



**DFID** Department for  
International  
Development

1 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HE

*From the Secretary of State*

Andy Reed MP  
House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

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

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*D Andy*

Thank you for your letter of 17 January, (ref. watercampaign/ben/lc) enclosing one from your constituent, asking what action the Government is taking to support public solutions to the global water crisis.

The Government recognises that access to water is a human right and supports the call in the recently published UN Human Development Report for governments to make water a human right – and mean it.

As the UN report acknowledges, the public sector continues to play the leading role in providing water and sanitation throughout the world. Most of DFID's aid (about 95 per cent of our bilateral country programme spending on water and sanitation) supports the delivery of water and sanitation through governments, not-for-profit or humanitarian agencies.

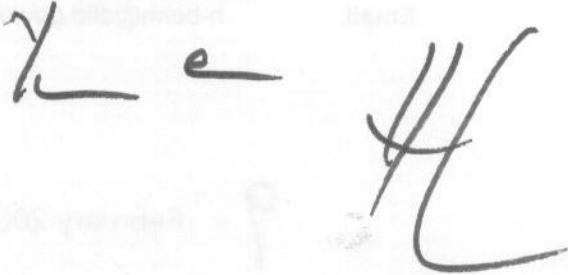
We do not push private participation on our partner governments. Our policy is to respond - where we can - to requests by developing country governments to help improve the delivery of their water utilities, whether by public or private provision.

The Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility (PPIAF) is a fund supported by a number of donors that provides advice to developing countries in response to requests for help. PPIAF has provided support to micro-credit banks in Kenya which will enable 60,000 people to get clean water. It has also supported the Ghana Community Water and Sanitation Agency with regulatory and legal reform to improve water services in small towns. More information can be found on the PPIAF website at: [www.ppiaf.org](http://www.ppiaf.org)

The idea of encouraging public-public partnerships to support public utilities is a good one and we are currently discussing a number of proposals with partners.

DFID's recent White Paper, *Eliminating world poverty – making governance work for the poor*, sets out how we will work with those countries most off-track to reach the Millennium Development Goal targets. DFID will double support for water and sanitation in Africa to £95 million a year by 2007/8 – and more than double funding again to £200 million a year by 2010/11.

I hope this is helpful.



HILARY BENN