In a region already suffering severe water stress, the ongo-
ing political, economic and social crisis in the Occupied Pal-
estinian Territories (OPT) has resulted in near catastrophic
consequences for the water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH)
situation. Local and International NGO’s working in water,
in tandem with the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), are
doing their utmost, under restrictive political conditions and
within limited budgets, to ensure that all Palestinians are able
to access sufficient water supplies and sanitation services as
is their right. These efforts are inline with achieving the UN
Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) related to water,
sanitation and hygiene (UN MDG 7  ‘ Target 10: www.un.org/
millenniumgoals/).

The Palestinian Hydrology Group (PHG), as the leading Pal-
estinian NGO working in the water sector, has undertaken
the responsibility for monitoring the extent to which Target
10 can be realized under these deteriorating conditions in
the OPT, and for identifying the limitations in its achieve-
ment. In the process of identifying the main constraints fac-
ing the realization of this goal, and in addressing water is-
ues and crises afflicted on Palestinian communities in the
West Bank and Gaza Strip, reliable water related data col-
lection became of paramount importance.

Typically, WaSH related data has been difficult to source,
disparate in nature, and generally incomplete. The data that
was available failed to describe, accurately, the reality on
the ground for many communities much less serve as a tool
for improving it. In addition, it failed to accurately provide a
comprehensive indication of the vulnerability within com-

munities, and could not be relied upon to assess whether
these communities had the capacity and coping mechanisms
to solve WaSH-related problems. The accumulation of prob-
lems has often resulted in Palestinians subsisting on
appallingly sub-standard levels of clean water.

The existing WaSH situation, coupled with the universal
belief among humanitarian agencies in this sector is that
extensive, timely and easily accessible quantitative data
would further enable international and local organizations
to target the most vulnerable communities and determine
what emergency intervention would be needed. This widely
held view, together with the undertaking to monitor the
extent to which the OPT was progressing towards achiev-
ing the MDG’s, resulted in the creation of the WaSH MP.

The timeliness and urgency for such data was recently re-
alyzed on 27 March, 2007 in the Gaza Strip, when an emer-
gency filtration basin flooded at the Beit Lahia waste wa-
ter treatment facility. This breach released a surge of sewage
that killed five people, injured many more and left the
majority of residents from the impoverished Bedouin vil-
lage of Um Al Nasser displaced. The implementation of
sound water resources management and continuous devel-
opment is clearly crucial in improving the situation. The
effectiveness of these efforts can be greatly enhanced with
a more extensive WaSH MP, highlighting the most vulner-
able communities within the OPT on a continuous basis in
order to prevent future disasters similar to Um Al Nasser
before they occur.

For more information about the WaSH MP please contact
the PHG or visit the WaSH MP website.
When was the WaSH MP initiated?
The inception and launch of the WaSH MP was in June 2002 under the auspices of PHG.

What is the main objective of the WaSH MP?
The main objective of the WaSH MP is to respond to the water crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by increasing local and international awareness of the WaSH situation while further encouraging mobilization around the emergency needs of the most vulnerable communities. Additionally, the hope is that this will help to stimulate political and environmental change through the use of timely and pertinent information in order to help remedy a WaSH related crisis or prevent one from happening.

What are the overall annual outputs of the monitoring program?
As part of the program deliverables an annual report is published along with quarterly based need assessment reports, monthly data sets, and pilot monitoring of selected Palestinian communities. Additionally emergency alerts are posted on a need be basis and are identified as part of the continuous monitoring process. The WaSH MP website comprises an archive of all published material, including reports, alerts and photographs to serve as a reference source.

How is the information collected?
The information is collected from the field, by means of a standardized questionnaire, and is checked as part of a quality assurance process by the five Technical Field Monitors (TFMs), four in the West Bank and one in Gaza Strip, before being sent to the field coordinator who double checks the information again before it is entered into a locally designed database, analyzed and then reported on.

How representative is the data and the forthcoming information?
The initial aim of the WaSH MP was to cover each of the 708 communities (defined as such by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)) in the OPT. By March, 2003, the MP had already succeeded in producing eight monthly reports covering approximately 647 Palestinian communities. The WaSH MP currently collects data from 660 communities with the remaining 48 communities excluded due to various reasons (e.g. seasonal community).

Why support the WaSH MP?
The WaSH MP has been widely lauded as a major contributor to alerting the water sector to problems that require urgent and longer-term attention, and furthermore, educating those outside the Palestinian water sector nationally and internationally on the water, sanitation and hygiene crisis in the OPT. The program also provides a direct channel for WaSH related information regarding the most vulnerable areas to be disseminated to the humanitarian sector and the international community in order for them to stay abreast of emergency needs.

What additional benefits does the Palestinian civil society derive from the WaSH MP?
An essential benefit of the WaSH MP is that it empowers the local councils to voice their concerns on issues related to water, sanitation and hygiene. It is therefore an integrated platform for public participation throughout the OPT.

Why does the WaSH MP merit a consistent stream of funding?
In the past financial support has been awarded by Oxfam-GB (ECHO) and UNICEF. Due to the rapidly deteriorating WaSH situation in the OPT there is an urgent need for greater intervention. The program requires a consistent source(s) of funding in order to maintain and improve the reliability and credibility of the data being disseminated. Additionally projects related to further empowerment of local councils, by means of workshops, are limited due to budget constraints. Lastly, efforts to increase project visibility and to improve the flow of information from Palestinian communities to the international community require a supplementary allowance for advocacy.

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