

**Communications briefing
8th December 2007**

The delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene services to poor people living in some of the world's most crowded slums will receive a major boost, thanks to an US\$11.3 million grant awarded to Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

WSUP is a not-for-profit organisation active in 12 countries. It comprises members from NGOs, the private sector and academia. The grant will allow the organisation to test an innovative approach to improving water, sanitation and hygiene services in order to improve the health, economic and social well being of the urban poor. WSUP will not deliver water and sanitation services directly to the urban poor but instead will build the capacity of local service providers to do so. The goal is to establish a robust model that can be replicated and sustained in cities across the world.

About 170 million people in urban areas of the developing world are not served by water services, and over 600 million lack access to safe sanitation facilities. This problem is particularly acute in Africa and South Asia, and is projected to get worse due to population growth and increased urbanisation. Moreover, those without access to water and sanitation services often pay significantly higher prices than people connected to an established network.

With funding from the grant, WSUP will assist local water and sanitation providers in Mozambique and Madagascar to provide services to a total of 340,000 people. These service providers will build capacity to serve the poor and to sustain and expand these services by strengthening links with poor communities, regulators and other key stakeholders. The grant will also support early stage project development in two other countries, together with an environmental management component. WSUP selects locations based on a clear request for assistance from local authorities and service providers who are motivated and willing to invest in improved services to the urban poor.

The grant is being made by the Global Development Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Global Development Program works with motivated partners to create opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty and hunger.

Quotes:

"We look forward to a close working relationship with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Our two organisations share a commitment to help people lift themselves out of poverty and lead healthy, dignified lives. WSUP was created by its members to develop approaches to the urban water and sanitation challenge that deliver impact, scale and sustainability. Building on existing support for WSUP secured from DFID, KfW and its members, this grant will allow us to take our capacity building model forward and test the interventions in a number of cities. Already the Gates Foundation development work has helped us to sharpen our ideas, and we look forward to learning from the evaluation of this project and communicating its findings widely".

"This support will help WSUP to reach its own target of delivering improved services to 3.5 million people by 2015, and to increase our contribution to the 2008 International Year of

Sanitation. More importantly, it will help test a model by which wider replication and scale can be achieved". Sam Parker CEO, WSUP.

"Many of the urban poor do not have regular access to affordable water and sanitation. They pay for this through poor health, lost days of work or school and—for women—fear of attack when relieving themselves outdoors at night," said Louis Boorstin, senior program officer, Special Initiatives, Global Development Program at the Gates Foundation. "WSUP offers a new way to address this problem by assisting local water and sanitation service providers to serve the poor in a way that is viable for both consumer and service provider. This holds the promise of an affordable and sustainable solution to a pressing problem."

Please contact Sam Parker, Mike Thompson or Emily Hornsby at the WSUP Secretariat for more information: (+44) (0) 203 008 5035.

Further Information

1. Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) is incorporated in the UK as a not-for-profit company. WSUP is a partnership between the private sector, civil society and academia. Its membership is open to new applicants and currently consists of: CARE International UK, WWF, WaterAid, Water for People (civil society), Halcrow, Unilever, Thames Water, Borouge and Borealis (private sector) and Cranfield School of Water Science (academic institution). UNDP and the International Water Association (IWA) hold observer status. WSUP works through local service providers, invests its own funds in early project development and assists local service providers to secure funding for implementation. WSUP is a learning organisation, and is committed to sharing the information and lessons it learns through its approach with the sector more broadly. WSUP is headquartered in the United Kingdom and has projects in a number of countries within Africa, South Asia and Latin America.
2. Population growth rates and urbanisation trends indicate that the number of the world's urban population without access to an improved source of drinking water will increase from 170 million (2004) to 240 million (2015). The urban population without access to improved sanitation will increase from 610 million (2004) to 692 million (2015). The majority of these people will be living in slums and peri-urban settlements which, globally, are growing by over 100,000 people every day. Despite some impressive, individual examples of government and local service provider capacity building for service delivery, efforts are not proving effective enough to reverse the deteriorating trend.
3. The key factors that constrain urban water and sanitation provision include weak institutional arrangements, low capacity of local service providers, weak political will, heavy investment requirements, insufficient cost-recovery, poor operation and maintenance and an overall lack of sound management practices.
4. About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people -- especially those with the fewest resources -- have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.