

## Press Release



**IFHE enhances the “WORLD HOME ECONOMICS DAY”**  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2008

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR HOME ECONOMICS

## “Home Economics Supporting Sustainable Development and Quality of Life for All”



The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO), having consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF) and with the Council of Europe.

IFHE enforces the aim of Sustainable Development and Quality of life with its international work.

One of the main important subjects regarding Sustainable Development and Quality of life is **Water**. Following the International Decade for Action for Water for Life (2005-2015) and the International Year of Sanitation (2008) the World Home Economics Day 2008 focuses on Water.

### **Water is essential for life**

Water is crucial for sustainable development, including the preservation of our natural environment and the alleviation of poverty and hunger. Water is indispensable for human health and well-being.

Among the themes that are central for the “Water for Life” Decade are: scarcity, access to sanitation and health, water and gender, capacity-building, financing, valuation, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), trans-boundary water issues, environment and biodiversity, disaster prevention, food and agriculture, pollution and energy.

### **Sufficient access to improved water**

Due to the fact that high levels of water use cause both environmental and economic problems and that the number of households will increase the question of water access in the future is decisive regarding quality of life and sustainable development.

Water scarcity affects all social and economic sectors and threatens the sustainability of the natural resources base. Addressing water scarcity calls for an inter sectorial and multidisciplinary approach to water resources management, one that ensures the coordinated development and management of water and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. Integration across sectors is needed. This integration needs to take into account development, supply, use and demand, and to place the emphasis on people and the ecosystems that sustain them. On the demand side, enhancing the productivity of water use in all sectors is paramount to successful programmes of water scarcity alleviation.

## **World Home Economics Day 2008 takes notice of the different aspects of Water for life**

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** „However, the “sobering reality” is that the planet’s water supplies are under great stress due to high population growth, unsustainable consumption patterns, poor management practices, pollution, inadequate investment in infrastructure, and low efficiency in water-use.“

### **Gender and water task force**

In most societies, women have primary responsibility for management of household water supply, sanitation and health. Water is necessary not only for drinking, but also for food production and preparation, care of domestic animals, personal hygiene, care of the sick, cleaning, washing and waste disposal. Because of their dependence on water resources, women have accumulated considerable knowledge about water resources, including location, quality and storage methods. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of the world’s finite water resources and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, often overlook the central role of women in water management.

### **WHO: Sanitation challenge**

The provision of sanitation is a key development intervention – without it, ill-health dominates a life without dignity. Simply having access to sanitation increases health, well-being and economic productivity. Inadequate sanitation impacts individuals, households, communities and countries.

**UNICEF’s hygiene awareness and promotion** efforts focus on changing behaviour by communicating key hygiene practices such as hand washing. Children and youth are encouraged to be agents of change in their families and communities through initiatives such as life skills training programmes, curriculum development and integrated sanitation and hygiene education in schools.

Access to improved facilities is crucial, but it is the correct use of water and sanitation facilities that leads to a reduction in disease.

IFHE promotes the awareness for the aims of International Decade for Action for Water for Life (2005-2015) and the International Year of Sanitation (2008) the World Home Economics Day.

Home Economists around the world support training programmes for sustainable consumer behaviour especially the sustainable usage of water including school programmes to change hygiene practices.

Based on the Home Economics Day 2008 many home economics association will highlight the importance of water for all and all related aspects.

### **For more information please see the following links:**

[http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/hygiene/envsan/sanitchallenge/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/envsan/sanitchallenge/en/)

[http://www.unicef.org/wes/index\\_hygiene.html](http://www.unicef.org/wes/index_hygiene.html)

<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/issues.html#scarcity>