

# **WATER**

## **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT AND JOHANNESBURG GOALS:**

### **A REPLY FROM THE PRESIDENTS OF REGIONS AND PROVINCES, AND CITY MAYORS**

We, the undersigned Presidents of the Regions and Provinces and City Mayors,

#### ***recognise***

that it is the responsibility of the governments of countries throughout the developed world to make an active contribution to reaching the *Millennium Development and Johannesburg Goals*, which envisage halving by 2015 the number of people who do not have access to safe drinking water and insufficient sewage systems.

#### ***We are united***

under the appeal launched at the Johannesburg Declaration in summer 2002 by Mikhail Gorbachev, President of Green Cross International, and other Nobel Peace Prize winners, for politicians, economists, and leaders of the civil society so that they immediately begin to fight against destruction of the global environment, and the human race is directed towards sustainable development.

#### ***We adopt***

the report by the group of finance experts on the global "Financing Water for All" project, which states that over the next 20-25 years global spending on water must be doubled (to over 180 billion US dollars per year) so that water safety can be reached by 2025.

#### ***We express***

our disappointment for the Ministerial Declaration signed by all Ministers and Heads of Delegation at Kyoto, Japan, during the Third World Forum on Water, 23 March 2003, which failed to reach any action plan for meeting the 2015 water goals, or to give a clear financial commitment to water problems in reply to the finance report. This is to be added to the general sense of frustration over the fact that the average percentage of GDP which OECD countries dedicate to Public Aid Development is not even half of that 0.7% set at the Earth Conference in 1992, and that PAD destined to water has even fallen over the last few years.

### ***We understand***

the efforts at national and inter-governmental level, but are worried that actions are not proceeding rapidly enough, or is not reaching the neediest people. It is our firm belief that everyone must face up to global water crisis with the greatest sense of urgency and pragmatism, since it has condemned millions of people to live in extreme hardship, and is a threat to peace and safety.

As the direct representatives of many citizens, we undertake to improve decentralised cooperation and to finance the machinery which has been put in place to support practical initiatives for water improvement at local and regional level. This is a reflection of our increasing solidarity our electorates feels for those without water or proper sewage systems. It is also a sign that we realise that conflicts about water resources often have a local origin.

We firmly believe that well-coordinated initiatives such as the local and regional shared type (which deal with water and sewers) may have a global impact on poverty reduction, environmental protection, and the strengthening of democracy and peace.

Decentralisation of cooperation may provide a more sharing approach to development, by taking into consideration the needs and initiatives of the population. Via direct cooperation between local and regional governments in developing and developed countries, technology and skills can be better shared, and this also serves to strengthen institutions. Experience has shown us that when the donor and the beneficiary are working together on a project, the project itself is more likely to be shared, efficient, and transparent.

Decentralised cooperation contributes to diversification, to the strengthening of participation in society, and to collaboration in the development process, all of which deepens the roots of democracy and stability in the countries involved.

Decentralised cooperation strengthens solidarity between countries and our sense of sharing responsibility, both of which are vital if we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals agreed at international level.

### ***For these reasons, we hereby undertake to:***

- increase annual spending in our regions/cities on decentralised cooperation, to double our contribution to water and sewage projects by 2007;
- double the number of local partners in our regions/cities ready to help water development projects;
- reduce water consumption and encourage efforts at reducing waste by citizens and companies in our regions/cities, and to convert these savings into aid development projects;

- make the principle of "water for life and for peace" the official one of all our decentralised programmes, and to guarantee that all relative projects respect the principles of participation by interested parties, sustainable development, integrated running of water resources, and transparency, and that they are all perfectly adapted and sensitive to local cultures and values;
- integrate our decentralised cooperation initiatives better with those of other regions/cities, and with those of national development and intergovernmental organisations;
- make sure decentralised cooperation projects for water are connected with peace building and conflict prevention.

We wish to ask the G8 government representatives meeting in Evian, France between 1 and 3 June 2003 to consider our practical, financial, and political commitment as a contribution which will provide positive and tangible results for this important G8 Summit. We hope the G8 Summit will be a new, proactive stage in our efforts at solving the world's water crisis, and that it will increase the international finances necessary to supply water for life and for peace.