

## **Water: The Key to Regional Stability through Sustainable Partnerships**

**7,8,9 May 2012**

Water is essential for life. No living being on planet Earth can survive without it. Beyond meeting basic human needs, water as a resource, and its supply and sanitation, are critical to sustainable development. Water problems – shortages, poor water quality, and floods - negatively impact food security, energy generation, economic growth and public health; and threaten political stability around the world.

**These statements are supported by a recent U.S. Intelligence Community Assessment entitled “Global Water Security” (ICA 2012-08). This document was requested by the U.S. Department of State and published on 2012 February 2. Very early in this assessment, a summary identified as “Our Bottom Line” very succinctly articulates the following:**

*During the next 10 years, many countries important to the United States will experience water problems—shortages, poor water quality, or floods—that will risk instability and state failure, increase regional tensions, and distract them from working with the United States on important US policy objectives. Between now and 2040, fresh water availability will not keep up with demand absent more effective management of water resources. Water problems will hinder the ability of key countries to produce food and generate energy, posing a risk to global food markets and hobbling economic growth. As a result of demographic and economic development pressures, North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia will face major challenges coping with water problems.*

Given the conclusions expressed in the preceding extract, it would appear clear that it is imperative that national and international policymakers support policies and provide adequate resources to assure effective management of water resources and reduce the risk of instability and state failure, increase of regional tensions, and damage to US policy objectives from water problems. Without support and resources, growing water problems will exacerbate existing tensions, create instability and encourage conflict in vital regions of the globe.

Subsequent to the promulgation of the above-mentioned ICA document, the Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton launched on 22 March 2012 ( World Water Day ) the US Water Partnership which will help meet this need by creating a platform for fostering new partnerships among the U.S.-based private sector and the non-profit, academic, scientific, and expert communities. The Partnership will mobilize the “Best-of-America” to provide safe drinking water and sanitation and improve water resources management worldwide.

Secretary Clinton was joined by Representative Earl Blumenauer in welcoming representatives of eighteen USWP members today, including Africare, the **Coca-Cola Company**, **Procter & Gamble**, the Nature Conservancy, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Motor Company, **Skoll Global Threats Fund**, the Water Institute at the University of North Carolina, **World Resources Institute**, Global Environment & Technology Foundation, Global Water Challenge, and Clean Water America Alliance. Representatives of U.S. Government partners participated from: U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; U.S. Agency for International Development; **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**; and U.S. Department of the Interior, in addition to the U.S. Department of State.

In her remarks , the Secretary stated: ***“We believe this Water Partnership will help map out our route to a more water secure world: a world where no one dies from water-related diseases; where water does not impede social or economic development; and where no war is ever fought over water.”***

**Many of the above-mentioned members of the US Water Partnership have presented at previous USF Conferences, and will present at this upcoming Conference.**

As American forces prepare to withdraw by the end of 2014, a newly-signed agreement ( 22 Apr 2012 ) has the U.S. pledged to fund Afghan security forces for a decade more. The U.S. also has pledged to support Afghan economic development, health care programs, education and social initiatives in the eight-part agreement described as a broad framework of engagement for U.S.- Afghan engagement for years to come.

**Recognizing the constrained financial resource environment in the years ahead, this Conference will assess the successful activities and lessons learned in Afghanistan as they may serve as a potential model for any country (in particular the Asia region) which has significant water management issues which impact stability, security, and economic development throughout the global community.**

