



# WORLD WATER COUNCIL

Conseil mondial de l'eau - Consejo Mundial del Agua

## **A Global Fund for Water as part of the Copenhagen accord**

Environmental shocks such as floods, droughts, sea-level rise and melting glaciers are core reasons for humans to be concerned about changes in the world's climates. These shocks affect us now and will continue to do so in the future. It is imperative that we continue to mitigate their impacts and adapt our societies to avoid billions of dollars in future costs and incalculable loss of life, especially in the poorest regions most affected.

The Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change, its preparation and expected outcomes, focuses the attention of the media and the public at large on our capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There is a tacit understanding that humans are living well beyond the planet's means and global production patterns are unsustainable. Whilst we are told that each one of us must change our lifestyles — in particular our consumption of resources — we must remember that this is far harder to achieve if one is poor.

Climate change debates have unfolded in recent months in the run-up to Copenhagen and presented us with terrifying 'possible futures'. We can neither accept to base our policy of sustainable development and the related politics on fear. Today several billion people are already short of water and sanitation services.

The World Water Council therefore regards Copenhagen as a key opportunity to remind the global community that sensible water infrastructure investments can help adaptation to climate change for a minor fraction of the costs of long term mitigation actions. Indeed, better management of water, is central to many future energy solutions. Managing and supplying water to create renewable energy and reduce energy consumption can overcome poverty and play a major role in supporting climate change adaptation. We call, therefore, on parties to COP-15 to make investment in water infrastructure a key part of the Copenhagen global climate deal.

If and when financial resources are provided to the poorest countries to support adaptation measures we propose that a significant portion be devoted to providing access to water for those who are deprived of it. More specifically, we call upon the global community to establish a Global Fund for Water which can be financed by the contributions agreed upon in Copenhagen.

The Global Fund for Water might be composed of two key elements: the first, "water for health", will be aimed at reducing drastically the number of deaths (around 25 million a year) caused by waterborne diseases; the second, "water for food", will be aimed at promoting water for local agriculture, in order to increase food security for the chronically poor and malnourished. The commitment, implementation and monitoring of the Global Fund for Water should be placed under international control as determined by the United Nations.

We recognise the importance of addressing future climate change, but in so doing demand that today's water crisis is addressed. The urgency is there and we cannot miss the opportunity that lies ahead of us.