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Water for the World™: Building on 5 years of partnership

Securing access to safe water and adequate sanitation is recognised as one of the world's most pressing challenges. About 1.8 billion people¹ depend on unsafe drinking water and 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation². This situation needs to be addressed with accelerated urgency, and is the reason why this challenge has been declared as part of core Millennium Development Goals defined by the United Nations (UN).

Half the hospital beds in developing countries are occupied by people suffering from diseases caused by poor water, sanitation and hygiene. In addition, people without access to water and sanitation are limited in their ability to lead lives in dignity and they are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty, reason why access to safe water and proper sanitation has been declared a Human Right. Moreover, the costs of treating water and sanitation related diseases drain national budgets. In Africa the economic loss due to lack of water and sanitation represents 5% of the continent's annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Meanwhile, investing in access to water and sanitation yields high economic returns. It is estimated that for every US Dollar invested in water and sanitation, USD 4 is delivered in economic returns through increased productivity³. And last but not least, the economic and social conditions have a negative impact on business development, as they impair productivity, cause sick days and restrict markets for products.

¹ Onda, K., LoBuglio, J., Bartram, J., *Global Access to Safe Water: Accounting for Water Quality and the Resulting Impact on MDG Progress*, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2012

² WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program 2012

³ Hutton, G., 2012. *Global costs and benefits of drinking-water supply and sanitation interventions to reach the MDG target and universal coverage*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. WHO/HSE/WSH/12.01. Available at washurl.net/emq8c7

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Business can and needs to play a major role in contributing to accelerating progress. In 2007, Borealis and Borouge, leading providers of innovative value-creating plastics solutions, launched Water for the World™, a programme dedicated to making a contribution to the global water challenge. Water for the World focuses on three areas, firstly improving access to water and sanitation for the poor and victims of natural disasters, secondly promoting sustainable water management practices to preserve water resources and finally raising awareness in communities and across the value chain.

During the past 5 years Borealis and Borouge have successfully implemented a wide range of projects in partnership with customers, local communities, non-government organisations (NGOs) and research institutes.

Improving access to water and sanitation

Together with local NGOs and pipe customers, Water for the World has supported projects in India, Vietnam, Nepal, China and Pakistan, providing direct access to water for about 300,000 people. In northern Pakistan, for example, new water supplies were brought to 8 villages in the Neelum Valley which had lost most of their infrastructure in the devastating floods of July 2010. High quality plastic pipes made from PE 100 material provided by Borouge and its local pipe producer Sun International now bring water down from springs in the mountains to the villages below.

Water for the World also supports x-runner, a social venture whose aim is to provide a sustainable sanitation solution for households that lack access to a piped water and sanitation infrastructure. The x-runner concept is based on a odor-free plastic toilet that does not need to be connected to a piped sewage system, combined with a pick-up and cleaning service for the human waste that is then recycled and turned into energy or fertilizer.

Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), is a partnership between the private sector, civil society and academia bringing together skills and expertise

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from all three sectors. Since its creation, WSUP has reached more than 1 million people in Africa and Bangladesh with water, sanitation and hygiene education. As board members, Borealis and Borouge provide technical expertise and strategic advice and support WSUP to obtain funding from major donors.

Promoting sustainable water management practices

At the present time 70% of the world's water resources are used for agricultural production and with food demand set to increase by 70% by 2050 without intervention there is a major threat to food and water security. Many irrigation systems are inefficient, with much of the valuable water never arriving at its intended destination. Water for the World joined a research initiative to evaluate possible water saving strategies in agriculture. In 2012, Borealis and Borouge launched Borstar Aquility™, a specific range of plastic materials for drip irrigation pipes that have a huge impact on water efficiency improvement and increase of crop yields – two crucial factors in addressing the global challenges of water shortage and rising food demand.

Another 20% of global water resources is consumed by industry. Assessing a company's water footprint together with its local impact puts a company in a better position to analyse and manage its water consumption and its effect on local environments and communities. Through Water for the World, Borealis completed the plastics industry's first water footprint assessment, in collaboration with the Royal Institute of Technology of Sweden, applying methodologies developed by the Water Footprint Network. Borealis also cooperated with European Water Stewardship Partners in the development of a Europe-wide water stewardship standard, and is now integrating this standard into its own management system. The companies' commitment to sustainability is reflected in a growing number of initiatives to minimise the Company's operational footprint and to address the impact of its products on society after their intended and valuable use.

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Much done, but much more to do

Since its launch in 2007, Water for the World has directly improved access to water for about a quarter million people and the number of people indirectly impacted is well over 1 million. The companies' participation in awareness and education programmes, involving employees, value-chain partners, neighbours, schools, and the general public, is an important means of sowing the seeds for future improvements.

"The uniqueness of Water for the World is that it is a truly integrated programme that works in cross-sector partnerships. We are engaged in social, environmental and business related water challenge projects." says Dorothea Wiplinger, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Borealis. "The water challenge is complex and can only be addressed by collaboration, a fundamental element of Water for the World. None of our projects could have been realised without the engagement and cooperation of our partners."

"Our engagement through Water for the World has provided us with better market and consumer insights as well as helped us to better understand the challenges and connect with important stakeholders." says Mark Garrett, Borealis Chief Executive. "Water for the World directly helps thousands of people with no strings attached, but what makes it sustainable is that it helps us to identify societal needs and convert them into new business opportunities for the benefit of both business and society."

Wim Roels, CEO of Borouge's Marketing & Sales Company stated: "We are proud of our achievements during the past 5 years. However, there is still much to do. The United Nations has designated 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation, an excellent occasion to further build our partnership approach with Water for the World."

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Foto: (c) Borealis:
Vietnam: Patients of the Hanoi Children Hospital benefit from the new safe drinking water supply



Foto: (c) Borealis
India: Improving water infrastructure in Malakpur

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Borealis is a leading provider of innovative solutions in the fields of polyolefins, base chemicals and fertilizers. Borealis is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and operates in over 120 countries with around 5,300 employees worldwide, generating EUR 7.1 billion in sales revenue in 2011. The International Petroleum Investment Company (IPIC) of Abu Dhabi owns 64% of the company, the remaining 36% is owned by OMV, the leading energy group in the European growth belt. Borealis provides services and products to customers around the world in collaboration with **Borouge**, a joint venture with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).

Building on the unique Borstar[®] and Borlink[™] technologies and 50 years of experience in polyolefins, Borealis and Borouge support key industries including infrastructure, automotive and advanced packaging. The Borouge plant expansion in Abu Dhabi will be fully operational by mid-2014 with a total annual capacity of 4.5 million tonnes. After this Borealis and Borouge will have approximately 8 million tonnes of polyolefin capacity.

Borealis offers a wide range of base chemicals, including melamine, phenol, acetone, ethylene and propylene servicing a wide range of industries. Together with Borouge the two companies will produce approximately 6 million tonnes of Base Chemicals in 2014.

Borealis also creates real value for the agricultural industry with a large portfolio of fertilizers. The company distributes approximately 2.1 million tonnes per year.

Borealis and Borouge aim to proactively benefit society by taking on real societal challenges and offering real solutions. Both companies are committed to the principles of Responsible Care[®], an initiative to improve safety performance within the chemical industry, and contribute to solve the world's water and sanitation challenges through product innovation and their Water for the World[™] programme.

For more information visit:

www.borealisgroup.com
www.borouge.com
www.waterfortheworld.net

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