

Multi-Sector Forum (MSF-6)

Improving Access to Safe Water and Sanitation through ONE WASH Programme

Speech by Dr. Peter Salama, UNICEF Representative to Ethiopia

In the capacity as DAG WASH Sector Working Group co-chair

Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa

10:00- 10:10 4 February, 2014

- Excellency Federal Minister of Water Irrigation and Energy, Ato Alemayhu Tegene
- Excellency State Minister of Water Irrigation and Energy, Ato Kebede Gerba
- Excellency State Minister of Education, Ato Fuad Ibrahim
- Excellency State Minister of Health, Dr. Kebede Woreku
- Representative from Ministry of Finance & Economic Development, Ato Fisseha Abera
- Ambassadors and Heads of the Missions
- Members of the DAG Water Sector Working Group
- Senior Government Officials, UN colleagues
- Colleagues from the Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I'm pleased to be with you here today, at the 6th Multi Stakeholder Forum (MSF), which is the first gathering of sector actors since the ONE WASH National Programme was launched in September last year. On behalf of the development partners in the Water Sector Working Group, I would like to congratulate the Government of Ethiopia on the progress made on ONE WASH National Programme. The launch of the national programme was a milestone for the Water and Sanitation sector in Ethiopia, and let me assure you, it is a marker of success for the Water and Sanitation Sector globally. Ethiopia has become internationally recognized for its strong Government leadership in the WASH sector. It is therefore, no surprise that the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Jan Eliasson, visited sanitation programmes in Ethiopia last week.

In April 2014, the global Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) forum will be held in the World Bank Headquarters, Washington DC. The Government of Ethiopia and the WASH sector as a whole will be represented by the Ministries of Finance, Water, Health and Education. At this meeting, Ethiopia will shine as an exemplary country that has fulfilled most of the commitments made in the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM) of April 2012.

Some of these notable achievements include:

- The forging of long term partnerships to mobilize additional resources required to achieve Universal Access Plan (UAP) and the Growth and Transformation Plan(GTP) targets
- The creation of the National WASH inventory, which will establish a national baseline on water and sanitation for the ONE WASH programme
- And the establishment of a Consolidated WASH Account under the WASH Implementation Framework.

Distinguished guests, although good progress has been made, we believe that the following 3 points are crucial to fulfill the remaining commitments to improve access to safe water and sanitation:

First, we need to reinforce our efforts in addressing open defecation in urban areas.

The Government of Ethiopia has pledged to the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) to achieve 82 per cent open defecation free Ethiopia by 2015. This ambitious goal requires the sector to devise and implement a comprehensive Urban Sanitation Strategy which provides clear guidance on the minimum package for urban sanitation including faecal, liquid and solid waste management and disposal. UNICEF, DFID, JICA and other partners are committed to support the Government in prioritizing urban sanitation. As noted in the ONE WASH programme document, to improve WASH services in small towns, for example, will require an additional US\$96 million for sanitation in the coming 5 years. We call upon all partners to join hands with us on this game changing strategy to make Ethiopia open defecation free.

Second, the WASH sector should embark on developing a robust sustainability framework to achieve reduction of the number of non-functioning water supply schemes to less than 10 per cent by 2015. According to the National WASH inventory, access to improved water supply in pastoralist regions (Afar, Somali, Benshangul Gumuz and Gambella) ranges from around 40 to 60 per cent, in comparison to other parts of the country where coverage ranges from 60 to 95 percent. Many village water schemes are affected by changing local conditions. Dropping groundwater levels are making “self-supply” schemes difficult to manage and are resulting in perennial droughts. Therefore the sustainability framework should have a mechanism for routine monitoring through external audits to ensure proper ONE WASH investments.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Last year, Ethiopia became one of the seven high mortality and low income countries to achieve the MDG 4 of reducing child mortality by two third, ahead of the 2015 deadline. This is a great encouragement to the sector to achieve WASH related MDG targets.

This brings me to my third point. **Achieving MDG 7 [of halving the population without access to clean water and sanitation by 2015] is within our grasp, but only if we accelerate the progress in increasing access to safe water and sanitation.** The recent National WASH Inventory (NWI) data shows that Ethiopia has made strong progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for water and sanitation by 2015. According to the MDG report of 2012 for Ethiopia, the percentage of households with access to improved and safe drinking water has more than doubled over the last five years and reached 58 per cent in 2012. Likewise, the national sanitation coverage has increased from 63 per cent in 2010/2011 to 67 per cent in 2011/2012. To give you an encouraging example: The 2013 Joint Technical Reviews (JTRs) undertaken jointly by the Government and partners, visited SNNPR, Gambella and Oromia. Findings from SNNPR indicated excellent progress in rural sanitation with 56 per cent (2814 kebeles) of the region being declared Open Defecation Free.

The sector should capitalize on the system that produced such result to even further the provision of access by focusing on the specific bottlenecks and risks that have been identified in the 2013 Fiduciary Risk Assessment. The areas requiring the attention of the sector include the need to strengthen government procurement systems at the regional, zonal and woreda level through the establishment of clearer procurement thresholds and the identification of independent supervisors of construction works.

Finally, we have reached a landmark in the WASH sector as partners have now formalised the first ever *pool fund* for the water and sanitation sector in Ethiopia. We are convinced, the implementation of the ONE WASH National Programme will provide a vehicle to reach both the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and MDG commitments. The journey we have travelled to arrive at this point has required a strong partnership between the Government and the development partners. We trust this forum will undertake tangible recommendations to further accelerate our progress.

On behalf of the Development Assistance Group, I wish you a successful deliberation.

I thank you.