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Economic Commission for Latin America

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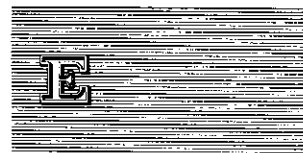
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PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DECADE (IDWSSD)
1980-1983

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A. BACKGROUND

At the nineteenth session of the Commission (Montevideo, May 1981) the Committee on Water, in the light of the General Assembly resolution proclaiming the IDWSSD (A/RES/35/18) in which it called upon "the regional commissions to review periodically, on the basis of national reports, the progress being made by the governments of their respective regions in establishing national targets and carrying out programmes to attain those targets", asked the Secretariat, in co-operation with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), to prepare a report on the progress made in Latin America to serve as a basis for a review by the Committee at the next session of the Commission prior to the appraisal to be undertaken by the General Assembly at its 40th session.

This progress report has therefore been prepared on the basis of national sector digest forms prepared for PAHO by national authorities of the following countries of the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

B. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS OF THE IDWSSD

In the twenty countries surveyed, all would have by the end of 1982 established at least partial targets for the water supply and sanitation sector during the IDWSSD (table 1). At the same time in a majority of countries, exception being Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay had initiated a process of plan preparation for the Decade at least for those areas of the sector for which targets had been established. Only in Argentina and Bolivia, however, had the plan been completed at the time of the survey.

All the countries surveyed had established targets in terms of house connections for urban water supply and most in terms of reasonable access to a protected water source for the rural population. Less than half, however, had developed targets for house connections for the rural population (table 2). In sanitation, most countries had established targets for connections to sewerage systems but only a minority had done so for the provision of septic tanks or latrines to the urban population. Only half the countries have developed targets or programmes for the improvement of sanitation for the rural population.

It will be observed that many countries of the region have adopted relatively modest targets for the improvement of service during the IDWSSD. In part, this reflects the relatively high levels of service already achieved in many countries of the region, particularly in urban water supply, and in part, no doubt, the experience since 1961 in the management of water supply and sanitation investment programmes.

Table 1 .

IDWSSD: PROGRESS IN TARGET AND PLAN PREPARATION

Country	Targets	Plan	
		Completed	In preparation
Argentina	x	x	
Bolivia	x	x	
Brazil	partial		
Chile	partial		x
Colombia	x		x
Costa Rica	x		x
Dominican Republic	partial		x
Ecuador	x		x
El Salvador	partial		
Guatemala	x		
Guyana	x		x
Honduras	partial		x
Mexico	partial		x
Nicaragua	partial		
Panama	x		x
Paraguay	partial		x
Peru	partial		
Trinidad and Tobago	partial		
Uruguay	partial		
Venezuela	x		x

Source: PAHO, Sector Digests.

Table 2

TARGETS ESTABLISHED AND LEVEL OF PROVISION EXISTING IN DECEMBER 1980 a/
(Percentages)

Country	Drinking water supply				Sanitation			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	House connections	Public tap	House connections	Reasonable access	With sewer connection	Septic tank, etc.	Adequate	
Argentina	80 (61)	20 (4)	80 (n/a)	19 (17)	70 (32)	n/a (57)	50 (32)	
Bolivia	60 (24)	31 (45)	20 (3)	40 (7)	40 (23)	40 (14)	60 (4)	
Brazil	90 (80)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (51)	n/a (n/a)	65 (32)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	
Chile	100 (93)	- (7)	39 (17)	n/a (n/a)	100 (69)	- (30)	n/a (n/a)	
Colombia	90 (74)	10 (26)	60 (n/a)	35 (79)	80 (61)	20 (39)	35 (4)	
Costa Rica	100 (95)	- (5)	74 (68)	n/a (n/a)	70 (43)	30 (50)	90 (82)	
Dominican Republic	70 (60)	16 (25)	26 (10)	28 (23)	35 (25)	n/a (n/a)	8 (4)	
Ecuador	85 (47)	10 (35)	50 (14)	20 (2)	65 (36)	20 (3)	60 (14)	
El Salvador	85 (62)	n/a (6)	n/a (n/a)	58 (40)	n/a (48)	n/a (32)	98 (26)	
Guatemala	76 (51)	24 (38)	50 (18)	n/a (n/a)	78 (35)	n/a (10)	80 (20)	
Guyana	100 (90)	- (10)	n/a (n/a)	95 (60)	22 (27)	78 (73)	95 (80)	
Honduras	90 (50)		n/a (n/a)	90 (46)	60 (49)		80 (26)	
Mexico	83 (62)	n/a (2)	n/a (n/a)	58 (43)	62 (50)	n/a (1)	26 (12)	
Nicaragua	90 (67)	10 (24)	n/a (n/a)	80 (10)	50 (35)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	
Panama	100 (93)	- (7)	n/a (n/a)	85 (65)	99 (62)	1 (n/a)	90 (28)	
Paraguay	70 (39)	n/a (n/a)	10 (2)	8 (8)	34 (30)	n/a (65)	95 (89)	
Peru	84 (57)	11 (11)	n/a (21)	n/a (n/a)	78 (55)	6 (2)	n/a (94)	
Trinidad and Tobago	99 (100)		n/a (n/a)	98 (93)	67 (24)	33 (71)	90 (88)	
Uruguay <u>b/</u>	95 (90)	n/a (7)	4 (2)	n/a (n/a)	15 (15)	n/a (45)	n/a (60)	
Venezuela	90 (67)	3 (10)	n/a (n/a)	85 (50)	99 (60)	n/a (30)	n/a (70)	

Source: PAHO, Sector Digests.

a/ Figures in parenthesis refer to percentage of the population served at 31 December 1980. (n/a = not available.)

b/ Targets for 1985.

Despite the modest nature of the targets in some countries of the region, the construction investments estimated for the sector for the Decade are very large (table 3), especially for urban water supply and urban sanitation. In contrast, in most countries the investments foreseen in rural water supply and sanitation are much less. In some countries no public investment is foreseen in the construction of rural sanitation facilities. In many countries, however, the estimated levels of investment represent large and even very large increases over the average investment made in the last five years.

It is recognized in all countries that there are constraints which will affect the accelerated development of the sector in line with the original aspirations held for the IDWSSD. In most countries, this problem has already been considered in the establishment of the plans and programmes for the Decade. Nevertheless, further consideration of these constraints seems worthwhile, as they will continue to be felt throughout the IDWSSD.

For the purposes of the survey which serves as the basis of the report a number of expected constraints or limitations were defined and each country was asked to grade their importance from "very severe" to "none" (table 4). It may be observed that the most important constraints or limitations for the region as a whole lie in inadequate cost recovery, or the lack of realistic pricing systems for the provision of water supply and sewerage services, and in operation and maintenance. The latter constraint is also connected with the continuance of inadequate price structures, since these give rise to revenues which are not sufficient for proper operation and maintenance.

These two constraints are followed in importance by overall limitations on funding, shortage of trained personnel at the sub-professional level, inadequate logistics or support systems, and insufficient health education efforts related to drinking water and sanitation.

It is hoped during the Decade to evaluate change in the different constraint areas to see whether the efforts made to reduce or diminish these problems have achieved success.

C. CONCLUSIONS ON THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED

Progress has been made in the region in the preparation of plans and programmes to achieve accelerated development of the water supply and sanitation sector during the IDWSSD, but the challenge of bringing these plans and programmes to fruition remains. The recognition of numerous constraints -particularly the availability of finance- on the possibilities of meeting the targets established shows that the countries of the region realize that this challenge is a difficult one.

Table 3

INVESTMENT REQUIRED TO MEET DECADE TARGETS

Country	Urban water supply	Rural water supply	Urban sanitation	Rural sanitation	Annual average compared to annual average 1976-1980 (%)
Argentina	1 800	56	2 600	0	250
Bolivia	306	160	192	72	150
Brazil	3 800	200	6 200	100	160
Chile	247	48	149	n/a	
Colombia	594	58	860	100	n/a
Costa Rica a/	112	12	39	21	n/a
Dominican Republic	450	85	85	n/a	900
Ecuador	400	316	493	327	n/a
El Salvador	375	57	260	20	325
Guatemala	241	71	294	15	300
Guyana	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Honduras	n/a	120	53	191	79
Mexico	4 100	2 230	3 500	1 670	n/a
Nicaragua	104	56	76	0	n/a
Panama b/	88	13	37	0	180
Paraguay	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Peru	795	n/a	689	n/a	200
Trinidad and Tobago	415	210	430	0	80
Uruguay a/	209	0	37	0	400
Venezuela	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	140

Source: PAHO, Sector Digests.

a/ 1981-1985.

b/ 1981-1986.

Table 4

INTERNATIONAL DRINKING WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DECADE: CONSTRAINTS
ON ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR

	Rating of constraints			
	Very severe	Severe	Moderate	None
Lack of definite government policy for sector	1	2	14	3
Funding limitations	3	7	10	-
Inadequate or outmoded legal framework	1	3	11	5
Inappropriate institutional framework	2	6	7	5
Inadequate water resources	1	2	12	5
Insufficient knowledge of water resources		6	8	6
Inadequate cost-recovery framework	4	12	2	2
Shortage of trained personnel				
i) Professional	2	6	12	-
ii) Sub-professional	2	8	10	-
Lack of planning and design criteria	1	6	10	3
Inappropriate technology	1	5	9	5
Intermittent water service	2	6	7	5
<u>Operation and maintenance</u>	2	11	7	-
Logistics	1	8	9	2
Import restrictions		2	8	10
Non-involvement of communities		7	10	3
Insufficient health education efforts	1	9	10	-
Total number of countries reporting: 20				

Source: PAHO.

The most difficult obstacle to the fulfilment of the plans for the IDWSSD in the countries of Latin America will undoubtedly be the lack of the required financial support. Undeniably, the financial situation of the sector has largely been self-imposed, through the failure to adopt tariff policies which allow proper recovery of the costs of supplying services. This failure has led to the neglect of operation and maintenance activities in both water supply and sanitation. In the former, this has led to intermittent water service in some cases. In sanitation it has commonly led to the transfer of responsibility for the provision of adequate sanitation to the private individual, as the urban population has expanded but the area served by sewerage has not.

The importance of establishing rational tariff policies for the financing of the water supply and sanitation sector has been pointed out in a previous study.*/ The results of the present survey underline further this necessity, particularly at the present moment, when all the countries of the region are facing a difficult economic situation and the competition for funds from multilateral sources is far greater than it was during the last decade.

*/ ECLA, "The financial demands of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in Latin America", in Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation in Latin America, 1981-1990, "Estudios e Informes de la CEPAL" series, No. 25, Santiago, 1983.