



## WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION

### Access to Water Supply & Sanitation

Water supply and sanitation (WSS) are interrelated. Inadequate access to sanitation facilities can lead to the leaching of waste into freshwater sources and a decrease in the quality and level of access to freshwater for a community. Also, public health and the quality and quantity of WSS are directly linked. Currently 1.1 billion people, or 18 percent of the world's population, live without access to adequate water supply. About 2.6 billion people, or 42 percent of the world's population, live without access to sanitation facilities (WHO/UNICEF, 2005).

***The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) call for halving by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.***

### Water Supply

Water supply systems obtain water from a variety of sources, including rainwater, groundwater (aquifers), surface water (lakes and rivers), and from the sea through desalination. Differences in the availability of water are based on both the quality and quantity of the water source. The international standard for minimum water supply is 15 liters per day for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene, and the maximum distance to a water pump should be 500 meters.



Mali Cart Vendors-WUP, 2007

### Water and Sanitation

Adequate sanitation is defined as communities having adequate numbers of toilets sufficiently close to dwellings to allow rapid, safe and acceptable access to water at all times of the day and night. Such standards require a maximum number of 20 people per toilet and that those toilets be no more than 50 meters from dwellings. Access to adequate sanitation varies globally. For example, different types of sanitation facilities include pit latrines, ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines, pour-flush toilets, flushing toilets, and composting toilets.



Photo: WHO, 2007

### Water Supply, Sanitation and Vulnerability

The impacts of lack of access to water supply and sanitation are not distributed equally amongst populations. Globally, the lack of access to WSS disproportionately affects women and children. Two water-related diseases, diarrhea and malaria, ranked third and fourth places respectively in the leading causes of death among children under five years old, accounting for 17 and 8 percent respectively of all deaths amongst children.

Inadequate facilities that are often not separated by sex in schools prevent girls from attending school around the world (WHO, 2005).



**Learn More: Do you know where your water comes from and where it goes? Where the natural boundaries of your watershed are? Contact your local environmental agency and ask them for more information on the source of your tap water. See if you can plot your watershed on a map of your town.**