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NATIONAL DRINKING WATER POLICY

2007



**GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT**

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1. PREAMBLE

The Government of Pakistan, while recognizing that access to safe drinking water is the basic human right of every citizen and that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure its provision to all citizens, is committed to provision of adequate quantity of safe drinking water to the entire population at an affordable cost and in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner.

In order to fulfill this commitment of the Government, the Ministry of Environment, in line with provisions of the National Environment Policy and Mid-term Development Framework (2005-2010), has formulated the National Drinking Water Policy through a countrywide consultation process.

The Policy aims to provide a guiding framework to the Federal Government, Provincial Governments, State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Federally Administered Territories and Areas, Local Governments, development authorities and other organizations to address the key issues and challenges facing Pakistan in the provision of sustainable access to safe drinking water.

The Policy complements, and will be implemented in coordination with, the National Environment Policy, National Sanitation Policy and other related policies of the Government of Pakistan for protection and improvement of public health and quality of life. The Federal Government, Provincial Governments, State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Federally Administered Territories will devise their own strategies, plans and programmes in pursuit of this policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

Drinking water, as referred to in the Policy, means that the water used for domestic purposes including drinking, cooking, hygiene and other domestic uses. The term “safe water” refers to the water complying with National Drinking Water Quality Standards. “Access” means that at least 45 and 120 liter per capita per day water is available for rural and urban areas, respectively, and that the total time required for reaching the public water source (where applicable), collecting water and returning to home is not more than 30 minutes.

3. GOAL

The overall goal of the national drinking water policy is to improve the quality of life of people of Pakistan by reducing incidence of death and illness caused by water-borne diseases through ensuring provision of adequate quantity of safe drinking water to the entire population at an affordable cost and in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner by 2020.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The key policy principles that will be pursued for implementation of the Policy are as follows:

- (i) Access to safe drinking water is the basic human right of every citizen and that it is the responsibility of the state to ensure its provision to all citizens;
- (ii) Water allocation for domestic purposes (drinking, hygiene, sanitation and other domestic uses) will be given priority over other uses;
- (iii) In order to ensure equitable access, special attention will be given to removing the existing disparities in coverage of safe drinking and for addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable;
- (iv) Recognizing the fact that women are the main providers of domestic waters supply and maintainers of hygienic home environment, their participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and operation and maintenance of water supply systems will be ensured; and
- (v) Responsibilities will be delegated to local authorities to enable them discharge their assigned functions with regard to provision of safe water supply in accordance with Local Government Ordinance-2001.

5. POLICY GUIDELINES

5.1. Increasing Access

- (i) New drinking water supply systems will be established and existing systems will be rehabilitated and upgraded in urban as well as rural areas to ensure sustainable access of safe drinking water to all the population. In this regard, the Federal, Provincial and AJK Governments will provide and mobilize additional financial resources and create special funds for the drinking water sector;

- (ii) Priority will be accorded to un-served and under-served areas, both urban and rural, with regard to access to drinking water, disadvantaged areas, brackish water zones and those areas where there is shortage of sweet water in the underground aquifers;
- (iii) All public “intermittent” water distribution systems will be upgraded phased-wise through supply and demand management and rehabilitation to “continuous water” supply mode; and
- (iv) Sustainability in the drinking water sector will be promoted through levying appropriate user charges, cost recovery and cross-subsidization for different segments of the population. Differential tariff will be set for low-, medium- and high-income geographical wards of cities and towns

5.2. Protection and Conservation of Water Resources

- (i) Measures will be taken to protect and conserve surface and groundwater resources as well as coastal waters in line with the provisions of the National Environment Policy and Pakistan Environmental Protection Act-1997;
- (ii) Ambient water quality standards will be developed and enforced for classification of water resources on the basis of their uses. Phased programmes for clean-up and protection of water resources used for drinking purposes will also be implemented in line with the standards.
- (iii) Rain water harvesting at household and community level will be promoted to augment the municipal water supply as well as for ground water recharge;
- (iv) Community management of local water resources and integrated management of water resources will be promoted;
- (v) Abstraction of groundwater for various uses will be regulated;
- (vi) Environmental impact assessment will be undertaken for all water sector projects to ensure that they do not adversely impact the environment;
- (vii) Recycling and re-use of water will be encouraged;
- (viii) Existing water supply systems will be rehabilitated to reduce water losses and wastage;
- (ix) Metering of water will be encouraged to discourage the indiscriminate use of water for municipal and industrial purposes; and
- (x) Water-saving plumbing equipment and water efficient techniques, devices and appliances will be promoted.

5.3. Water Treatment and Safety

- (i) The drinking water will be treated so as to ensure that it complies with National Drinking Water Quality Standards. To this end, water treatment will be made an integral component of all the drinking water supply systems, both public and private, depending the quality of source;
- (ii) Water quality monitoring and surveillance framework and guidelines will be established to ensure that quality of all public and private water supplies conforms to the required standards. In this context, water quality laboratories will be established at Provincial, District and Tehsil levels and the quality of drinking water sources and supplies will be monitored;
- (iii) Water safety planning will be promoted for urban as well as rural water supply systems. In addition, sanitary inspection and community surveillance for water quality monitoring will be promoted; and
- (iv) Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) will be assigned the role of “Surveillance Agency” to undertake independent assessment of the quality of water being supplied by the water supply agencies in the Islamabad Capital Territory and Federal Administered Areas, including Northern Areas. Provincial and AJK Governments will designate regional offices of PCRWR or any other appropriate organization to work as the “Surveillance Agency”. The “Surveillance Agencies” will immediately intimate the non-compliance of the National Drinking Water Quality Standards to the “Water Regulatory Agencies” for taking appropriate actions. The “surveillance agencies will prepare the annual report on the state of drinking water in Pakistan

5.4. Appropriate Technologies and Standardization

- (i) Cost-effective and appropriate technological options to suit local conditions and social and cultural practices will be used. Operation and maintenance and sustainability will be given due consideration in the selection of the technological options; and
- (ii) Standard operating procedures will be developed for planning, design, construction, monitoring and operations and maintenance for the various

categories of water supply schemes. This will ensure adherence to technical standards and specifications and quality construction and sustainable service;

5.5. Community Participation and Empowerment

- (i) Participation of communities, especially women and children, in planning, implementation, monitoring and operations and maintenance of water supply systems will be encouraged to promote community ownership and empowerment as well as sustainability;
- (ii) Every public sector project will have special allocation for community mobilization;
- (iii) Community mobilization units will be established in water sector service providers. Special focus will be placed on gender training programs for all tiers of local government staff, TMAs, Local Government Staff and EPAs so that they are able to respond in a sensitive manner to the gender differentiated needs in the drinking water sector.
- (iv) Special efforts will be made to recruit and induct women in TMAs, EPAs and other relevant agencies to ensure that the needs of women clients are addressed.
- (v) To ensure the representation of female councilors in all review and decision making forums regarding drinking water supply at the district, Tehsil and Union Council tiers.

5.6. Public Awareness

- (i) Intensive information, education and communication campaigns will be developed and implemented to promote water safety, water conservation and safe hygiene practices; and
- (ii) Hygiene will be made an integral component of all water supply projects and programmes.

5.7. Capacity Development

- (i) The roles and responsibilities of various agencies with regard to water sector at the Federal and Provincial levels will be streamlined to address fragmentation and overlapping of responsibilities;

- (ii) Technical, institutional and financial capacity of Provincial Governments, Town and Tehsil Municipal Administrations and other service providers will be strengthened. Special training will be organized for staff of these organization on planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drinking water supply programmes; effective and efficient operation and maintenance of water supply systems; water quality monitoring; community mobilization and hygiene promotion; financial management; budgeting; audit and accounting; contract management and revenue collection;
- (iii) Capacity of Environmental Protection Agencies will be strengthened to enable them to act as “Water Regulatory Agencies”;
- (iv) Capacity of citizen’s community boards (CCBs) and other community organizations developed in collaboration with NGOs for improving the local level capacity for implementation and operation and maintenance of water supply systems; and
- (v) Systems of performance grants will be encouraged to reward those institutions and individuals who are able to meet performance milestones and achieve the specific targets.

5.8. Public-Private Partnership

Public-private partnerships for enhancing access of safe water, operation and maintenance of water supply systems, resource mobilization and capacity development will be promoted. The role of civil society organizations to support the government’s effort in enhancing the coverage of drinking water will also be encouraged.

5.9. Research and Development

Special efforts will be undertaken to pilot new approaches and innovative ideas and arrangements in the drinking water sector, especially those which help to improve access, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Where these pilots are successful, they will be widely disseminated and plans will be made to scale-up and replicate them at the national level.

5.10. Emergency Preparedness and Response

- (i) National, Provincial, District and Tehsil level emergency preparedness and response plans will be developed for ensuring provision of safe water to people in case of emergencies such as floods, earthquake, droughts ; fires;
- (ii) Water supply systems will be designed and constructed with due consideration to the natural disasters and emergencies ; and
- (iii) Training programs on emergency preparedness and response will be arranged for the staff of line agencies, civil society organizations and communities.

5.11. Coordinated Planning and Implementation

- (i) Sector-wide approach will be promoted for water and sanitation sector;
- (ii) Existing data collection systems such as PSLM, MICS and others will be streamlined and strengthened to ensure availability of authentic information for decision making purposes for the sector;
- (iii) Water sector information management system will be established at the Federal, Provincial and Local levels;
- (iv) In order to ensure effective utilization of resources and to maximize impacts, inter-sectoral approach will be promoted and implementation of the Policy will be coordinated and integrated with relevant national policies, especially policies for sanitation, water, environment, health and education sectors;
- (v) Allocation of provincial resources to districts for drinking water sector will be based on the multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) data;
- (vi) In order to ensure inter and intra-sectoral coordination, Federal Water and Sanitation Coordination Committee will be strengthened to include representatives from the Ministries of Health, Education and Water and Power. Moreover, similar committees will be set up at the Provincial, District and tehsil levels.

5.12. Legislation

- (i) Federal and Provincial Environmental Protection Agencies will also act as “Drinking Water Supply Regulatory Agencies”. To this effect, necessary legal provisions will be made in the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act and Pakistan Safe Drinking Water Act;
- (ii) Pakistan Safe Drinking Water Act will be enacted to ensure compliance with the National Drinking Water Quality Standards for domestic water supply and hold municipal bodies accountable to the general public;

- (iii) The Drinking Water Quality Standards will be enforced throughout the country and agencies responsible for the provision of water supply will ensure that the quality of water supplied by them does not fall below the standards at any given time; and
- (iv) Appropriate action will be undertaken to penalize any supplier or vendor of drinking water supply found to be providing water quality lower than the standard prescribed in accordance with the existing legislation;
- (v) Water Conservation Act and relevant standards/guidelines will be enacted;
- (vi) Standards for water-saving plumbing equipment and appliances will be enacted; and
- (vii) Legislation for regulation of groundwater exploitation will be enacted.

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The implementation and monitoring of this Policy will be coordinated by the Ministry of Environment in collaboration with Provincial, AJK and Northern Areas Government,. Following the approval of the Policy, the Federal, Provincial, AJK and Northern Areas Government will develop comprehensive plans for its implementation within a period of six months. Federal, Provincial, AJK and Northern Areas Government will, thereafter, allocate necessary funds for implementation of the Policy in line with the respective Plans. Reports on the progress of implementation of these plans will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment on bi-annual basis.

This Policy will be implemented and monitored in conjunction with the National Sanitation Policy which was approved by the Federal Cabinet in October 2006. The “National Sanitation Policy Implementation Committee” envisaged under the National Sanitation Policy will, therefore, be re-constituted as the “National Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy Implementation Committee”. Accordingly, the Directorate of Environmental Health envisaged under the National Sanitation Policy would be renamed as “Directorate of Water and Sanitation” to serve as Secretariat for the Committee.

The Policy will be reviewed and updated after every five years by a committee constituted specially for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of its guidelines, their efficacy and continued relevance to the changing situation in the country.