

Mr. Malcolm S. Morris
Chairman
Millennium Water Alliance
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The Impact of U.S. Water Programs on Global Health

My name is Malcolm Morris, a co-founder and Chairman of the Millennium Water Alliance.

The Millennium Water Alliance represents 13 leading US-based charities that help to achieve safe water, sanitation and health and hygiene, called WASH, for people in developing countries.

Safe drinking water and sanitation are life and death issues. They are also fundamentally issues for women's, for public health, for education, and for economic and social development. Addressing WASH is the most effective step the U.S. can take to enhance its reputation among people in the developing world, and to work in partnership with our allies to accelerate the economic and political development that is the foundation of true security.

Is it working? Yes. First our goal is not to complete the job of full water and sanitation coverage in any one country, but to build local capacity within that country so that these nations finish the task for themselves – and more and more of them are moving in that direction.

To help us in this important work, I want to urge members of the Subcommittee and their colleagues in the House to support the Sen. Paul Simon Water for the World Act introduced this week in the House by Representatives Earl Blumenauer and Ted Poe. This is not funding legislation, it is efficiency legislation, aimed at improving the way USAID works with its partners and providing a streamlined structure for better information that all stakeholders – including the Congress itself – need to better understand how USAID programs in WASH are working in the field, and how we can be partners with maximum efficiency. I will not detail here the elements of the legislation, other than to say it is strongly supported by the NGO community, and in particular MWA and its member organizations. We are the ones who work in the field with USAID and other funders and implementers, and we believe this legislation will advance that work on behalf of the American taxpayer.

Among the many activities we conduct in partnership with USAID, for example, MWA members train local organizations in WASH programming while applying country-specific standards. Through our framework, local and national participants meet regularly to share best practices and lessons learned, and are held accountable to our standards of transparency and technical effectiveness. .

How do we do all that? We first meet with governments to determine standards for water quality and quantity within the country. Country-specific technology standards are established so that supply chains for parts and expertise can be created, and people are trained in the maintenance of water points.

MWA uses independent monitoring and evaluation by specialists to make sure our progress is successful, up to standard, and achieving desired goals. Baseline studies regarding health and education are prepared so we can measure milestones and determine improvements to the life, livelihood, education and health in a community. These results are shared with participating organizations and governments.

USAID has an important role in priming the pump. Perhaps USAID's best practice is funding an RFA (Request for Assistance) in countries where the U.S. desires to put its best foot forward. Through successful programming initiatives funded by USAID, MWA has attracted over \$16 million dollars in additional funding since April 2009 to facilitate further programming. Matching contributions are generated from other donor countries, foundations, corporations, and from the countries themselves in which work is undertaken.

Science and technology are used in training. For example, we know that many lives are saved through oral rehydration techniques. Through MWA and others, USAID has helped to build momentum with pilot programs being replicated within the country. Most importantly, we are not just building infrastructure which relies on calling 1-800 America for repairs.

We enable community-funded maintenance programs which must be designed as permanent interventions. . Community leaders must be included in planning and training to meet future growth needs, the same as any city in America.

I wish to suggest at least two practices for USAID now:

- a. USAID should continue the use of RFAs to get underway quickly, allowing implementers such as MWA to utilize their expertise responding to local factors in the areas being served.
- b. Conserve on the costs of meetings just to talk about the water problems. Those participating often do not have the expertise to eliminate the problems. People locally get excited by seeing and being a part of work being done, and seeing the improvements and gaining an understanding about the interventions. Then they want to get involved. Water committees are formed, a process that leads to more local empowerment and especially empowering women to be full partners. This creates a learning experience that applies democratic principals at the grass roots level.

Water availability brings economic development. The impact of a \$1 spent on water resource development has at least \$4 of economic impact on the local community. It is one of the most cost-effective expenditures we can make to get a country's economic engine

running. People who are not healthy are not able to work at peak performance. Building full WASH access is a community-by-community experience.

USAID support of the MWA concept in implementing WASH programs within developing countries has achieved something beyond plan. In partnership with American NGOs, USAID is recognized for its leadership in WASH, and other countries, corporations, and multilateral organizations are now calling on the MWA to apply its expertise to assist in water programming, even in places where USAID has not been called on for funding.

Finally, I want to mention that for one example, we have a great new program in Kenya where MWA is partially funded by USAID and a Dutch NGO with major funding from the Dutch government. I will be happy to take your questions.

USAID awarded MWA the Kenya Arid Lands Disaster Risk Reduction WASH (KALDRR-WASH) program in December 2012. KALDRR-WASH is a two-year program aimed at increasing resilience to drought and flash floods while simultaneously increasing access to improved water supply and sanitation services and improving hygiene behaviors for poor and vulnerable populations in the arid counties of Turkana, Marsabit, Garissa, Isiolo, and Wajir.

What sets KALDRR-WASH apart from other programs is:

- The robust monitoring and evaluation activities and framework we are using. By conducting an extensive baseline household survey, we have established the conditions of the area we are aiming to assist, thereby setting tangible targets so as to monitor our impact.
- Its focus on managing risk and reducing the negative economic and social impacts of droughts and floods; for instance, by significantly increasing water storage capacity in target areas, the program will increase year-round availability of water.

Within two years, more than 85 health clinics and nutrition centers throughout Garissa, Wajir, Turkana, Marsabit, and Isiolo counties will have access to safe water, improved sanitation, and hand washing facilities. Such an activity exemplifies the USAID priority of improving health and health standards.

However, the program (like USAID programs in general), addresses more than physical infrastructure. Learning and knowledge sharing are an integral part of KALDRR-WASH. As it

stands in the five targeted counties in Kenya, there are different understandings of what makes water “safe.” Thus, a behavior change is necessary, which is the impetus behind the program’s numerous training sessions geared toward local Water User Associations (WUAs), Water Management Committees (WMCs), and students. The training sessions cover many topics regarding healthy WASH behaviors, including water treatment and safe storage, and multiple uses of water (MUS).

The KALDRR-WASH program aligns four implementing MWA members – CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Food for the Hungry, and World Vision – in their vision for safe WASH in Kenya. By specializing in different areas, and collaborating in new ideas, such a consortium proves to be an effective mode of carrying out development practices.

I wish to thank Chairman Smith, Ranking Minority Member Bass, and the Majority and Minority Staff for extending to me the invitation to testify, and again express our eagerness to assist the Subcommittee in any way we can to advance this great work on behalf of the American people.