

CG Meeting for Ghana: Annual Partnership Meeting June 18 - 19, 2007. Agenda point "Policy Dialogue around Human Resource Development and Growth (GPRS II pillar II)". Intervention by the Ambassador of Denmark.

I wish to expand on one of the "headlines", which my British colleague mentioned - namely **water and sanitation** services.

Millennium Development Goal number 7 is - officially - about improving access to water. But in reality it is much more than that. It is also about improving the quality of life of **women and girls**. For they - the women and the girls - are the ones, who have to walk long distances to fetch water. It is also the mothers, not the fathers, who have to bring their children to the clinic, if there is a water borne disease in the family.

On this background we must all be concerned, when we note that number of people in rural areas with access to safe drinking water increased only marginally (namely by 1,1 percentage point) from 2005 to 2006.

I am tempted to ask (like my Canadian colleagues did this morning): how come that it is precisely those MDGs, which are of direct relevance to **women**, which Ghana is furthest away from fulfilling?

The facts are clear:

- 1) From the budget related to MDG number 7, which was approved by Parliament for 2006, only 35 percent was actually released. In terms of the MDGs this percentage was the lowest of all the 8 MDGs (see page 20 of the discussion paper);
- 2) Of the investments in rural water supply during the past 5 years, approximately 94 percent came from DPs. Only 6 percent came from the Ghanaian Government;
- 3) There is still no National Water Policy.

I wish to end on a positive note.

I'll do so by saying that it very positive that the responsibility for delivery of services regarding drinking water and sanitation now is in the process of being transferred to District Works Departments.

With the responsibility for rural water and sanitation **decentralised** to Districts, and with grass root organisations empowered to pursue a rights based approach, I am convinced that it will be possible to improve coverage in the rural areas with much more than 1.1 percentage point pr. year.

To the benefit primarily of women and girls.

DANIDA stands ready to continue cooperating with Ghana in the field of water and sanitation.