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**Policy issues: State of the environment
Outcome of the World Summit on
Sustainable Development**

**INITIATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ON WATER AND
SANITATION, ENERGY, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY**

Note by the Executive Director

The present note summarizes the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General on water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity (WEHAB) and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with respect to water. Other documents before the Governing Council (UNEP/GC.22/2, UNEP/GC.22/2/Add.3 and UNEP/GC.22/INF/21) provide information on activities the United Nations Environment Programme will undertake to assist in the achievement of the environmental aspects of WEHAB recommendations and the goals and targets emanating from the World Summit. The text of the following paragraphs has been reproduced without formal editing.

* UNEP/GC.22/1

(A) WEHAB - Water Paper - A Framework for Action on Water and Sanitation

1. This paper identifies water and sanitation challenges and recommends actions to address them. The challenges and recommendation action are consistent with previous major water related conferences, such as the Bonn International Conference on freshwater. That is, the paper does not break significant new ground. However, there is more emphasis on water supply and sanitation, consistent with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
2. The paper highlighted a number of important areas which water and sanitation were seen to revolve around:
 - access, availability and affordability
 - allocation issues
 - capacity building and technological needs
 - social issues.
3. The WEHAB Water framework for action contains the following priority Action Areas, and the WEHAB Water document lists examples of specific actions to achieve them:
 - Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
 - Halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to improved sanitation
 - Develop integrated water resources management (IWRM) frameworks, including integrated (ICARM), and prepare and implement water management action plans at the country level.
 - Accelerate water productivity gains in irrigated agricultural systems to contribute to food security, relieve environmental pressures and provide scope for water transfers to other important productive uses.
 - Safeguard human health, including reduction in the mortality rate (associated with lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene), by improving the quality of drinking water.
 - Strengthen disaster preparedness planning processes at the country level to protect the poor from the impact of water-related disasters (floods and droughts), particularly in low-lying countries and small island developing states.
 - Mobilise financial resources to meet the investment needs in the water sector.
 - Strengthen institutional and technical capacities of developing countries in the implementation of IWRM, ICARM and water governance at the country level, including those dealing with the O&M of water schemes.
 - Protect the quality of surface and groundwater as well as of the aquatic ecosystems and coastal zones.
4. In discussing the WEHAB Water & Sanitation paper, the WSSD highlighted that water is not only the most basic of needs but is also at the centre of sustainable development and is essential for poverty eradication. Water is intimately linked to health, agriculture, energy and biodiversity. Without progress on water, reaching other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be difficult if not impossible.

(B) World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

5. The World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation adopted goals and targets to protect ecosystems and to achieve the integrated management of water. The most concrete outcome of the Summit was arguably the adoption of the Millennium Development Goal applying to water and sanitation.
6. The agreed goals and targets in the implementation plan of direct applicability to freshwater, to which UNEP should make a contribution include:
 - By 2015 halve the proportion of people without safe drinking water and provide the same in terms of access to sanitation;

- Develop integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005;
- Provide new and additional financial resources for water management.

7. WSSD also recognised that oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas form an integrated and essential component of the earth's ecosystem and are critical for global food security, sustaining economic prosperity and the well-being of many national economic. In relation to the coastal and marine environment, the implementation plan highlights a set of key commitments, including the implementation of the GPA/LBA, establishment of a regular process for global reporting and assessment for the state of the marine environment and the strengthening of the Regional Seas Programme. The Summit called for continued assistance to the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in terms of technology transfer; strengthening regional fisheries management; implementing programmes on marine on coastal biological diversity and convening of an international conference for the comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The agreed goals and targets in the implementation plan of the WSSD include:

- Maintain or restore fish stocks to levels that can be sustainably harvested by not later than 2015.
- Cease destructive fishing practices and establish marine protected areas and networks by 2012, through the protection of nursery grounds, watershed planning and integrated marine and coastal areas management.
- Encourage, by 2010, the application of the ecosystem approach to the management of oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas.
- Establish by 2004 a regular process under the UN for global reporting and assessment of the marine environment.
- Reduce and prevent wastes and pollution by undertaking, before 2004, initiatives aimed at implementing the GPA in SIDS.
- Undertake a full review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for SIDS in 2004.

(C) WEHAB, WSSD and the UNEP Programme of Work for the 2004 and 2005 Biennium.

8. UNEP reviewed and adjusted its Programme of Work (POW), consistent with its mandate and resources, to improve alignment between UNEP activities, WEHAB recommendation and WSSD goals and targets. This review was also consistent with the Secretary-General's request to UN agencies to reflect the WEHAB in their work programmes. Broadly the POW required some adjustments in priorities, including with regard to sanitation. However, not all of the WEHAB or WSSD priorities with a high environmental relevance could be accommodated under projected 2004-2005 POW budget parameters.

(D) Key Issue

9. The key issue is, as indicated in the WSSD Political Declaration, making it happen. Implementation of agreed actions is the priority.
