



**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development

1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE

*From the Secretary of State*

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP  
Suite 58  
The Hop Exchange  
24 Southwark Street  
London SE1 1TY

Telephone: 020 7023 0134  
E-mail: h-benn@dfid.gov.uk

14 June 2006

De Caroline

Thank you for your letter of 24 May reiterating your specific points on the EU Water Initiative (EUWI). Since I last wrote to you on 7 March, we have started to take some significant actions to improve the effectiveness of the EU Water Initiative. This included tabling a paper on EUWI reform at the Steering Group meeting in May and now working with the Germans to develop a high level strategy for a new phase of the EU Water Initiative. I enclose a copy of the paper that we tabled for the EUWI Steering Group, which you will see addresses many of your points in detail. We have also increased our involvement with the Africa Working Group to take forward these ideas, since this is the region where we are most keen to achieve progress.

On civil society involvement, we have stressed the importance that costed work plans for all working groups should include stakeholder financing and set out how they will ensure participation of governments and civil society from partner countries. Last year DFID renewed its Programme Partnership Agreement with WaterAid for the period 2005-11. We have local partnerships with WaterAid in Tanzania and Nigeria, and are proposing to extend our work with civil society in Africa.

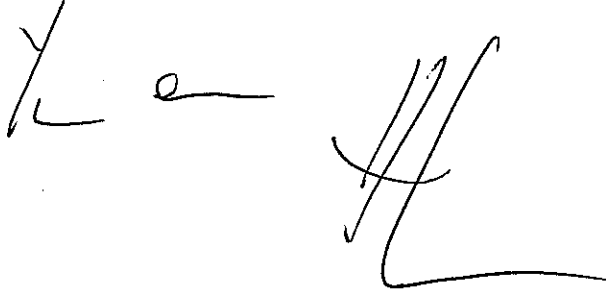
It is clear that improved reporting and accountability is a priority. We have already funded a consultant to develop tough, measurable indicators for the Africa Working Group. The consultant is also working with the EUWI Monitoring Group, which is led by the Italians, and with the Steering Group to ensure that these indicators inform the high level accountability framework we have proposed. At the Steering Group, we and Germany agreed to take forward the reform and to fund work on more detailed plans that we will report to donors at Stockholm Water Week in August.

The Commission also recognises the need for reform and held a meeting of Directors (for water) of Member States on 17 May 2006. It was at this meeting that Member States agreed that the EUWI needs to enter a new phase with radical improvement on focus and delivery, and that the UK with Germany agreed to develop the new strategy. This strategy will recognise the need for the EUWI to focus on countries where it can add value, to promote alignment of donor support behind credible country plans, and to provide finance through national budget processes.

I am hopeful that these various strands of work which are underway at the both the international level and within the working groups, will lead to renewed political commitment and better, focussed implementation on the ground.

I hope this is helpful.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'H' followed by a horizontal line and a large, sweeping 'B'.

HILARY BENN