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**UNITED NATIONS YOUTH AND STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRIA**

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## **Abstract**

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

**"Clean Water for All: Water as a Basic Need for Economic Growth,  
Sustainable Development, Poverty Alleviation and a Key Factor in  
Achieving the Millennium Development Goals"**

Access to clean water is a key prerequisite to growth and development and essential to the reduction of poverty in developing countries. Each year water-related diseases claim more than 5 million lives, mainly in Africa and Asia. Every 15 seconds a destitute child dies from a disease, largely because of poor sanitation and contaminated water. Additionally, access to clean water and proper sanitation in the world's poorest countries is considered essential for advances in female empowerment and parity in education. Within a few decades, about a third of the world's people are expected to suffer from chronic water shortages. Because water is necessary for life, for the economy and industry, and the sustenance of a growing world population, these realities, combined with an increasing demand for water, the unequal geographic availability of water resources, the limited worldwide freshwater supply and the fact that water is controlled by a few to the exclusion of many, suggest the urgent need of action with regard to an increasing number of clean-water issues across the globe.

It is therefore far from surprising that due to these alarming numbers the United Nations have declared the years 2005 to 2015 the "water for life decade", with UNIDO participating among many other organizations. One of the main priorities of this project is the further promotion of the Millennium Development Goals, set up in the year 2000, which include the reduction by half of the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015 and the elimination of unsustainable exploitation of water resources. During this decade additional focus will be made on two goals, elaborated at the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 and aimed at the development of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and water efficiency plans, as well as at halving by 2015 the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.

Better cooperation and more effective institutional work along with further technical assistance in developing countries will be needed if any of these ambitious goals are to become reality by 2015. UNIDO with its two core functions as a global forum and a technical cooperation agency in industry- and economy-related issues, offers a great platform to work on water-related issues. Currently UNIDO uses "Water Management" as the main facility in its Service Module 8 ("Environmental Management") to address the problems mentioned above. The extension of this Service Module would be one possible way for UNIDO to contribute more significantly to the "water for life decade", but this will be left to the delegates of VIMUN 2006 UNIDO committee.

Some more details are given below to show the indisputable importance and interlinkage water possesses with all of the Millennium Development Goals:

### Millennium Development Goals in relation to clean water issues:

- **Poverty (Goal 1).** One fifth of the world's population lives in extreme poverty, while 800 million people are chronically hungry. Sufficient clean drinking water and adequate water for other household, agricultural and economic activities can be instrumental in eradicating poverty and hunger.
- **Education and Gender (Goals 2 and 3).** Queues for water almost always consist of women or girls. These time-consuming activities prevent women from engaging in productive work and keep girls from attending schools. Expanding access to water and sanitation is fundamental to female empowerment and parity in education.
- **Health (Goals 4, 5 and 6).** More than 5 million deaths are caused each year by water-related diseases. Contaminated water is the biggest killer of young children. Realizing the health goals critically depends on increased access to water and proper sanitation.
- **Environment (Goal 7).** The target for water and sanitation officially resides in the overall goal of ensuring environmental sustainability. Water is also essential for sustaining the biodiversity of all the world's ecosystems.