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**Effective Partnerships in the Areas of Human Settlements,  
Water, Sanitation and Waste Management**

A Paper by the Commonwealth Secretariat

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# Effective Partnerships in the Areas of Human Settlements, Water, Sanitation and Waste Management\*

## Executive Summary

1. The biennium 2004/5 has seen an intense global discussion on how to ensure progress towards internationally-agreed goals on human settlements – housing and shelter, basic services (including waste services) and employment for slum dwellers – as well as access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development adopted the themes of human settlements, water and sanitation as its thematic cluster for the 2004/5 cycle. In addition, the Millennium Project’s summary report *Investing in Development* and its Taskforce Reports on improving the lives of slum dwellers and on water and sanitation also give strong support both for a new commitment to human settlements development and to partnerships as a means of realizing this.<sup>1</sup>

2. Despite many decades of development planning and assistance, much of the rural and urban population in low- and middle-income Commonwealth countries live in overcrowded homes of poor quality that lack adequate provision for water, sanitation and waste management. In most instances, neither public nor private provision has managed to reach most of the lower-income population; in many places, even middle-income groups with substantial capacity to pay still get inadequate provision for basic services. The 2004 *World Development Report* highlights these concerns, noting that progress on human development has lagged behind that in reducing income poverty. There are examples, however, of partnerships between governments, community organizations and NGOs that show effective, locally-rooted solutions to these challenges. They include initiatives such as the Working for Water programme in South Africa, which has focused on environmental goals but also brought benefits for poorer groups. Others, such as the municipality-supported community-designed and managed toilets in Pune and Mumbai, have focused on bringing benefits to poorer groups but also created much improved environments. As noted in the 2004 World Development Report, “the fact that there are strong examples where services do work means governments and citizens can do better. How? By putting poor people at the center of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers; by amplifying their voice in policy making; and, by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor.”<sup>2</sup>

3. A variety of approaches are being used to deliver commitments on human settlements, water, sanitation and waste management. They include provision by central government, decentralized initiatives, and action by local government and communities, as

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\*This paper was first presented as the basis for discussions by the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment in March 2004, when they met in Jeju, Korea. It has been revised and updated for the 2005 meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements. The paper was prepared with the assistance of Gordon McGranahan and David Satterthwaite of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Ruth McLeod and Kim Mullard of Homeless International and Peter de Groot. The views expressed in the paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

well as contracting out to the private sector and non-governmental organizations. This paper focuses on the important mechanism of partnerships involving groups of stakeholders in jointly planned and implemented initiatives. It does so, in the recognition that governments cannot deliver sustainable development commitments on their own and that the committed participation of stakeholders can bring more resources and ensure that solutions tackle the problems directly as they are perceived by low-income communities themselves.

4. This paper examines current provisions for basic services in low- and middle-income Commonwealth countries and summarizes the goals and targets that governments have agreed on housing, water, sanitation and waste management at the two UN Habitat Conferences, the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. They include commitments to:

- Significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million 'slum' dwellers by 2020.<sup>3</sup>
- Halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and without access to basic sanitation between 1990 and 2015
- Develop waste management systems, with the highest priorities placed on waste prevention and minimisation, reuse and recycling, and environmentally sound disposal facilities.

5. The paper then reviews different types of partnerships that are being employed to help achieve these international goals. The first is that of government working with the private sector (public-private partnerships). This form of partnership has received considerable attention and takes many forms. The hope is that increasing private sector participation will increase the amount of finance available to development and that it would improve efficiency. The experiences have been mixed, and appear somewhat disappointing with respect to the Millennium Development Goals. In particular, investment has been lower than hoped and concentrated in large cities, with little investment in the poorest countries. Furthermore, many of the obstacles to improving provision in low-income areas have little to do with whether the local utility is privately or publicly owned. The second type of partnership is that of governments working more directly with poorer groups (public-community partnerships). These partnerships have received less attention, but are proving quite successful in addressing the needs of the poor in both urban and rural areas. These have shown how, by keeping costs to a minimum, limited resources can go further. They have also integrated measures into their approaches that help increase household incomes and strengthen organisations of the poor. A third type of partnership has been less widely used, one between government agencies, private operators and organisations representing urban poor groups. Such approaches can promote discussion around difficult trade-offs. Examples of Commonwealth partnerships are provided as an annex to the paper. Partnerships in the areas of settlements, water, sanitation and waste are seen as particularly relevant for local governments that lack the capacity and funds to meet their responsibilities for infrastructure and service provision.

6. The paper examines the role of external agencies in supporting partnerships. It notes that while many official bilateral and multilateral agencies have sought to support local development processes, they face institutional constraints in doing so. Some agencies, such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), have had some success through special funding facilities that can support national and local institutions in conjunction with others, and help to scale-up community-driven initiatives. The study

concludes with an examination of the factors that help successful partnerships develop. These include: a recognition of the implications of unequal power between the partners; supporting partnerships that build consensus around a pressing issue, enabling them to become a focus for action; using good governance to provide the institutional and political framework within which partnerships work best; taking measures to ensure that under-represented and unorganised groups are involved; and ensuring clarity and precision with regard to the role of any partnership – what it is seeking to achieve, and how it will do so.

### **Issues for Ministers**

7. In their discussion on the issues outlined in this paper, Ministers may wish to consider the following points:

- I. To share their experience of partnerships to achieve development objectives in the areas of water, sanitation, human settlements and waste management.
  - What policy approaches have helped in reaching the lowest-income groups? What have been the constraints?
  - Have partnerships been a key strategy, and if so, which groups have proved to be the most effective partners for governments, and why?
  - What kind of stakeholder involvement did these partnerships entail, including experience working with organizations formed by low-income groups? How can national agencies best support diverse local partnerships?
  - What gaps need to be filled in generating progress towards international agreed goals?
  - Is there a need for partnership facilitation? If so, of what kind?
- II. Ministers may wish to consider how important the Millennium Development Goals are in creating direction for programmes that governments are implementing. In particular:
  - Have the goals and targets been useful in focusing activities?
  - Have the MDGs altered the focus of your programmes?
  - Have you noticed any change in the priority areas for donor funding as a result of the MDGs?
  - What role have Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) played in addressing water & sanitation, human settlements and waste management concerns and how successfully have the MDGs been integrated into these strategies?
- III. Is there is a role for the Commonwealth to play in facilitating partnerships to implement the MDGs? What role could ComHabitat most usefully play in the areas of human settlements, water & sanitation and waste management?
- IV. What is the potential for regional partnership approaches in the areas of human settlements, water, sanitation and waste management? How can current best practice be scaled-up?

- V. How can the Commonwealth most effectively support member states' engagement in review cycles of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York and the upcoming review of the MDGs during the UN General Assembly? How can the Commonwealth assist Ministers in ensuring that human settlements, water and sanitation concerns are effectively addressed by such meetings.

## **PART I: HOUSING AND PROVISION OF BASIC SERVICES**

### **Low and Middle Income Commonwealth Countries**

8. Despite five decades of national development plans and hundreds of billions of dollars of development assistance, a large part of the rural and urban population of most low- and middle-income countries within the Commonwealth still subsist on incomes that are below the poverty-line and live in poor quality housing that lacks adequate provision for basic infrastructure and services. Most of the poverty and the inadequacies in provision for basic services are in rural areas. But the scale and depth of urban poverty has been growing and is usually under-estimated in official statistics, because the income-levels at which poverty-lines are set are too low for non-food needs (including rent, transport, fuel, water and health care costs and the costs of keeping children at school).<sup>4</sup> In many countries, no allowance is made in setting poverty lines for the higher monetary costs of most basic needs in urban areas.

9. The limited achievements in regard to development can also be seen in the high levels of infant and child mortality rates in urban and rural areas. Infant and child mortality rates are among the most significant and useful indicators of development and of environmental quality since they reflect whether households have adequate incomes, food supplies, infrastructure to limit diseases (especially water, sanitation and drainage) and services to limit the impacts of disease and injury (health care and emergency services in which maternal and child health care have particular importance). Table 1 shows how high infant and child mortality rates remain in many lower-income Commonwealth countries. It is still common for one child in ten to die before their fifth birthday – and in some countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia) for close to one in five to die<sup>\*</sup>. UN Habitat has begun work comparing indicators in ‘slum’ and ‘non-slum’ areas<sup>5</sup>.

10. Although infant and child mortality rates within countries are lower in urban areas than in rural areas, the gap is surprisingly small in many of the countries listed in Table 1, particularly when one considers that most middle and upper-income people live in urban areas. Studies of infant and child mortality rates within cities often show particularly high rates among poorer groups or in particular settlements. For instance in Nairobi a study in 1998 found the under five mortality rate for the city to be 62 per 1000 live births but it was 151 per 1000 live births in the informal settlements in which around half of Nairobi’s population live.<sup>6</sup>

11. In regard to housing, a large proportion of the Commonwealth’s population lives in houses of poor quality, usually with high levels of overcrowding (2 or more persons per room) which have inadequate provision for water and sanitation – both in rural and in urban areas.<sup>7</sup> According to official UN statistics on water and sanitation, most low-income Commonwealth countries have less than half their rural population served with ‘improved’ provision for water and sanitation<sup>8</sup>. Official UN statistics appear to suggest that problems

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\* We note that the period shown in Table 1 coincides with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection within Sub-Saharan Africa. Child mortality rates are still a good overall indicator of poverty, since children that are poor and are HIV positive are likely to have shorter life expectancy as a result of poor family incomes, poor housing, poor sanitation, poor diet and lack of access to medicine and medical facilities.

**Table 1: Infant and Child Mortality Rates (selected lower-income Commonwealth countries)**

Country and Year	Deaths per 1,000 Births*					
	Age <1			Age 1-4		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Bangladesh 2000	74	81	80	24	35	33
Cameroon 1998	61	87	80	53	80	72
Ghana 1998	43	68	61	36	58	52
India 1999	49	80	73	17	35	31
Kenya 1998	55	74	71	35	38	37
Malawi 2000	83	117	113	71	106	102
Mozambique 1997	101	160	147	55	92	84
Namibia 1992	63	61	62	25	36	32
Nigeria 1999	59	75	71	52	73	67
Pakistan 1990/91	75	102	94	21	33	29
Tanzania 1996	82	97	94	42	59	56
Uganda 1995	74	88	86	64	78	77
Zambia 1996	92	118	108	90	98	95

\* Infant and child mortality rates for the 10-year period preceding the survey

Source: Population Reports, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2002, drawing data from Demographic and Health Surveys.

are not so serious for urban areas. But as the official statistics state, the only data available in most countries is on who has access to an 'improved' water source (for instance a standpipe) or to a latrine – and not whether they have 'adequate' or 'safe' provision from a health perspective. For instance, those with access to a standpipe will be classified as having 'improved' water, even if they have to share this standpipe with hundreds of other people (so access is difficult) and water in the standpipe is of poor quality and only available intermittently\*. A recent UN study of provision for water and sanitation in urban areas showed that much of the urban population in low- and middle-income Commonwealth countries do not have water piped to their home or, for sanitation, anything better than a shared pit latrine. Tables 2 and 3 show that in many cities, less than half the population have water piped to their home. We note that the examples in these tables are primarily from

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\* The following definitions are quoted from the UN web site [www.wateryear2003.org](http://www.wateryear2003.org):

**Adequate sanitation:** Access to sanitation that is convenient for all household members (including women and children), affordable and that eliminates contact with human excreta and other wastewater within the home and the wider neighbourhood.

**Adequate water supply:** Supply of safe water that is safe, sufficient, regular, convenient, and available at an affordable price.

**Improved sanitation:** Access to a private or shared toilet connected to a public sewer or a septic tank, or access to a private or shared pour-flush latrine, simple-pit latrine or ventilated improved pit latrine.

**Improved water supply:** Access to a water supply from a household connection, a public standpipe, a borehole, a protected dug well, or a protected rain water connection. At least 20 litres per person per day must be available from a source within 1 km of the user's dwelling.

national capitals and that conditions are usually worse in smaller, less important urban centres.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 2: Provision for Water Supplies in Commonwealth Cities in Asia c. 1995**

CITY	% of popn with house taps	% of popn served by public taps	Other
Kolkata (India)	24.1	20.3	34% without piped water; most use tubewells and dug wells
Chittagong (Bangladesh)	43.3	17.0	40% without piped water; rely on tubewells and ponds
Colombo (Sri Lanka)	31.2	29.2	42% without piped water; rely on tubewells and dug wells
Delhi (India)	65.8		c. 11,000 public taps that are not metered and c. 7,500 known unauthorized connections
Dhaka (Bangladesh)	35.6	6.7	58% without piped water; rely on tubewells and other
Faisalabad (Pakistan)	31.1	5.6	40% without piped water; rely mostly on tubewells
Karachi (Pakistan)	50.5	8.7	30% without piped water; rely on tubewells and dug wells
Kathmandu (Nepal)	69.3	6.0	Those unserved generally use tubewells, dug wells and ponds
Lahore (Pakistan)	81.5	2.3	16% without piped water; using tubewells with handpumps
Penang (Malaysia)	100.0	0.1	
Singapore	100.0	0.0	
Suva (Fiji)	98.6	0.0	

Source: McIntosh, Arthur C. and Cesar E. Yñiguez. *Second Water Utilities Data Book*. Asian Development Bank, 1997.

**Table 3: Provision for Water Supplies in Commonwealth Cities in Africa (2000)**

CITY	% of popn served by:					
	house connections	yard taps	public stand-pipes	boreholes with handpumps	other	unserved
Accra (Ghana)	25	20			50 (vendors)	5
Blantyre (Malawi)	41		25			34
Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)	7	13	17	15	8	39
Freetown (Sierra Leone)	2	8	0.4	0.2	24 (wells)	*
Gaborone (Botswana)	43	2	56			
Harare (Zimbabwe)	8					
Kampala (Uganda)	42	8	13			
Lusaka (Zambia)		26	55			19
Maputo (Mozambique)	22	28	27	14	9	1
Maseru (Lesotho)		26	9			64
Mbane (Swaziland)	37	37				24
Nairobi (Kenya)	78		15	1	7 (wells)	
Windhoek (Namibia)	84		17			

Source: WHO (2001), *Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Assessment 2000; Africa Region Part 2; Country Profiles*, World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, Harare, 287 pages.

12. In regard to sanitation, the only provision for most of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa and much of Asia is latrines that households dig themselves or public latrines that are usually dirty and often difficult to access. Most toilets are not connected to

\* Source does not give percentage unserved.

sewers; most urban centres in Africa and a high proportion in Asia have no sewers at all and for those that do, these typically serve only a small proportion of households. Good quality pit latrines or toilets connected to septic tanks can provide adequate quality alternatives – but only a very small proportion of households have these.

13. Provision for sanitation is so poor in many African and Asian cities that significant proportions of their population resort to open defecation or to defecating in some waste material (such as waste paper or a plastic bag) – what is termed ‘flying toilets’ in Accra and in Nairobi.<sup>10</sup> Interviews with 1843 households – in Vijayawada (India), Maputo (Mozambique) and Accra, Cape Coast and Tamale (Ghana) found that 29 percent of households had no domestic sanitation facilities within their plots.<sup>11</sup>

14. A large part of the population in many low-income Commonwealth countries receives little or no household waste collection service. This is generally less of a problem in villages or small towns, as households and communities make informal provision for disposal (and residential waste volumes are lower). It becomes more problematic in cities because informal provision for disposal is not possible and waste volumes increase. Among major cities, it is common for half or more of the population to have no service or for half or more of all residential wastes not to be collected; among smaller urban centres, it is common for there to be no service to collect household wastes at all.<sup>12</sup> This presents serious problems for the residential areas that receive inadequate or no service as refuse accumulates in and around the settlement, attracting disease vectors and blocking drainage channels. Most cities also face difficulties from a lack of local capacity to manage what wastes are collected – including toxic or otherwise hazardous wastes. Usually, local governments are responsible for waste collection and management and the (usually inadequate) services they provide still represent a sizeable part of their total budget.

### **Small States**

15. Small states face special problems related to size. In their provision of basic services, they have a limited ability to exploit economies of scale: infrastructure and public services tend to be expensive on a *per capita* basis, since expenses are shared amongst a smaller number of users. They also face problems with waste management and the provision of clean water given that their land areas tend to be small and subject to competing uses.

16. Although Small Island Developing States (SIDS) generally have abundant rainfall, their small land area can constrain the use of storage reservoirs for the dry season. In general, water supplies are heavily dependent on aquifers replenished by rainfall, but these reserves are increasingly at risk from pollution and wastes from rising urban populations and burgeoning tourism, leachates from landfill sites, pesticides and fertilisers from agriculture and industrial wastes. Increasingly these aquifers are in danger of salination by encroaching seawater due to excessive pumping of groundwater (a problem in Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago) and from rising sea levels induced by climate change. On some islands, water quality is declining as forests are cut and watersheds damaged. Inadequate sanitation in rapidly growing urban areas is affecting water quality and international definitions of improved sanitation – in terms of density and separation distances – may not be appropriate to environmental conditions in tropical small island states<sup>13</sup>. There are examples of successful technological solutions to water concerns in SIDS, such as the technology being employed in Bermuda to maximise rainwater harvesting, but as the Caribbean drought of

2001 showed, shifting rainfall patterns are continuing to create severe water stress for many SIDS.

17. Due to their small size, the safe disposal of wastes is also a problem for SIDS. Even if available, landfill sites are not suitable for the permanent disposal of hazardous chemicals and biomedical wastes, especially if these sites are poorly sited or badly managed. Incinerating wastes is expensive, and leaves an ash that may contain concentrated toxic residues. The high use (and often over-use) of fertilizers and mixes of pesticides contaminates aquifers and coastal waters, where pollution from large capacity tourist cruisers is also causing serious problems in some countries.

18. Effective management of wastes and control of pollution is a prerequisite for the supply of clean water, and the challenge is heightened by the conflicting priorities and close proximity of the many stakeholders involved. For example, tourists, an important part of the economy of many SIDS, produce around ten times more waste than locals. The development of intensive agriculture to service increased urban populations and numbers of visitors has encouraged the over-use of chemicals, creating impacts on human and environmental health. Regulation of these diverse and conflicting activities is made especially difficult if responsibilities for the different sectors (health, waste disposal, tourism, agriculture, environment and industry) are fragmented across different ministries and organisations. Furthermore, SIDS face challenges in supporting technical capacity to measure and monitor contamination and water quality.

19. Commonwealth small states in Southern Africa share many of the problems of the wider group of low-income countries with respect to human settlements, water, sanitation and waste management. Like other countries in Sub-Saharan African, they too are also vulnerable to climate change and its impacts on water resources and water management.<sup>14</sup> For these, and all small states, a healthy and sustainable living environment can only be achieved through increased international efforts towards climate change mitigation, and through deeply integrated approaches to development, including by means of partnerships.

## **Goals and Targets**

20. Governments and international agencies have been making commitments to improve provision for water, sanitation and waste management and other improvements to human settlements for more than two decades. In 1976, at the first UN Conference on Human Settlements, 132 governments committed themselves to ensuring that “safe water and hygienic waste disposal should receive priority with a view to achieving measurable qualitative and quantitative targets serving all the population by a certain date” (recommendation C12) with this commitment re-affirmed in 1977 (at the UN Conference in Mar del Plata) and within the 1980s as it was designated by the UN General Assembly as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade.

21. These commitments were reaffirmed at the second UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1996 within the Habitat Agenda, but with certain important additions, including:

- framing these commitments within an overall commitment to sustainable development

- recognizing the need for governments to work in partnership with the private sector and civil society
- providing a more explicit focus on strengthening the capacity and accountability of local governments

22. The Habitat Agenda requires progress to be monitored but is generally silent on how progress can be measured (see Annex II for further details on the Habitat Agenda). The Millennium Development Goals adopted at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 are intended to assist governments to meet their commitments by setting time bound benchmarks for a set of activities that will go some way towards sustainable human development and these include specific targets for improving provision for water and sanitation, for the achievement of sustainable development goals and for reducing urban and rural poverty (see Annex III for a summary of the MDGs).

23. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, heightened the recognition that sustainable development must embrace poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development. Participating Governments also reaffirmed their commitment to a partnership approach to implementing Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the MDGs. It also included a new target on access to sanitation.

24. This evolution of goals addresses issues that are critical to the lives of the poor in rural and urban areas. It also provides a mechanism for focusing on certain priorities, as well as a means to monitor progress. In discussions on how to achieve these goals, there is a growing recognition of the advantage of partnerships. Before discussing how partnerships can achieve these goals, seven points need to be stressed in regard to ‘how’ to achieve the goals:

- ***Recognise the interdependence of goals and targets.*** The achievement of each goal, and even individual targets, depends upon what is done in relation to others. MDG Target 11, for example, which calls for a “significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers”, cannot be achieved without ensuring better access to safe water and adequate sanitation. Significant improvements will usually require greater income-earning opportunities and better service provision (especially schools and health care that slum dwellers can access). Most improvements for ‘slum’ dwellers will also require more democratic and accountable governance systems. Thus the target that most relates to the Habitat Agenda cannot be achieved without reference to most other Millennium Development Goals. Meanwhile, the ambitious MDG targets for reducing infant, child and maternal mortality cannot be achieved without significantly improving the lives of slum-dwellers.<sup>15</sup>
- ***Support locally-driven approaches.*** Internationally, it is important to have time-bound goals with instruments through which progress can be tracked. However, it is also important to ensure that the goals are addressed, working with low-income groups and their organizations to make sure that programmes tackle the pressing, location-specific problems that they face. The achievement of most of the MDGs depends on more competent local

organizations that are accountable to and work with low-income groups. Local people should also be involved in drawing up indicators to make certain that what is being measured is making a real difference to their lives. Otherwise, indicators developed by experts at international meetings may suggest to international agencies that progress is being made, whereas in reality little of real benefit is happening on the ground. For example, the lack of a clean safe water supply in most areas of cities is often wrongly attributed to water scarcity when the real problem is the lack of investment in water distribution and poor water network management.<sup>16</sup> Under these circumstances, a programme to increase water supply might be deemed as successful but not produce any improvement in supply for those in need.

- ***Support action, and not just strategies.*** There is a propensity for international organisations to concentrate on models and approaches. The examples of successful projects demonstrate that progress will only be made through enabling local action.
- ***Look beyond narrowly defined targets.*** The targets could focus undue attention only on issues that can be quantified and that lend themselves to goals and targets. We can measure the infant mortality rate, but good governance including empowerment for low-income groups, which are critical to the realisation of all the MDGs, is very difficult to quantify. Alternatively, the targets could detract attention from important issues that are quantitatively less significant, but still deserve attention. For example, prioritising the reduction of infant mortality must not be allowed to lead to the neglect of older children.
- ***Consider individuals and groups, as well as averages.*** Averages appear to support the widely held belief that urban dwellers are better off than their rural counterparts, and that they enjoy better health, education and access to essential facilities such as clean water and sanitation. Closer scrutiny shows that the aggregated statistics are misleading because urban averages are boosted by the fact that most higher-income groups live there. The poorest 30 to 50% of urban dwellers can have levels of malnutrition and a lack of basic services that is comparable to poorer groups in rural areas.
- ***Ensure that the indicators selected correctly represent the goals and targets.*** The MDG water target refers to “sustainable access to safe drinking water”, but there are no statistics available for most countries on this. Data are only available on what the United Nations defines as “improved” access to water and sanitation which as noted earlier is of a lower standard than ‘adequate’ or ‘safe’. The US\$1 a day poverty line, which is suggested as the main means for monitoring income-poverty within the MDGs, is inappropriate because in high-cost locations (especially cities), avoiding poverty and meeting basic needs requires a higher income than this.<sup>17</sup>
- ***Have reliable local data.*** As noted above, there are no reliable indicators for “safe” and “sustainable” provision of water and sanitation in the majority of countries, making it impossible to monitor progress towards Target 10 (to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe

drinking water and basic sanitation).<sup>18</sup> But the priority should be to improve local data to support local action. Much of the international funding for improved data has gone to national household surveys that provide little of use for local action, because they are based on representative samples and do not identify the settlements or neighbourhoods where provision is poor.

## PART II: PARTNERSHIPS

25. Partnerships between government agencies and other organizations are seen as a means by which governments can get more done or do things better. They are considered especially relevant for local governments that lack the capacity and funds to meet their responsibilities for infrastructure provision (e.g. piped water networks, sewers, drains, roads and paths) and services (e.g. schools and health care plus emergency services and solid waste collection and management). Partnerships may also be developed to serve other needs such as the management of public facilities (parks, nature reserves and playgrounds). In many countries, decentralisation has increased the importance of partnerships as roles and functions are transferred from national or state to local government and local government is expected to work with local NGOs and community based organizations, in part to draw on their resources, in part to allow civil society more scope for planning and action.

26. In considering partnerships, it is useful to distinguish between a weak and a strong sense in which working together should be considered a partnership. In its weak sense, the term partnership is often used loosely, to refer to virtually any relationship in which two or more people or organizations are involved in or share the same activity. **In its strong sense, partnership implies a sharing of resources, and even decision-making authority, to achieve common goals.** Using this stronger definition, an arrangement through which one organization (for instance local government) contracts another (for instance a private company or an NGO) to supply some good or service is rarely a partnership: resources and decision-making authority are rarely shared and the primary goal of one party is typically to receive payment from the other. Even under the weak sense, most relations simply defined by contracts would not qualify as partnerships: the two parties are not both involved in the same activity in any meaningful sense. There are, however, a growing number of cases where private companies are contracted to undertake tasks that have until recently been the responsibility of the public sector, and with which the public sector remains intimately involved. It may be appropriate to term these 'public-private' arrangements as 'partnerships', in the weak sense.

27. One area where partnerships have been widely tried in low- and middle-income countries is in improving housing and living conditions and basic services (and the infrastructure that both need) for lower-income groups. As noted above, large sections of the urban and rural population in most low- and middle-income Commonwealth countries lack basic infrastructure and services, including many that local governments should provide (and often have a statutory duty to provide). Thus, one reason for the emergence of partnerships is because of the limited success of many governments and international agencies in addressing such problems. Another is the success that many community-organizations, NGOs and non-profit organizations have achieved in improving housing and living conditions, independent of government.

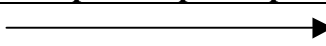
28. Two different kinds of partnerships have been widely tried. The first is government agencies working with the private sector, the second is government agencies working in partnership directly with poorer groups, including their community organizations, and local NGOs. The next section looks briefly at the first kind of partnership, which received a great deal of attention and documentation since the early 1990s, but which has proved disappointing, particularly in relation to the MDG targets for water and sanitation. The remainder of the paper focuses on the second kind of partnership, which has received less

attention, but has proved to be particularly successful in reaching poorer groups in many instances.

### Public-Private Partnerships

29. From the late 1980s through the 1990s, private sector participation was vigorously promoted as a means of improving the management of water and sanitation utilities. In England and Wales, full divestiture was implemented for almost the entire water network in 1989. Although no other countries have actually transferred such a large share of their water and sanitation infrastructure to the private sector, most have considered giving a bigger role to private enterprises, and many have increased the level of private sector participation in operating their water and sanitation utilities. Table 4 summarises several of the options for private participation, starting with minimal service contracts on the left and ending with full divestiture on the right. All but service contracts are sometimes referred to as public-private partnerships, and even with divestiture in England and Wales the public sector takes responsibility for regulating water and sanitation provision. Indeed, while this table illustrates how responsibilities can be shared, the extent to which government plans or market pressures drive a utility's actions also depends upon other factors, including the regulatory environment. To at least some degree, private utility operators can be made to meet water and sanitation targets that are identified by the public sector, while public utilities can be made to operate on commercial principles. Thus, it should not be assumed that privately operated utilities are always more responsive to paying customers, or that public utilities are more public spirited.

**Table 4: Allocation of key responsibilities for private participation options**

Increasing private participation 							
	Service contract	Mgt contract	Affermage	Lease	Concession	BOT-type	Divestiture
<b>Asset ownership</b>	Public	Public	Public	Public	Public	Private / public	Private
<b>Capital investment</b>	Public	Public	Public	Public	Private	Private	Private
<b>Commercial risk</b>	Public	Public	Shared	Shared	Private	Private	Private
<b>Operations/maintenance</b>	Private / public	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private	Private
<b>Contract duration</b>	1–2 years	3–5 years	8–15 years	8–15 years	25–30 years	20–30 years	Indefinite

Source: Jessica Budds and Gordon McGranahan (2003). "Are the debates on water privatization missing the point? Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol 15(2), pp 87-114.

30. The case for private sector participation was based in large part on the failures of public utilities, with some of the worst failures occurring in low-income countries where the health risks tend to be greatest. In many countries, public utilities were under-financed, inefficient, and inclined to subsidise middle class consumers while leaving many of the poorest residents unconnected. The World Bank led the greater part of the international development community in promoting private sector participation in the operation of water

and sanitation utilities in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The hope was that increasing private sector participation would increase the finance available, improve efficiency, and extend the provision of piped water and improved sanitation to an increasing share of the urban poor. Competitive bidding, it was hoped, would eliminate some of the dangers of monopoly provision, while appropriate contracts, well regulated, could ensure that public targets could be met (including the expansion of provision to low-income households).

31. Experiences with private sector participation and public-private partnerships have been mixed.<sup>19</sup> Investment has been disappointing, and has been concentrated in large cities, with very little investment in the poorest countries. Only a part (perhaps a small minority) of the investment in private sector participation projects has been privately financed. Moreover, following a few years of rapid expansion, the growth in private sector participation projects appears to have declined, not least because of declining interest on the part of the international water companies. Private utility operators still only serve between 5 and 10 percent of the world's population.

32. Even in urban centres where public private partnerships are operating relatively successfully, the anticipated benefits for low-income households have not always materialised. It has become evident that many of the obstacles to improving provision in low-income areas have little to do with whether the local utility is privately operated. Public-private partnerships do not ensure equitable and effective water and sanitation politics, or prevent corruption. They do not address the tenure and housing security problems that often inhibit water and sanitation improvements in low-income areas (especially squatter settlements). They do not give low-income residents the financial capacity to make their needs felt in the market, or the organizational capacity to engage effectively in the political arena. Facing these challenges, a number of Commonwealth countries such as the UK, and more recently South Africa, have developed centres of excellence in private sector participation techniques and Commonwealth Finance Ministers recently considered different models for private sector involvement to maximise the benefits.<sup>20</sup>

33. Public-private partnerships are likely to remain an important option in the coming decades. Hopefully private enterprises, including the multinational water companies that now dominate the global market, will play a positive role in improving water and sanitation conditions in low-income areas. The question is whether public-private partnerships have received undue attention in recent years. Public-private partnership should be an option that a locality would do well to consider in the course of water sector reform, but it has been presented as a panacea by some, and as inherently evil by others. The resulting controversy has, unfortunately, detracted attention from other forms of partnership that may be more relevant to the needs of most urban households who lack adequate water and sanitation.

### **Public-Community Partnerships**

34. In the second kind of partnership, there has been more success in both rural and urban areas. There are many examples of successful partnerships between community organizations and government agencies, although in most, there are also important roles for local NGOs and in some, important roles for external funders. Many have reached tens of

thousands of low-income groups while some have reached hundreds of thousands. Before presenting these, some points are worth making:

- *Most try to keep unit costs as low as possible.* This might seem contradictory if working with and reaching the poorest groups – but makes limited resources go further and increases the possibilities of cost-recovery (which then allows further investments to be funded).
- *Most seek to strengthen the organizations of the poor and to ensure they are representative* – usually through supporting community-based savings schemes that also develop the capacity to provide loans to their members. Drawing on community organization’s capacity to organize, manage and mobilize their own resources is an important part of these partnerships; if people feel that they are partners in the initiative they will contribute much more.
- *Most integrate wherever possible measures to increase poorer households’ incomes or strengthen their asset bases or reduce costs*
- *Many of the public-community partnerships in urban areas are based on alliances between local NGOs and larger federations formed by the urban poor or homeless* that have the capacity to develop new housing or upgrade informal settlements, working with local governments (as discussed below).

### **What Role for External Agencies**

35. Official bilateral and multilateral agencies (including the multilateral development banks) were set up to work with national government, not local government or local NGOs or community organizations. Although most such agencies have sought ways to support local development processes, including those that support the kinds of community-NGO-local government partnerships noted above, all face institutional constraints in doing so. These include lacking the staff-time to be able to respond rapidly and flexibly to local demands and to managing funding for what is usually a multiplicity of relatively small funding requests. All official bilateral and multilateral agencies are under pressure to keep down their staff costs relative to the amount of funding spent or loans provided.

36. Many development assistance agencies have sought to support local processes through supporting local institutions through which their funding is channelled. One example of this is the special funding facility set up in India with support from the UK Government’s Department for International Development and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). This funding facility (the Community Led Infrastructure Finance Facility – CLIFF) was set up to support two networks of community organizations (the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* – savings groups formed by women slum and pavement dwellers) and a local NGO, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) to carry out and scale up community-driven infrastructure, housing and services initiatives in many different locations, in conjunction with local governments and the private sector (including banks and landowners). The UK Charity Homeless International helped develop the concept and is managing it, along with the Cities Alliance.

37. CLIFF provides loans, guarantees and support for technical assistance for a range of projects including community-led multi-storey housing developments in crowded inner-city areas (so housing can be improved without displacing anyone), a variety of new housing projects (including one designed and managed by women-pavement dwellers) and large-scale community-managed resettlement programmes<sup>21</sup>. It also supported a very large-scale programme of community-designed, implemented and managed toilet blocks in ‘slums’ in Mumbai and Pune which now serve hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers – and similar programmes are being developed in other cities (see Annex 1 for more details).<sup>22</sup> Around US\$10 million is available within this new finance facility for bridging loans to kick-start large infrastructure, upgrading and resettlement projects. In India, many schemes to benefit low income groups can obtain government funding but this only becomes available when a project has reached a certain stage and this leads to such funding not being used, as Indian NGOs and urban poor organizations cannot afford to start major construction projects until funds become available. CLIFF is unusual in that it provides a funding base from which local projects can be developed (there is no specification of which projects are to be funded in the initial project document) and does so on a larger scale than is usually available to NGOs and people’s organizations. It is also unusual in that the funding is provided in a form that helps the local organizations leverage funds from other (mostly local) groups such as banks and government organizations, and to recoup the capital provided to allow its reinvestment.

38. Similar financing facilities are likely to be set up in other countries to support community-led infrastructure, including in Kenya to support the work of the Kenyan Urban Poor Federation (*Muungano wa Wanavijiji*). By 2004, this federation had 137 savings groups in over 60 settlements in 9 different urban or peri-urban areas and more than 25,000 members. Although initially focused on Nairobi, many of the federation’s new savings schemes are in other urban centres including Nakuru, Kisumu, Mombasa, Kitale, Meru, Thika and Kiambaa. Working with the local support NGO (Pamoja Trust), it is planning 9 upgrading schemes. The federation has also undertaken a citywide survey of ‘slums’ in Nairobi and supported detailed household enumerations in several of them. From these enumerations (and the intense community-discussions that are part of the enumeration process), an upgrading programme has been initiated in Huruma (with some 2,500 households) and comparable programmes are being developed in other settlements. The federation has established its own urban poor fund *Akiba Mashinani* (grassroots savings) that helps federation members acquire land, build homes and develop livelihoods.<sup>23</sup>

39. In several other Commonwealth countries, other than India and Kenya, there are comparable urban poor and homeless federations – for instance in Malawi, Ghana, South Africa and Namibia (see Annex 1 for more details). Most of the urban poor federations have set up Capital Funds (also known as Urban Poor Funds or Community Development Funds) for community-led housing and infrastructure developments. Urban Poor Funds offer loans, deposits and matching grants for development schemes which cannot be covered solely from community savings because of the level of funding required. In general lending from the Funds is to collectives or to projects, rather than to individuals. These Funds can also serve as the financial institution through which external financial support can be channelled to multiple local initiatives.<sup>24</sup>

40. One example of partnerships among international agencies is the Cities Alliance, a joint programme of the World Bank, UN-Habitat, and the Asian Development Bank, most of the leading bilateral donor agencies and several global associations of local authorities.<sup>25</sup>

41. Perhaps one of the most important (and neglected) areas for addressing deficiencies in provision for water and sanitation is reforming existing public sector utilities and including within this new channels for partnership with low-income groups. An initiative in the public water utility in Bangalore (India) shows the kind of internal changes that can make this happen. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage Board is a publicly owned water utility struggling to cope with insufficient funds, rotating leadership, rapid population growth, expanding urban boundaries, high water costs and various institutional constraints. Its own revenues do not generate funding for investment so it is dependent on external funders for any expansion programme. Its existing piped system does not serve slums well and only households with proof of land tenure in 'slums' that had been officially recognized as 'slums' could get individual piped connections. However, three AusAID funded pilot projects demonstrated that water could be piped to slums legally; that residents were willing to pay for household connections and water supply; and that the traditional stumbling block of insecure tenure status could be managed. These pilots led to the setting up of a Social Development Unit within the public utility to work with slum dwellers to connect them to the official piped network. For the first time, slums are being serviced as a distinct category by the water utility and new working relationships are being forged between the utility, NGOs, and residents as they learn to cooperate and bargain with one another.<sup>26</sup>

42. One example of how to support local processes and partnerships comes from Thailand where the Thai government's Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) makes loans available to (rural and urban) community organizations for a wide range of activities relating to land acquisition and housing construction, housing improvement, and income generation. CODI is unusual in that it not only provides support to community organizations but also to networks or federations of community organizations (for instance networks formed within a particular locality or based around particular occupations) that on-lend to their members. These networks or federations of community organizations also have more capacity to negotiate with local or provincial authorities, or to influence development planning, or to work together on shared problems of housing, livelihoods or access to basic services. These networks also link communities so they can share their experiences, learn from each other, work together and pool their resources. Collectively, they also have a very large impact – a reminder that going to scale is often more about multiplication than replication (i.e. achieve scale through support for many locally-grounded initiatives rather than increasing the scale of one initiative).

43. Since 2003, CODI has been implementing *Baan Mankong*, an ambitious national programme for upgrading and secure tenure that has set a target of improving housing, living and security of tenure for 300,000 households in 2,000 poor communities in 200 Thai cities within five years. By September 2004, initiatives are underway in 166 communities, involving more than 13,000 households.<sup>27</sup> As CODI's director notes, large scale slum-upgrading programmes are only possible if the "infrastructure" of community processes and networks and their savings schemes are in place; representative community organizations have to be involved in decision-making, be able to own the decisions that are taken and be in control of the activities that follow.<sup>28</sup> CODI is also unusual in that it supports community-directed poverty reduction in both rural and urban areas and many of the community networks it supports have both rural and urban members.

## What Helps to Make Partnership a Success?

44. Approaches that promote successful partnerships have been the subject of intense review over the past two years, including negotiations resulting in the agreement at CSD-11 of guidelines for partnerships on sustainable development being implemented under the WSSD process. So, what helps to make partnership a success? Recent experience suggests the following:

- i) **The recognition of unequal power between the partners** and the importance of ensuring that the priorities of the weaker partners (generally low-income groups and their organizations, often local NGOs) do not get pushed aside by those of the stronger partners. In part, this is provided by democratic checks and balances; in many instances, it is supported by opening new channels through which low-income groups can get more influence on government decisions.<sup>29</sup>
- ii) **The need for any partnership that builds consensus around some pressing issue to achieve action** – for instance, by having access to resources or the power to generate an appropriate response from existing agencies. It is often easier for local governments to be participatory in encouraging discussion than in actually delivering. Any enthusiasm for a partnership quickly wanes if no action is taken to address the problems that the partnership has identified. The enthusiasm among international agencies for promoting ‘stakeholder dialogues’ or city or village consultations with under-resourced and weak local governments must be backed up with support for actually addressing the priorities identified within such consultations
- iii) **The key role of ‘good governance’ in providing the context within which partnerships can be effective.** It is difficult for NGOs or village or urban poor organizations to be effective without government support or in the face of a bureaucracy that imposes unnecessary delays and constraints. It is also difficult to ensure that privatization serves the needs of lower-income groups without effective, accountable local authorities. The privatisation agenda of some international donors seems to be based more on these donors’ immediate need for organizations that can implement the projects they fund than on a careful assessment of the best means of improving provision. Frustrated by having to work with weak municipal authorities, the donors hope that private enterprises will prove more effective. But this means too little attention to developing the capacity of governments to set appropriate terms for privatization, to act as regulators and to ensure consumer representation within this regulation. Good governance is needed to provide the institutional and political framework within which privatization and municipal-NGO-community organization partnerships can work best.
- iv) **The need for particular measures to ensure that under-represented and unorganized groups are involved.** Special measures need to be taken to ensure that the needs and priorities of women, youth, minority groups and the lowest-income households are included. Doing so is particularly difficult

in societies where many such groups face discrimination in most aspects of their lives. However, for most of the partnerships described above, women's involvement both in the community organizations (including the savings groups that underpin these) and in leadership roles was particularly strong – especially in the urban poor federations in India, South Africa and Kenya (and in other urban poor federations). The urban poor federations also develop processes to ensure that the poorest households are not excluded.

- v) **The need for clarity and precision in regard to the role of any partnership, what it is seeking to achieve and how it will do so.** Much time can be lost if partnership-based groups are not clear about their function.

## Conclusions

45. Governments are facing the challenge of delivering basic services and shelter to their poorest communities with limited resources and within a rapidly evolving policy environment. The recently developed framework of internationally agreed targets and goals is helping to focus action and support in these areas, and partnerships may prove to be amongst the most powerful means to meet the goals – and to promote learning by all stakeholders on what it takes to really deliver these goals and meet the aspirations of the poorest people of the Commonwealth.

46. A range of experiences with different types of partnerships has provided valuable lessons, but we still need to identify what works best and take further action through more, real, partnerships.

47. Partnerships are more than the sum of their parts and effective partnerships can achieve what individuals, organizations or groups can not. By working together in partnerships, stakeholders develop a more comprehensive analysis of sustainable development challenges than they otherwise would achieve by working on their own. The strategies that they develop are often innovative and more likely to be effective since they take into account a range of perspectives. These approaches also have the potential to create systemic change, by encompassing policy change, private sector innovation and NGO action. By bringing together coalitions, partnerships are also able to develop more detailed operational programmes for implementing sustainable development goals than can be agreed in formal negotiations.

48. Resources are also critical. As the 2004 World Development Report notes, “to accelerate progress in human development, economic growth is, of course, necessary. But it is not enough. Scaling up will require both a substantial increase in external resources and more effective use of all resources. As resources become more productive, the argument for additional resources becomes more persuasive. And external resources can provide strong support for changes in practice and policy to bring about more effective use”.<sup>30</sup> The World Development Report suggests that resource transfers by developed countries of around \$40 billion to \$60 billion, over and above Official Development Assistance, may be needed to meet the MDGs, providing they are accompanied by policy and institutional reforms to enhance the productivity of domestic and external resources. Clearly, the mobilisation of additional and non-traditional resources through partnerships will be an important strategy in achieving the MDGs.

49. For most local governments, the key issue is to provide the framework in which a great multiplicity of partnerships can develop and be effective, and within which those with low incomes and other disadvantaged groups have influence. Government at all levels needs to be involved in creating this framework. Good governance has to underpin these and all partnership efforts, including building good relations with community organizations and commitment to participation and accountability. Greater involvement by communities through partnership can help strengthen accountability, by increasing the ability of communities to monitor and call-to-account service providers. It can also help to address the weak demand for services by the poor. Good governance also has to include measures that reduce the bureaucratic constraints on effective action and remove anti-poor orientations with regard to how low-income groups earn a living (for instance, harassment of street vendors) and develop their own homes. We can see from this, that the wider policy framework within which partnerships operate is of great significance. In the water sector, for example, it must support an enabling environment for transparent governance in the sector, clear rights of ownership and use, and the provision of information on water availability, quality, and consumer demand. In the wider sense, partnerships that deliver basic services to the poor will be supported best when they operate within a well-functioning public sector and policy environment.

## **ANNEX I**

## EXAMPLES OF COMMONWEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

### Examples of partnerships in rural areas

*The Integrated Village Development Project in Tamil Nadu (India)* was established in eighteen villages in a remote area of Tamil Nadu to address serious problems of poverty exacerbated by extremely arid conditions which encouraged seasonal out-migration. Over a period of more than ten years, it supported the villagers in setting up savings and loan schemes and provided a small grants fund so check dams could be built to store water from the monsoon rains. As the number of dams increased the water table rose significantly. The savings and loan schemes allowed poorer families to take out collective loans to build wells and install pumps so that water supplies and irrigation could be improved. As irrigation improved, so too did crop yields and local incomes. Sericulture was successfully introduced and it became possible to harvest three paddy crops each year. Housing conditions also improved as new roofing materials were introduced which saved households having to thatch their roofs each year. There is now net in-migration to the area, and many leaders who emerged when communities became organised around savings and loans and the building of dams, have since become resource people helping other villages from outside the area to replicate the approach.<sup>31</sup>

*The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in Northern Pakistan* began with the recognition of the need to support village communities develop their own participatory institutions so they would work with government agencies, politicians and other development agencies. This also included a recognition that improvements in infrastructure (including provision for water) had to be combined with better natural resource management and stronger livelihoods, as well as improved education and health care. Building on local traditions of self-help and cooperation, village organizations and subsequently separate women's organizations were established. All such community organizations developed savings programmes and received support from the Programme to address local needs. In terms of partnerships, it shows the importance of supporting the development of representative community/grassroots organizations that are able to form partnerships with external agencies (governments, NGOs, international agencies) in developing livelihoods, improving living conditions and supporting better natural resource management.<sup>32</sup>

*The Working for Water programme in South Africa* was an environmental initiative to help address a serious problem of water shortages (invasive plants which cause a loss of water through reduced stream flow and increased evapotranspiration) and to create jobs and develop skills among low-income populations. It was implemented through partnerships between government, the private sector, non-government organizations and grassroots organizations. The programme trained and equipped teams of unemployed local people to remove invasive alien vegetation. At its peak, it had over 42,000 workers in the field. It also developed a reproductive health programme for participants and supported job creation based on harvesting and processing the plant materials cleared and with business and skills training for many workers.<sup>33</sup>

## **Examples of partnerships in urban areas**

In six Commonwealth countries, there are federations formed by the urban poor and homeless that have developed their own poverty reduction programmes, drawing on their own resources and capacities and negotiating with local and national government for support – in India, South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Uganda and Swaziland. The urban poor federation in Zimbabwe is also doing remarkable work with local governments, despite the political and economic difficulties. In most of these countries, there are also support NGOs that work in very close partnership with the federations. In many other countries, comparable organizations are developing, supported by these federations and their umbrella organization, Slum/Shack Dwellers International.<sup>34</sup>

***Community-municipal partnerships to improve sanitation and support the rule of law in India.*** Community-based organizations formed by ‘slum’ and ‘pavement’ dwellers demonstrated that they could plan, build and manage community-toilet blocks in slum areas that were better designed and managed than those built by local government. But it was only when municipal governments worked in partnership with them that a large-scale programme was possible. Today, hundreds of thousands of people in low-income areas of Mumbai and Pune have much better quality toilets and washing facilities because of government-community partnerships. Two community organizations (the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan* – savings and loans cooperatives formed by women slum and pavement dwellers) and a local NGO (SPARC) developed these toilets. But it only became possible for these to be constructed on a large scale when the municipal commissioner in the city of Pune decided to get NGOs and community organizations involved in replacing or building 440 toilet blocks. A third of the construction cost was to come from the city, a third from the state government and a third from the national government. A further condition was that NGOs/communities would agree to maintain toilets for a set period, as government did not have the capacity or resources to do this. SPARC, *Mahila Milan* and the National Slum Dwellers Federation successfully bid for 114 toilet contracts. The new toilet blocks were light and airy, with tanks to ensure a constant water supply (conventional toilet blocks often ran out of water) and with toilet blocks at the front specially designed for children (children are frightened to use smelly dark pit latrines and haven’t the same capacity as adults to queue). The blocks included a home for a caretaker, who also helps to collect a small monthly fee from community members to pay for maintenance. Some blocks had a community hall built on top. These same three organizations obtained a contract to build 320 toilet blocks in the slums of Mumbai. As a result of these community-municipal partnerships, hundreds of thousands of ‘slum’ households in Pune and Mumbai now have clean, cheap, easily accessed toilets with facilities for washing. There are plans to promote this new approach in smaller towns, where local resources and capacity are even tighter. SPARC, *Mahila Milan* and the National Slum Dwellers Federation also have many other initiatives to improve conditions for low-income households that are being developed in partnership with local governments and national government agencies.<sup>35</sup>

Another example of an innovative government-community partnership is the community police stations within the ‘slums’ in Mumbai set up by Mumbai’s police commissioner, working with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*. By September 2004, 65 ‘slums’ in Mumbai had community policing developed through a partnership between ten community representatives (seven women, three men) and local police officers. In each settlement where these are set up, the community make available a room where the

police are based. These community police stations have importance not only for bringing the rule of law to these settlements but also because they establish a permanent partnership between the police and slum residents. They help reduce the prejudices that slum dwellers so often face, when they go to police stations – to make complaints or as victims of crimes. The decision to have a majority of women in the police committee is in recognition that women are disproportionately the victims of crime and often face problems of domestic violence.<sup>36</sup>

***Community-based slum-improvement plans in Nairobi.*** Half of Nairobi's population lives in informal or illegal settlements which have very inadequate provision for water, sanitation and drainage. But attempts to improve conditions are complicated by the potential conflict between landlords and tenants and by the conflicts between different ethnic groups that in the past were often exacerbated by powerful political interests. In most informal settlements, the inhabitants do not have tenure of the land they occupy but any programme to legalize tenure means conflicts between landlords and tenants. However, a partnership between community organizations (based on savings groups) and these organization's federation (*Muungano wa Wanvijiji*), a Kenyan NGO (Pamoja Trust) and local government have been developing a consensus among the inhabitants of informal settlements on how to resolve these issues and improve housing conditions and basic services. Community based savings schemes develop each settlement's capacity to organize and manage funds. 'Slum' enumerations and the development of house designs by local inhabitants provide the basis for planning for improvements and for developing community capacity to manage these. These organizations are also best placed to identify their own needs, and also to plan their own collective solutions. Only in partnership with government, however, were they able to formalise their plans (and agree to alternative regulatory standards) and take them forward in a manner that tackles poverty at significant scale and benefits the city as a whole.<sup>37</sup>

***Improving housing (and access to land), water and sanitation through the 'People's Housing Process' in South Africa.*** Over the last ten years, local processes developed by the South African Homeless People's Federation working with a local support NGO (People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter) have helped to secure land for housing for tens of thousands of its members and also helped them design and build new homes with provision for water, sanitation and other infrastructure. Now, many local governments work in partnership with them to develop new homes for among the poorest households. The Homeless People's Federation has over 1,500 autonomous local savings and credit groups (with more than 100,000 member households). The Federation has developed new homes and neighbourhoods for thousands of low-income households but perhaps more importantly, it has demonstrated how community-based organizations (based on savings groups) can do this more cheaply and with better quality results than contractors. This has encouraged many local authorities to work with them, including Durban Municipality which is working in partnership with them within an ambitious city-wide programme to improve housing conditions.

A new partnership is being developed between the South African Homeless People's Federation and the Methodist Church of South Africa. This Church has started an initiative to identify vacant land it owns that can be allocated to housing projects for homeless families and, in rural areas, to support their livelihoods. The initiative also has importance for encouraging more action from the government on land redistribution and tenure reform and in setting an example that it is hoped that other churches in South Africa will follow.<sup>38</sup>

**Community-municipal partnerships in Namibia:** By mid-2004, the Namibia Shack Dwellers Federation had 312 savings groups that were active in 41 different settlements and in all 13 regions. Some 12,350 households have members (56 percent women, 44 percent men) and most live in informal settlements or ‘backyard shacks’. The Federation is supported by a local NGO, the Namibia Housing Action Group. By mid 2004, 2,300 households had acquired land for infrastructure and housing development. The Federation has been working with the city authorities in Windhoek to greatly reduce the cost of formal, legal housing-plots so these are affordable by low-income households. The city authorities have a long-established policy of supporting self-help and community projects – but reaching the poorest groups required a cut in the cost of official solutions, since the city authorities had to recover costs from the land they developed for housing. Two new options were developed: a rental plot of 180 square metres serviced with communal water points and gravel roads with the rent charged being just sufficient to cover the financing costs for the land investment plus water services and refuse collection; and group purchase or lease of land with communal services and with minimum plot sizes allowed that are below the official national minimum plot standard of 300 square metres. Families living in areas with communal services have to establish neighbourhood committees to manage toilet blocks. These acknowledge the importance of representative organizations and seek to offer improvements to the lowest income groups while still achieving cost recovery. Federation groups (and other communities) are now able to purchase public land as a group, increasing densities and slowly upgrading their plots with water and sanitation services.<sup>39</sup>

**Orangi Pilot Project – and its expansion beyond pilots, beyond projects and beyond Orangi in Pakistan:** A local NGO, the Orangi Pilot Project, was set up in the early 1980s to support households in a large informal settlement in Karachi called Orangi to develop a solution to the lack of sanitation and drainage that low-income households there could afford. It did this by supporting the inhabitants in each ‘lane’ to reach agreement about how they could fund and manage the installation of sewers and drains. This reduced the cost per household to a fifth of what municipal authorities charged and made the provision of good quality sewers and drains to each household affordable to low-income households. In so doing, it has reached hundreds of thousands of people and with virtually all of the costs covered by what low-income households can pay. This locally-driven model of sewer and drain construction has also been used in many other areas of Karachi and in many other urban centres in Pakistan, including its widespread adoption by official (national and local) government agencies.<sup>40</sup> Although the local NGO initially supported the community-developed sewers as an alternative way to get these built and financed, it was never their intention to promote alternatives to official provision. They developed this model to change the way official provision worked, so it would be affordable by low-income households.

OPP’s experience presents two points of great relevance to the achievement of the MDGs:

- The possibility of providing good quality sewers and drains to low-income dwellers at costs that they can afford.
- How the ‘component sharing’ model for water and sanitation can work – where the inhabitants of streets and neighbourhoods take responsibility for the pipes, sewers and drains in their neighbourhood and official service providers install the water mains and sewer and drainage trunks into which their neighbourhood systems can connect.

The OPP also uses the same kinds of mapping and household enumeration techniques employed by the urban poor federations to develop a strong local information base about each low-income settlement – which can then serve as the information base for designing and implementing improvements in infrastructure and services.<sup>41</sup>

Other examples of community-municipal partnerships include:

***Water and sanitation improvement in low-income areas of Dhaka and Chittagong.*** Partnerships between community organizations, Bangladeshi NGOs and the UK Charity WaterAid have provided water points and sanitation blocks or community latrines serving tens of thousands of low-income households within a programme that is recovering most of its costs – to allow reinvestment in reaching other low-income communities.<sup>42</sup>

***Community managed solid waste collection in Chennai.*** A partnership between a local NGO (Exnora international) and neighbourhood organizations (Civic Exnora units) have developed community-managed solid waste collection services for several hundred thousand inhabitants whose costs are covered by fees collected from those who are served. To be effective, this also depends on a partnership with the local government, as these local organizations need transfer stations to which they deliver the solid waste they have collected.<sup>43</sup>

There have also been some notable successes among local governments in low- and middle income countries in developing local agenda 21s that are long-term programmes to support improved living conditions, better provision for water, sanitation and solid waste management and better environmental management including those developed by the cities of Durban<sup>44</sup> and Windhoek<sup>45</sup> although most examples of this are in non-Commonwealth countries.<sup>46</sup>

### **Examples of International Partnerships**

***White Water to Blue Water (WW2BW), Caribbean.*** The WW2BW Partnership was first initiated by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on September 2002. It promotes integrated watershed and marine ecosystem-based management in support of sustainable development. The WW2BW Steering Committee is currently identifying existing programmes in the Caribbean, and developing new partnerships that enhance the integration of projects dealing with wastewater and sanitation, agriculture, coastal management, tourism and marine transport. It is hoped that this Caribbean partnership may serve as a blueprint for similar programmes in Africa and the South Pacific.

The focus of WW3BW includes: strengthening national and regional institutional capacity; facilitating closer cooperation and good governance within and among countries, regional agencies and civil society in coastal and marine resource management, water management, health, environmental protection, agriculture, and urban planning; and engaging business partners in tourism and marine transportation, to promote best business and environmental practices, and to support regional activities.

The WW2BW Partnership also helps to implement a number of international agreements to which governments have committed. These include: the Barbados Programme of Action,

the Montreal Declaration of the Global Program of Action, the Jakarta Mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCLOS, the Cartagena Convention and its three protocols, the International Coral Reef Initiative, the St. Georges Declaration of Principles, the FAO Compliance Agreement, the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and the 2000 Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

WW2BW intends to use all types of partnerships, and will focus on an integrated approach to four thematic areas of watersheds, ecosystems, sustainable tourism, and marine transportation, while incorporating issues relating to marine science, global climate change, and green markets.

The current partners include governments from the wider Caribbean region, international and regional organisations, civil society organisations, universities from the region and interested members of the private sector. The Partnership has worked hard to obtain political commitment from throughout the region. The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have set up a forum to exchange information and work together, and links have been made with the private sector and donor bodies. However, the success of WW2BW will be determined by whether the initiative facilitates working partnerships that increase environmental protection in the region. Further information is available from the website: [www.international.noaa.gov](http://www.international.noaa.gov).

***Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) – strategies for railway resettlement.*** The Indian Alliance of SPARC (a Mumbai-based NGO) and two community-based organisations (the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan) have worked with city authorities to enable tens of thousands of slum dwellers to voluntarily relocate from dangerous locations next to railway lines and roads to safe, secure and affordable housing. Railway-side slum dwellers mapped and enumerated their settlements to establish how the resettlement could take place, and negotiated with city authorities for land and housing development options. As a result, the safety and efficiency of roads and railway lines has dramatically improved in Mumbai, whilst thousands of slum dwellers have benefited from better homes and settlements.<sup>47</sup>

In 2004, infrastructure investment plans in Nairobi revealed a need to clear safety zones along railways, under power lines and beside rivers, in which people would no longer be allowed to live. Through their links with counterparts in India through Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI), Pamoja Trust (a Nairobi-based NGO) and the Kenyan Urban Poor Federation (*Muungano Wa Wanavijiji*) arranged for representatives from government, from the Kenyan Railway Authorities and from slum communities to visit their peers in Mumbai and learn how win-win partnerships there had facilitated both infrastructure development and community-led human settlements development. As a result, multi-stakeholder strategies for negotiated resettlement and upgrading have now begun in Kibera, and learning between Kenya and India continues apace. Other similar public-community partnerships for railway improvements are also being explored in Ghana.

***ComHabitat.*** Inherent in the Habitat Agenda is the recognition that governments alone cannot implement the diversity of actions necessary to improve human settlements. The Habitat Agenda was perhaps the first international agreement to actively encourage

effective partnerships between national government, local authorities, civil society (including community based organizations and NGOs) and the private sector.

ComHabitat was formed to capitalise on the extensive formal and informal networks and partnerships through which the Commonwealth functions. ComHabitat includes a Ministerial Group (the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Human Settlements or CCGHS) that is open to all member governments. The ComHabitat Management Group currently consists of the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Commonwealth Foundation (which provides one third of the funding); the Commonwealth Local Government Forum; Homeless International (a UK based charity that supports community organizations and NGOs); the Commonwealth Human Ecology Council (an NGO that helped form ComHabitat) and the UK Department for International Development (which provides two thirds of the funding). ComHabitat is also developing a broader Network to facilitate a broader engagement by many more organisations and individuals.

The ComHabitat structure is intended to provide a direct channel of communication between those most in need with various levels of Government. As a partnership, it aims to assist member Governments to implement plans and actions that directly address the needs of those most affected by poverty in their countries. Through its Commonwealth linkages, ComHabitat can access an invaluable store of knowledge, information and expertise.

ComHabitat therefore provides an opportunity to develop a coherent pan-Commonwealth strategy to address the problems of human settlements. It aims to become a catalyst for change, linking key policy ‘thinkers’ with community and local government ‘implementers’. Successful programmes should help to shape and inform policy, while offering those dispossessed through poverty a direct voice at influential government levels. At its inaugural Meeting in Nairobi in May 1999, the CCGHS adopted a Commonwealth goal: “Demonstrated progress towards adequate shelter for all with secure tenure and access to essential services in every community by 2015”. Further information on ComHabitat can be found on the website: [www.comhabitat.org](http://www.comhabitat.org).



## The Habitat Agenda

This Agenda was agreed by governments in 1996 at the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (also called the City Summit) draws on the outcomes from previous international gatherings, notably the concept of sustainable development from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit) in 1992, and articulated in Agenda 21, but was also influenced by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the UN Social Summit in 1994, and the World Conference on Women in 1995.

### Goals, Principles and Commitments

**Goals:** The Habitat Agenda aims to improve the quality of life by providing: satisfactory housing for all; good quality food, clean water, unpolluted air, health facilities, education, and job opportunities. It includes commitments to tackle crime, and to make human habitations environmentally sustainable.

**Principles:** Ten principles or guidelines form the basis for the development of sustainable human settlements.

1. Partnerships. No single individual, organisation or country can bring about sustainable human settlements, which will need collaborative and often novel partnerships.
2. Sustainable Development, improving the quality of life without compromising natural and human resources on which it is based.
3. Eradication of Poverty should underlie activities concerning human settlements, and is key to providing opportunities and choice for all.
4. Equity, so that there is equal access to opportunities, resources and services regardless of gender, race or status.
5. Good Standards of Health and Education, essential for a good quality of life, should be targeted at those who most need them.
6. Good Planning and Layout of settlements to provide a decent living environment.
7. Solidarity and Co-operation, whereby countries, communities and individuals work together for the wider goals of the Habitat Agenda.
8. Nurturing of the Family, which as the basic unit of society, plays an important role in the stability of human settlements.
9. The Citizen. We should encourage respect for human rights and provide opportunities for active participation of every citizen in local affairs. Each individual should take a responsible part in building a sustainable community.

10. Developing and More Developed Nations. While countries have agreed to tackle the unique combination of social, environmental and economic problems and opportunities with which they are faced, the enormity of the problem faced by many developing countries places a special responsibility on the developed countries to help them.

**Commitments:**

1. Providing Shelter, including access to land and legal tenure and financial systems to make housing affordable, especially for the 'no-and-low-income' groups.
2. Making Towns and Cities More Sustainable, promoting social and economic development while caring for the environment.
3. Widening and Increasing People's Involvement in decisions and actions needed to achieve decent human settlements.
4. Equality for Men and Women. All decisions take into account the needs of women and men.
5. Mobilising Funds, which will require new and innovative thinking.
6. International Co-operation. Developed countries agreed to try to meet the UN's target of giving 0.7% of GNP to help developing countries, and highlighted the importance of exchanging information and about new technologies and good practices.
7. Monitoring Progress.

### Summary of the Millennium Development Goals and their Targets

Eight Millennium Development Goals	18 Millennium Development Targets
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<i>1 and 2:</i> Between 1990-2015, halve the proportion of people: whose income is less than US\$1 a day who suffer from hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education	<i>3:</i> By 2015 all boys and girls able to complete the full course of primary school
3. Promote gender equality & empower women	<i>4:</i> Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015
4. Reduce child mortality	<i>5:</i> 1990-2015, reduce by two thirds the under five mortality rate
5. Improve maternal health	<i>6:</i> 1990-2015, reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6. Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases	<i>7 and 8:</i> By 2015 to have halted and begun to reverse The spread of AIDs The incidence of malaria and other major diseases
7: Ensure environmental sustainability	<i>9-11:</i> Integrate principles of Sustainable Development into country policies 1990-2015: Halve the proportion without safe water and basic sanitation Significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020
8. Develop a global partnership for development	<i>12-18:</i> Fairer trading and financial system Address special needs of least developed, land-locked and small island states Deal with debt problems Strategies for work for youth Access to affordable essential drugs Access to benefits of new technologies, especially information-communications technology



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