

Private Water Operators welcome the proposal for a Global Objective for the improvement of water management

This objective will encourage governments to make greater efforts to meet the needs of the billions of people who do not enjoy satisfactory services and at the same time promote economic development and protect ecosystems

New York – 31st of May 2013.

The High-Level Panel, charged by the UN Secretary General to prepare recommendations for development objectives in the post-2015 development programme, has just completed its work and has published its recommendations for the period 2015 to 2030¹.

Private Water Operators congratulate the panel on the choice of objectives which will contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development. The panel's proposals should facilitate the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, when the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set in 2000, will expire.

The operators welcome the importance given by the panel to the resolution of growing challenges linked to water and sanitation. Among the 12 Global Objectives proposed, the panel recommends a dedicated Objective for the improvement of water management. In addition, it suggests that certain other Global Objectives take specific water related issues into account in their formulation².

Private water operators are very hopeful that the United Nations will adopt the proposition for a Global Objective for Water Management that will focus on the important questions of:

- universal access to drinking water that is truly safe and to sanitation that includes safe and dignified toilets,
- efficient management of water resources to satisfy all needs sustainably,
- collection and de-pollution of water after it has been used for industrial and domestic purposes.

These three important subjects were identified by AquaFed as major challenges at the global level in its contribution to the Rio +20 summit³. The same issues were also given prominence by business at Rio⁴. They are also the ones that received strong public support in the global online public consultation organised by the United Nations between November 2012 and March 2013.⁵

¹ the report of the high-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda: www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf

² In particular, developing irrigation is targeted to achieve the Objective #5 on food security

³ AquaFed contribution to Rio +20: www.aquafed.org/pages/fr/admin/UserFiles/pdf/Rio+20_AquaFedContribution_Pc_2011-10-31.pdf

⁴ Business Action for Sustainable Development, contribution to Rio +20 compilation document, section J, pgs 37 to 41: www.unctd2012.org/content/documents/424BASD_FINAL_1%20Nov2011_input_for_Rio20.pdf

⁵ See: "High Level Forum Outcome Statement 22 March 2013" www.worldwewant2015.org/fr/node/341073

AquaFed

Gerard Payen, President of AquaFed said: “Adoption in 2015 of this global objective for water management with the corresponding specific targets and indicators will encourage countries to face up to the water challenges and define more ambitious policies for their water and wastewater management. It promises to improve the living conditions of 2 billion people, who only have access to water that is not safe to drink and dangerous for their health, to satisfy sustainably the growing water needs of expanding populations, the economy and agriculture, while at the same time protecting ecosystems and stopping the creeping menace of pollution from human activities being discharged into the environment without any appropriate treatment measures.”⁶

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AquaFed is the International Federation of Private Water Operators. Open to companies and associations of companies of all sizes and from all countries, it aims to contribute to solving water challenges by making Private Sector know-how and experience available to the international community. It brings together more than 300 water companies that serve hundreds of millions of people in 40 countries. Members of the Federation participate actively in the improvement of water and sanitation services, thus contributing to make the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation effective for people.

For many years, the Federation has warned of the underestimation of people’s needs for safe water and sanitation (including access to toilets, collection of water after use, wastewater treatment and storm-water management) and has alerted on the absence of any UN policy on pollution discharged by human activities into water . For many years through their International Federation, private water operators have advocated for more ambitious water and sanitation policies.

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⁶ It is estimated that 80% of water used by people and industry throughout the world are discharged to watercourses and the sea without any treatment to remove pollution.