

## **Policy, challenges and issues in Asia for Water Supply**

- Major policy changes in the water and energy sectors will be needed in the near future to balance water and energy uses in agriculture and stabilize the levels of declining groundwater tables.
- A major challenge for Asian developing countries in the areas of water, energy, food, and the environment is how to coordinate appropriately all the concerned resource policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, and institutions responsible for formulating and implementing these policies
- Increasing water pollution from accelerating domestic, industrial, and agricultural activities is a major issue for nearly all Asian developing countries.
- As the energy needs for Asian countries continue to increase significantly, the water requirements of the energy sector, including the new bio-fuel subsector, are likely to rise as well
- Massive, unprecedented urbanization in Asia—especially the many small urban centers (<500,000 people)—will present new types of water- and wastewater-related challenges that all countries will have to face.
- Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme events like droughts and floods. If so, water infrastructure and management practices have to be more robust and flexible, which will not be an easy task without significant increases in our current knowledge base.
- In a rapidly changing Asia, tomorrow's water problems can no longer be identified, let alone solved, with today's knowledge and yesterday's experience.
- A whole new mindset will be needed to identify and solve the future water supply and related problems.
- Many developing countries will mortgage their future in a decade or two in terms of water security, by considering sanitation only in a very restricted sense of collecting and transferring the untreated sewage to another area thereby contaminating freshwater sources.
- The main reason for the prevailing unacceptable situation is widespread Mismanagement of water utilities, as a result of which the utilities cannot be run professionally.
- It is impossible to continue with the traditional idea of providing required drinking water to everyone free of cost or at highly subsidized rates.
- If some of the Asian cities face a water crisis in the future, it will not be because of physical scarcity of water, but because of inadequate or inappropriate water governance, including management practices, institutional arrangements, and sociopolitical conditions.
- It is simply not possible to plan, develop, and manage water resources in any country on a long-term sustainable basis without the availability of reliable data on physical as well as social, economic, and environmental factors and composite indicators.
- A new paradigm of "business unusual" is needed that can solve the region's water and wastewater problems, in a cost-effective and equitable manner. This will require the formation of a new form of partnership, different from the earlier models, with three distinct partners— government, corporate (public or private), and society

- Solving the water problems of the future will require additional skills and capacity, innovative approaches, and new mindsets. It will also require a more holistic approach that can successfully coordinate the energy, food, environment, and industrial policies of a nation, all of which have direct linkages to water