**Water Homework**

1. **Why is access to safe drinking water such an important element of development?**

Safe drinking water is water that is not contaminated and will not cause disease or illness of any kind. Fig. 12 shows that more developed regions have a higher percentage of people with access to safe drinking water (99-100%), while developing regions have a lower percentage of people with access to safe drinking water. Also, rural areas, which are often less developed than urban areas show a significantly low percentage of people with access to safe drinking water in developing regions, while the developed rural areas are nearly at 98% in 2005. This indicates a strong correlation between development and safe drinking water. Safe drinking water is the key to being healthy and therefore able to work or perform any type of skill.

1. **Why does access to safe drinking water vary so much between urban and rural areas in some parts of the world?**

Rural areas tend to be less developed in forms of infrastructure, technology and living standards and rather poor, while urban areas are usually more developed (also industrially) and richer people tend to live here. In many cases, rural populations are very spread out (as in Sub-Saharan Africa), which makes the establishing of advanced water systems more difficult. Areas like these therefore have longer ways to reach water sources and usually don’t have the financial possibilities to establish water filter systems. This explains the low percentage people with access to safe drinking water in rural areas (Sub-Saharan Africa around 40% in 2005). Urban populations are far denser and usually richer, so more effort is put into development of these areas, which comes with improved water systems and filters. Especially developing countries first develop the more densely populated urban areas, as the money spent reaches far more people and it is much easier to perform.

1. **Explain the major differences between world regions shown in Figure 12.**

Developed regions have a very high percentage of access to safe drinking water in 2005 in urban (around 99%) as well as rural (around 98%) areas. The countries of Commonwealth of Independent states have a nearly as high percentage as developed regions, of around 98% in urban and around 80% in rural areas in 2005, and are also above the world average (rural around 96% and urban around 79% in 2005). The developing countries are very unequal, but a pattern is that they are generally close or under the world’s average. Urban area percentages are very high and generally over around 90%, with an exception of Sub-Saharan Africa, which lies at around 80% in 2005. Rural areas have far lower percentages, all close to world average, except Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, which lie at around 40% and 35% in 2005.

Developed and Commonwealth of Independent States regions stayed relatively equal from 1990 to 2005 with only slight improvements. Developing regions also had only slight improvements in urban areas but rural areas experienced high improvements, with the only exception being Oceania, where the percentage of people with access to safe drinking water even decreased.