

# HUL's 'water body' to tackle scarcity

## To produce 'Water Report Analysis' in six months

**Our Bureau**

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Taking forward Unilever's 'Sustainable Living Plan', Hindustan Unilever Ltd announced on Monday the setting up of the 'India Water Body' (IWB) to address water scarcity in India. IWB is envisaged as a collaborative group involving multiple corporate houses, NGOs and the Government, and hopes to evolve a public-private partnership model to focus on the issue.

"Our goal is to get a multi-lateral partnership going, to create a replicable model that minimises the usage of water," stated Mr Nitin Paranjpe, MD and CEO, HUL.

The IWB will conduct a nation-wide study to assess the gap between demand and supply for water in India, informed Mr Gopal Vittal, ED, Home and Personal Care products, HUL. He added, "There is a huge opportunity for a fact-based and shared understanding of demand and supply. We hope to produce a water report in six months. We are working with a few partners to put this together."

HUL has a five-pronged approach to water conserva-



Mr Nitin Paranjpe, CEO and Managing Director, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, and Mr Gopal Vittal, Executive Director, Home and Personal Care Products, at the launch of the 'India Water Body' in Mumbai on Monday. — Shashi Ashiwal

tion: sustainable sourcing, reduction in water used in manufacturing, reduction in water needed for consumption of its products, rain water harvesting projects, and shaping the water debate in India.

The company is engaged in rain water harvesting and soil conservation projects in Khamgaon (Maharashtra), Silvassa (Dadar and Nagar Haveli), Puducherry and Gundar Basin (Tamil Nadu). HUL expects these projects to conserve 50 billion litres of water by 2015. Invited by the

Madhya Pradesh Government, it has also submitted a proposal for a new project in that State.

The IWB is an initiative under the Hindustan Unilever Vitality Foundation. While Rs 2 crore was spent on water-related projects last year, Rs 5 crore has been allotted for such projects this year, according to Mr Paranjpe. He added, "We have signed MoUs worth Rs 20 crore for projects so far and are committed to taking up more projects across the country as and when we find the oppor-

tunity and the right partners."

In seven water-scarce countries with large population — China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey and the US — Unilever studied its water footprint by water added to products and water used for consuming products. It estimates that less than 0.1 per cent is the water added to the product at the manufacturing stage, with water in the raw materials sourced and water used by consumers accounting for almost 50 per cent each.

By category, 38 per cent of the brand's water footprint is contributed by laundry, detergents and fabric conditioners; and 37 per cent by soaps, shower gel and skincare.

HUL claims to have reduced water consumption at its manufacturing units in India by 36 per cent (per tonne of production) between 2004 and 2010. On the product side, it introduced Surf Excel Quick Wash, a detergent that requires less water to use. Globally, its Comfort Single Rinse detergent is another product innovation designed to reduce water consumption during usage.