Frank Rijsberman, Director General of IWMI. “Current production patterns are unsustainable. They involve large scale groundwater overexploitation and widespread river depletion which poses a major threat to biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems. We are seeing ever increasing levels of environmental degradation and loss of production potential caused by water pollution from agricultural chemicals, water logging and salinisation.”

The Report also stresses the need to identify unsustainable agricultural subsidies and trade barriers. In water scarce regions, food imports may ensure food and nutritional security regardless of agricultural subsidies and trade barriers. In water scarce regions, food imports may ensure food and nutritional security regardless of the possibility to produce the food domestically. However, the ability to increase import is limited by poverty and lack of foreign exchange. Agricultural subsidies and trade barriers are effectively reducing a desirable pattern of trade in food commodities. There is a need to identify unsustainable agricultural subsidies and trade barriers and establish to what degree free trade can help to solve regional food deficiency problems.

Stockholm International Water Institute

Making every drop count

No sooner had the World Summit on Sustainable Development set the target to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe water and basic sanitation, than there were predictions that it would not be met. Over a year and a half later, it seems that governments have been unwilling or unable to respond to this challenge. Continuing at the current rate of progress there is no possibility of meeting the 2015 target on water in sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific and nowhere in the developing world is on track to meet the sanitation target. Easily preventable
With this in mind Tearfund is holding a side event on how to improve the quality of aid flows – making every drop count. People have grown understandably weary of international meetings that repeat platitudes and tired rhetoric. It is vital that the majority of aid to high-tech, large-scale projects even though past experience has shown us that these do not address the needs of poor communities. And why, despite the continual prioritisation of poor countries and communities in multilateral agreements, is most aid to the water sector spent in lower middle-income countries and urban areas, rather than least developed countries and rural areas.

Officials from USAID, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UK DFID, the Ugandan Government (TBC) and the WSSCC will be panellists at the discussion tomorrow. There will be a presentation from Tearfund on our new report “Making Every Drop Count” and time for questions, We do hope you can join us in exploring the way forward on this vital subject.

Tearfund

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

Major Group Positions

Throughout this first week, Group’s Position. This should give governments all the more opportunity to incorporate those recommendations into their Ministerial positions in the second week. Happy to be of assistance.

Local Government:

Water & Sanitation

- A thorough assessment by local governments of the recommendations made by the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure along with the development of tools and mechanisms to increase financing of local water and sanitation infrastructure is urgently needed;
- Decentralisation and the process of engaging local governments with and by other stakeholders has direct impact on water governance. The Local Agenda 21 participatory processes developed by numerous local governments worldwide need continued support at all levels to ensure that appropriate action in the field of water and sanitation is undertaken. Building on Local Agenda 21 experiences could address issues of gender and other inequalities;
- Capacity Building of local leadership to make long-term decisions in a short-term job is crucial for the sustainable development of local infrastructure;
- Housing programmes that help low-income households afford better provision for water and sanitation are essential;
- The inhabitants of informal settlements must be provided with tenure, allowing utilities to extend provisions for piped water and sewer connections;
- Good urban governance is a key factor. In this field we wish to recognize the excellent work of the UN-Habitat campaign promoting principles of water urban governance. Similarly we wish to call for further support of the Dialogue on Water and Governance launched in Johannesburg in 2002 as an implementation partnership;
- Capacity-building of local government leaders is crucial to achieve full understanding of the implications of various options for service delivery, including privatisations and partnerships;
- More specific information-sharing enabling cities to learn from each other is needed;

Human Settlements

- Recognise that informal and illegal settlements exist in some of our communities and require basic services. Service delivery should therefore be a commitment of all stakeholders, including all levels of government;
- National housing standards need to be re-examined to ensure that they are appropriate to the various regions. Furthermore, national support is required to ensure that the set standards are appropriately adhered to;
- Local involvement in national, multilateral and bilateral schemes that make housing affordable for all is essential;
- National development strategies that foster dialogue and cooperation between urban and rural local jurisdictions need to be developed to ensure greater regional coherence;
- In order to support sustainable patterns of consumption and production, formal networks of local governments to purchase goods and services (such as public transport, provision of shelter, or delivery of water and sanitation) that meet sustainability criteria should be encouraged.

Industry

Leadership & Governance:

- Global targets for water, sanitation and human settlements must be broken down into country targets so that national governments and their partners can engage and contribute
effective to meeting the overall goal;

- The importance of sanitation in reaching the Millennium Development Goals is under-recognised and consequently given low-priority by too many governments.
- Integrated Water Resource Management mechanisms have a central part to play in building strong and effective governance for water and sanitation and in fostering sustainable human settlements;
- Land tenure issues associated with rapid urban development can have serious implications for the provision of water and sanitation services to the poor and marginalised.

Unlocking Finance:

- (Where water and sanitation services are administered through municipal or equivalent local authorities) Investment needs can be met only when effective cost recovery systems are adopted, based on the use of tariffs and taxes that are appropriate for the local social, economic and environmental context;
- The CSD should seek ways to promote better understanding, development and adoption of appropriate models for the use of tariffs and taxes as the foundation of sustainable economic management - an essential pillar of sustainable water resource management;
- Donor organisations should give clear signals that official development assistance will be targeted towards building local capacity for sustainable local economic management as the basis for creating the conditions required to draw significantly higher investment flows into water and sanitation improvement;
- Where local authorities are willing and able to implement sustainable economic management, the business sector can explore with them alternative financing, investment and service delivery options tailored to local conditions and capacity to meet capital and operations costs.

Infrastructure & Technology:

- Through business-to-business networks and in partnership with public, local and civil society organisations, business resources can be leveraged to:
  - Transfer knowledge, skills and good practice;
  - Share technologies and cooperate to find ways to accelerate dissemination;
  - Help to build local capacity to improve community water and sanitation facilities;
  - Support sustainable growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the domestic economy.

Effective partnership building:

- Business recognises that to achieve the necessary rate of progress requires the engagement of all sectors of business that can bring different resources and skills to generate new options for communities living under varying social economic and environmental conditions;
- Many companies, from information technology and telecommunications to hygiene and health-care sectors, are developing new partnerships and contributing to building infrastructure that empowers local communities to improve their own lives;
- It is vital that the CSD and all major groups taking part recognise the enormous and very diverse contributions that business will make to the development of new and sustainable models for meeting the world’s needs for water, sanitation and human settlement.

Farmers

Farmers and rural communities are motivated and willing to become responsible for efficiently managing water resources, and for developing new and innovative agricultural production methods that conserve their water supplies. A policy approach based on stakeholder participation and giving responsibility to users in the management of water resources is proving to be an effective way of using water well.

In the cases where farmers engage in protecting water resources on a voluntary basis, this has proved to be beneficial to their living and production conditions. It has also been seen that collaboration and dialogue with public authorities often proved to be valuable.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships also appear to be an effective tool for good management of water supplies. Event though it is important to set up clear rules and regulations to support the efforts of farmers in managing water resources more efficiently, legislation alone is not always the only way to solve problems. Informal agreements between farmers’ organisations and other stakeholders, such as private companies and research institutions, represent valuable alternative methods that need to be given further consideration.

Raising the awareness of farming communities on ways to improve production while using water resources more efficiently must be given a higher priority, especially in those regions where this is not to be strengthened, enabling them to be proactive in safeguarding this natural resource. Farmers know their natural environment well, and helping them with structural problems, such as finding the necessary resources (financial, human, institutional), will help them use their unique knowledge in the best way. Collaboration is thus of the utmost importance.

Collaboration with the scientific community needs to be encouraged as it is an essential partner in developing technologies and farming techniques for water conservation that build on the local knowledge of farmers.

Farmers have interesting experiences to share and the capacity to change and improve their standards of farming, and their standards of living.

Access to water is critical to agriculture, and agriculture is critical for food security and rural development. ‘Win-win’ partnerships are badly needed in order to face the challenging issue of protecting our precious natural resources, while at the same time doubling world food production to meet the needs of the growing population.

Extracts drawn from the discussion papers submitted by major groups.
Rain, a precious raw material, is the original source of all fresh water systems. It has the highest social value and is a complementary solution to food security strategies in most regions of Africa.

IRHA is thus calling upon governments, after the Addis Ababa Ministerial conference on Water in December 2002 to encourage RW planning and management within Integrated Water Resource Management frameworks, to use rain where it falls and to facilitate the means to supply safe drinking water at the lowest cost.

Rain, as a public good, represents a major freshwater supply option for poverty reduction, conflict prevention and gender equity. There are many good practices around the world to confirm the figures above. They all show the urgent need to put RWH in the first row of development priorities.

As an essential component of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), rainwater harvesting should improve cross-sectoral planning, facilitate better institutional coordination and preserve traditional water-saving knowledge. IRHA is thus engaged in building the Social Life Cycle of Rainwater in demonstrative projects in view to mainstream this option in development agendas and to implement a forceful capacity building strategy in selected countries in the south.

Mainstreaming RWH in development agendas should now permit to concretize implementation of principles and declarations adopted in major global events in Rio, Dublin, Bonn, Johannesburg, Kyoto, Jeju and CSD 12, as in many regional and local water and sanitation events.

The statement below has been included as a result of the intervention of the Secretariat of The International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance IRHA with UN DESA during the CSD 12 preparatory process:

“Due to the increasing financial and environmental costs of developing new sources of water, it is generally more cost-effective to increase the effective water supply by reducing leakages and losses. Another cost-effective approach to improving water supplies is rainwater harvesting, which has been neglected as a source of drinking water partly because of water quality concerns. It is now gaining popularity in many developing countries in Asia, including China, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka, as it provides a sustainable solution to water scarcity. Desalination of sea water is used to provide water for drinking or other high-value uses in some water scarce West Asian countries and SIDS, but the high cost limits the application of desalination as a source of water in poor countries or for relatively low-value uses such as irrigation.”

Water Matters

Water matters to the plant science industry. A renewable, but scarce and precious resource, it is the lifeblood of every crop and the key to successful food production, poverty eradication and public health. As an ever increasing world population puts more and more pressure on natural resources, it is imperative that water supplies are used more efficiently. Equally the quality of water must be protected. Future forecasts predict a 20% increase over the next thirty years in the number of irrigated hectares. Agriculture accounts for some 70% of all water use, making it our duty and responsibility to protect and preserve this vital natural resource.

The plant science industry is well placed to address the water challenge. As part of its commitment to sustainable agriculture a range of agricultural technologies are being developed that help improve water use efficiency in crop growth. Industry also promotes improved land management systems that play a major role in enhancing water use efficiency and protecting water quality, such as low- or no tillage land practices, which are often enabled only through the use of herbicides. Farmers throughout the world have already seen the benefits of these systems. In Europe industry has now partnered with the EU to study the beneficial effects of conservation tillage on water quality there.

Herbicides also help increase a crop's access to water by reducing weeds that compete for use of scarce water resources? resulting in ?more crop per drop.? In the Philippines, new rice production systems enabled by innovative weed control have reduced water consumption by one-fifth. This is particularly critical as rice is one of the most water intensive crops worldwide.

The promotion of good agricultural practices and product stewardship is fundamental. By engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships, industry seeks to ensure its stewardship activities are also successful in protecting water quality by reducing soil erosion, avoiding run-off of crop protection products, and...
increasing wildlife habitat as part of a holistic farm or land management approach. Throughout Europe, for example, industry has teamed up with farmers and water utility companies to protect water areas and inform farmers regarding application timing, amount, and choice of crop protection products.

Research carried out by industry into new products that address farmers’ needs while at the same time protecting essential water resources are also underway. One programme currently in the discovery phase is an effort to identify genes that might provide “drought stress tolerance” with the potential to substantially improve a crop’s water utilization, resulting in less water consumption.

Industry is stepping up to the water challenge by developing innovative strategies for sustainable water management in agriculture. However, progress can only be made when all stakeholders are involved in the process; it is vital that the private sector, the public sector, and civil society work together in partnership to preserve our world’s natural resources.

A publication some case studies, facts and figures on water, agriculture, and the plant science industry are already available on CropLife International’s website (www.croplife.org). For contacts: Christine Gould at christine@croplife.org.

**RIO GRINDS**

The light-hearted side of Sustainable Development

*Oil based Non-renewable business NGOs had a meeting on Monday morning, during which there was a bomb threat. They couldn’t agree whether to leave the building or not as there was insufficient scientific basis for action.*

Rio Grinds is opening a negotiating withdrawal station, available to delegates just before they arrive at the Vienna Café. Negotiators will find a number of sentences for them to try to bracket or delete.

*The results of a survey in the Vienna Café of most sought after tickets:*

1. South African 10th Anniversary Party
2. Tickets for Euro 2004
3. Tickets for the 2004 World Series

Complimentary tickets for the South African party should be sent to the editor at: tmiddleton@stakeholderforum.org
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TUESDAY’S DIARY

10:00-11:30 Human Settlements Partnerships Presentations (Partnership Fair)
10:00-1:00 CR 1 & 2: Major Group Discussions on Water, Sanitation, and Human Settlement
10:00-1:00 Learning Centre: Consensus Building for Natural Resources (World Bank)
11:30-1:00 Interactive Discussion: Human Settlements Partnership (Partnerships Fair)
1:15-2:45 CR 1: Pacific-Caribbean Regional Sustainable Water Resources Plans and Joint
1:15-2:45 CR 6: A Decade of GEF Experience with Transboundary Waters
1:15-2:45 CR D: Environmental Threats and Security: Addressing the Governance Deficit
1:15-2:45 CR 2: Sustainable Solutions to Rural Water and Sanitation in NIS, Experience from Women’s Organizations
3:00-4:30 CR 1: Regional Discussions on Water: UN ESCAP
3:00-4:30 Partnership presentations (Partnership Fair)
3:00-6:00 CR 2: Interactive Major Group Discussion on Water
3:00-6:00 Learning Centre: How to Apply for GEF Projects
4:30-6:00 CR 1: Regional Discussion on Water: UN ECE
4:30-6:00 Interactive Discussion: Tools for management of partnerships information (Partnership Fair)
6:15-7:45 CR 2: Sustainable Production and Consumption Patterns for Water within the Agricultural Sector
6:15-7:45 CR 6: Making every drop count: better quality ODA to water and sanitation
6:15-7:45 CR 1: Environmental Flows: a negotiated approached to sustainable water resource management
9:00-10:00 CR 6: The Achilles Heel of the International Water Agenda

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