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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Note to Mr. Malloch Brown

Subject: 4th Session of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (Berlin, 20-21 February 2006)

The most recent (4th) session of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, held in Berlin on 20 and 21 February (with joint financing by France and Germany) was very congenial and productive. The session enjoyed record attendance, including Michel Camdessus, who contributed actively to the discussion and appeared quite pleased with the evolution of the Board's work. The Chair, Mr. Hashimoto, appreciated the Secretary-General's action to add two new members to the Board, H.E. Sechung Wand, Minister of Water Resources of China (who could not attend the meeting, but will participate in the next meeting of the Board in Mexico City next week), and Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli (who was in attendance).

The 3rd session, in Rome last November, marked the beginning of a new, more engaged, and indeed better supported, phase in the Board's work. Task forces of Board members were established in Rome to cover each of the six themes identified by the Board as priorities for its work-programme (Financing, Water Operators Partnerships, Sanitation, Monitoring, Integrated Water Resources Management, and Water and Disasters). Members of the task forces corresponded actively with each other between the two sessions and, as a result, the Board reached agreement in Berlin on a comprehensive "Compendium of Actions" to be taken by national governments and international organizations on the one hand, and the Board itself and its secretariat on the other, to achieve some breakthroughs in each of the thematic areas. The Board will meet again on 14 and 15 March in Mexico City, immediately before the Fourth World Water Forum, where the Board will have a prominent role and the Compendium will be launched.

There is also definite progress in relation to the advocacy/communication dimensions of the Board's mandate. The Board has established a rather attractive website, and CNN International has agreed to broadcast a public service announcement on water and sanitation which will be aired 5/6 times a day during the next three months, reaching 120 million viewers at a time.

Following the Mexico City session, we expect an invitation from France for the Board to hold a session in Paris before the summer. It is being targeted as an occasion to follow up on the Compendium of Actions (particularly its financing component) with OECD (whose new Secretary-General is a member of the Board), and with the Presidents of the Regional Development Banks.

The Chair of the Board will seek, in the coming weeks, a meeting with the Secretary-General to ask for his intentions regarding the future of the Board. The matter will first be discussed at the Mexico City meeting. My view is that it would be a pity to put an end to the Board now that it is becoming so active after a rather slow start. I would appreciate your concurrence to my intervening in this discussion and indicating that the Secretary-General would be very pleased to see the work of the Board continue, on the understanding, of course, that it would be up to his successor to decide on the future of the Board beyond 2006.

José Antonio Ocampo
Under-Secretary-General

HJB
cc: YM

Note to Mr. Ocampo

Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation

Thank you for your recent note on the 4th session of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, which we received on 13 March. I am happy that the Board has agreed on its working methods and found a way to make visible contributions to the efforts to reach the MDGs on water and sanitation.

I agree with you that the Board should continue with its work till the end of 2006. Feel free to relay that message, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to the Board. The Board could discuss its future beyond 2006, but any decision on its future is up to the new Secretary-General.



Alicia Barcena
21 March 2006

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