GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING DOMESTIC WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AND MAKING HEALTH PROTECTION MORE SUSTAINABLE IN LATIN AMERICA

THE POLITICAL AGENDA

For national, sector and local authorities:

- Draft and implement policies aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for reduced infant mortality and increased public sanitation coverage, among others.
- Accept that poverty in the urban areas of Latin America is increasing in order to redefine country agendas, especially those of the health, economic, environment, production and sanitation sectors.
- Promote the inclusion of wastewater in country agendas, as part of an integral approach to water resources.
- Reassess the urban-rural relationship in order to complement the generation and use of wastewater as part of a more efficient management of water resources.
- Promote partnerships between those responsible for treatment and the users of wastewater, to reduce the cost of treatment and promote its productive use under adequate sanitation conditions.
- Incorporate the concept “use of treated domestic wastewater” into government policies and promote initiatives from different economic and social agents.
- Promote local development of agricultural areas producing crops irrigated with treated domestic wastewater, as a strategy for food safe and job creation in the cities.
- Promote mechanisms for community participation in the monitoring and improving of drinking water and sanitation services, and the use of treated domestic wastewater.
- Regulate the use of technology for removing human pathogens and other pollutants from domestic wastewater in order to achieve the quality required for its new use or safe final disposal.
- Develop treatment projects for domestic wastewater, incorporating cost-efficiency criteria, public health protection and safe and productive use.
- Promote integrated systems for treatment and productive use of domestic wastewater in order to optimize the benefits, as well as reduce and distribute these costs better.
- Promote agreements to distribute the cost of treating domestic wastewater among those who generate it and those who use it.
- Commit farmers to use treated wastewater for irrigation in order to protect their health.
- Create incentives for the safe and productive use of treated domestic wastewater.
- Promote maximum use of treated domestic wastewater to minimize discharges into the environment.
- Regulate the handling of sludge and other wastes generated by domestic wastewater treatment.
- Design strategies to encourage an increase in household sewer connections in order to optimize their capacity.
- Commit the industry to comply with regulations governing waste discharge.
- Uniﬁy the criteria for allocating resources from international cooperation into the water and sanitation sector, which includes domestic wastewater.

For legislators:

- Develop the legal framework necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for reduced infant mortality and an increase in sanitation coverage, among others.
- Include wastewater in legislation as part of an integral approach to water resources.
- Appoint a body to encourage coordination between the health and sanitation sectors, local governments and the civil society.
- Include in the national legislation the WHO Health Guidelines for the use of domestic wastewater in agriculture and aquaculture, to establish limits, control mechanisms and incentives to promote its safe and productive use.
- Use domestic wastewater treatment legislation principally to remove human pathogens (nematode eggs and fecal coliforms), and other pollutants.
- Develop mechanisms to regulate and control the quality of treated domestic wastewater and the agricultural products irrigated with it.

For regulatory, monitoring and supervisory bodies:

- Regulate the disposal of domestic wastewater in terms of the quality standards applicable to the receiving water course or type of use.
- Regulate the competences of the health and sanitation sectors and of local governments, concerning the management of domestic wastewater.
- Regulate the use of technology for removing human pathogens and other pollutants from domestic wastewater in order to achieve the quality required for its new use or safe final disposal.
- Include the cost of treating domestic wastewater into public services tariffs.
- Achieve agreement to distribute the cost of treating domestic wastewater among those who generate it and those who use it.
- Establish tariffs or mechanisms that place a value on the availability of treated wastewater for irrigating crops and others uses.
- Regulate and monitor the management of sludge and seasonal excesses of domestic wastewater generated during the treatment process in order to minimize any significant negative impact.