



UNILEVER AND WATER

TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY



Water is a precious and limited resource. To meet today's needs and ensure that future generations enjoy access to clean, safe water, we must all learn to use it in more sustainable ways. Unilever is working hard to integrate this principle into its own water management and to encourage its suppliers, customers and local communities to do so too.



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Unilever is one of the world's leading consumer goods companies. Our food, home and personal care products are chosen by 150 million consumers around the world every day.

The availability of clean water is essential for our business. Water is used directly in our operations, by our suppliers, by consumers who need water to use our products, and by the communities in which we operate.

Water is a shared resource. Without action by all users, demand for water will continue to outstrip potential supply, particularly in areas of water stress. That is why we are promoting sustainable water management as one of our three sustainability initiatives, alongside agriculture and fish.



OUR WATER VISION

We are committed to ensuring that our activities and those of our suppliers, customers and consumers achieve a sustainable balance between protecting ecosystems and meeting human needs, so assuring the ability of future generations to access sufficient quantities of clean water.

UNILEVER'S WATER IMPRINT

Our first step has been to analyse our own Water Imprint – the total volume of water used in the life cycle of our products, from raw materials to consumer use. The results of this Water Imprint help us make sure our imprint is sustainable and prioritize those areas where we can make a real difference.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Our factories around the world are working hard to reduce their water consumption – already down 7.2% in 2001 compared to 2000. We will increasingly be working with our suppliers, especially within the agricultural sector, to reduce the total supply chain impact on water.

PRODUCT DESIGN AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

We are paying more attention to the design of our products so that they need less water and have a lower impact on water quality, as well as applying existing strict environmental and human safety criteria to products before they are launched. We are also working with consumers to change product use patterns and foster the responsible use of water.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An important part of Unilever's approach to water is our Sustainable Water Integrated Catchment Management (SWIM) principles, which were developed with the assistance of the UK sustainability organisation Forum for the Future. These recognise that competing demands for water – for agriculture, manufacturing and human consumption – and the need to sustain a healthy environment mean that society needs to adopt a more integrated approach to water management. The SWIM principles incorporate a practical approach to helping Unilever and our partners ensure that the community water partnerships we engage in are effective and successful.

LIFEBUOY HANDWASH CAMPAIGN

In India every 30 seconds a child dies from a diarrhoea-related illness. Yet according to a World Bank study done in 1998 in Guatemala, Bangladesh and USA, diarrhoea cases can be reduced by up to 48% just by using soap to improve hygiene. The problem lies in deep-seated traditions and lack of knowledge about simple personal hygiene practices. A campaign by Hindustan Lever is changing the way consumers in India use water and our soap products to promote disease prevention. The Lifebuoy Handwash Campaign aims to educate people about invisible germs and their consequences on health, using a variety of community-based activities for mothers, children and elderly people.



Lifebuoy Swasthya Chetna, the diagram illustrates the interactive nature of the Lifebuoy campaign.



Local fish farmer on the Brantas River.

CLEAN BRANTAS PROJECT

An initiative led by Unilever Indonesia has resulted in more than just cleaner water for the communities situated along the polluted Brantas River. It has provided them with a source of social and economic development and healthier lifestyles.

As part of the Clean Brantas Project launched in July 2001, Unilever Indonesia has adopted four villages along the Brantas River. The company works in partnership with these communities, a local university, NGOs and government agencies to improve environmental awareness, sanitation systems, waste management and recycling, tree planting and housing development along the riverbank. As a result of these initiatives, the river now generates income for the villages

through small-scale fish farming and cultivation of Java Noni fruit crops for export. It is hoped that the Village Adoption Programme will be expanded by other local companies to include more villages along the river.

PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION PROJECT

The Pasig River is a critical lifeline between Manila Bay and Laguna de Bay, one of the world's largest freshwater inland lakes. Since 1993, Unilever Philippines has been a key partner in the US\$ 1 billion 15-year international multi-sector Pasig River



Domestic waste water treatment plant at Unilever Philippines' Manila factory. Treated water from the plant flows through a fish pond before entering a tributary of the Pasig River.

Development Plan to clean up the severely polluted river. We have opened our own on-site domestic water treatment plant, a first in the industry and for metropolitan Manila, to ensure that our operations do not pollute the

river. We have also set up partnership programmes to help neighbours not to pollute the Pasig, for example by organising solid waste management workshops for the local traders. In addition, working with the NGOs and civic associations, we have run public awareness campaigns in schools and the community to encourage the establishment of Clean River Zones.

LIVING LAKES

Lakes worldwide are showing signs of strain caused primarily by human activities. As enclosed bodies of water, they are easily damaged by the unsustainable use of their resources. In many regions the supply of drinking water depends on healthy lakes. Since 1998, Unilever has been the Global Partner of the Global Nature Fund's 'Living Lakes' network, a major programme to benefit lakes, their wildlife and the communities that live around them. Local Unilever companies are actively involved in looking after eleven lakes around the world. We have also developed a toolkit to provide guidance and case studies for potential partners in the Living Lakes programme.

For more information about these and other Unilever water sustainability initiatives visit the Environment and Society section of www.unilever.com



Columbia River Wetlands Canada - a Living Lake in a wilderness area supported by Unilever Canada.



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