

Core messages from AquaFed at the 6th World Water Forum

Marseilles, 14 March 2012,

Private Water Operators exhort national governments meeting at the 6th World Water Forum to accelerate progress on three major water and sanitation challenges and to prepare decisions on them for the Rio+20 summit (See §1, 2 and 3 below). The Federation has submitted these messages publicly to the consultation process for the Rio+20 Summit¹. All these messages are supported by Business Action for Water, the global coalition that represents the Business & Industry “major group” in the World Water Forum.

Several of these messages have received a very satisfactory echo in the Marseille Ministerial Declaration that was adopted on March 13, 2012.

1. Accelerate access to safe drinking water and sanitation

AquaFed has requested Governments at 6th World Water Forum to acknowledge the need to accelerate programmes aimed at improving access to drinking water and sanitation in both rural and urban settlements by:

- i) recognising the needs of about half the world’s population who do not have satisfactory access to drinking water and taking action to remedy these deficiencies. Applying the criteria of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, more than half of mankind needs to be targeted,
- ii) recognising the urgent need to reverse the deterioration of water and sanitation services in urban settings where these programmes are being outpaced by urban growth, in a context where it is forecast that more than 70% of the population will live in cities in 2050.
- iii) deciding to monitor, both globally and nationally, the quality of water used by people in order to identify more clearly the current deficiencies in water safety.

These three steps are essential for poverty eradication, equity, gender equality and human dignity.

“5+1+4.” - *New UN statistics released for the 6th World Water Forum show that people benefiting from public water networks either through tapwater at home or public standpipes are only 61% of the population. This means that out of 10 people on the planet, 5 receive water from a public operator, 1 receives water from a private operator and 4 have no public water supply (2.7bn people).*

2. Share a common vision and adopt an action plan for wastewater management

It is estimated that 80% of water used by humans is discharged into nature without de-pollution.

Controlling man-made pollution of water and organising successive uses of water are becoming increasingly urgent. This is necessary to:

- protect individuals’ health against contamination by others and by economic activities,
- support economic development,
- protect ecosystems and biodiversity from harmful pollution,
- mitigate increasing water scarcity.

¹ See www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/232Rio20_AquaFedContribution_Pc_2011-10-31.pdf

AquaFed and others have requested Governments at 6th; World Water Forum to decide to include the management of man-made water pollution in their global agenda. They should target the collection and de-pollution of water after it has been used and organise successive uses of this water by treating it as a resource. They should propose that country governments take appropriate steps to adopt a shared vision of urban, industrial and agricultural wastewater management and recovery.

The Marseille Ministerial Declaration has echoed this proposal through 2 full paragraphs (§5 and 6) on the matter and also a mention in its conclusion (§30).

3. Ensure sustainable water economics to provide services sustainably

AquaFed has proposed that Governments at 6th World Water Forum promote the adoption of water and sanitation policies that are grounded on the principles of sustainable economics. Sustainable economics are where costs and revenues are balanced. They include Sustainable Cost-Recovery, which is necessary for reliable services to be provided to all users. Water and sanitation services must be grounded on realistic economics to ensure that they can be provided to meet user's needs and to support the long term social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainable development, Green Growth and Poverty Alleviation.

4. Performance

Operation of water services by private professionals is an option that performs well for responsible authorities. Private operators of all sizes can deliver performance in many different directions to help achieving the goals of public water authorities.

A report² has been prepared by Aquafed to show statistics and examples of performance achievements of Public-Private Partnerships between public authorities and private water operators in different countries, of different sizes and different PPP arrangements. This report will be launched at the Forum during a side-event (Wednesday 14 March, 13h15 - 14h15).

These field cases cover a broad diversity of performance dimensions such as:

- Implementing the human right to safe drinking water;
- Improving wastewater management;
- Improving relationship with water-users;
- Improving efficiency of water utilities;
- Raising and maintaining staff capacity;

AquaFed is the International Federation of Private Water Operators. Open to companies and associations of companies of all sizes and from all countries, it aims to contribute to solving water challenges by making Private Sector know-how and experience available to the international community. It brings together more than 300 water companies that serve hundreds of millions of people in 40 countries. For many years through their International Federation, private water operators have supported the Human Right to Water and Sanitation and advocated for more ambitious water and sanitation policies.

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² http://www.aquafed.org/pdf/AquaFed_Performance_PrivateWaterOperators_2012-03-14.pdf