

# SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT IN CITIES: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE AND ACTION

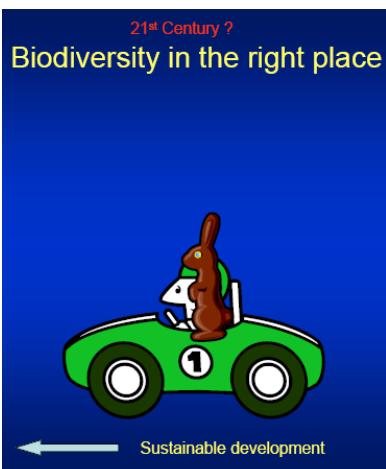
13-17 December 2010 • Zaragoza, Spain

## Conference Daily Thursday, 16 December 2010

### Political engagement

#### Building on yesterday's sessions

In yesterday's sessions, participants discussed case studies of stakeholder engagement using different tools and approaches. Several successful tools and approaches were highlighted. Key questions that were addressed were for example; how do specific tools and approaches serve for a more sustainable urban water management? And how do we specifically engage the marginalized groups?



*'We need to get the rabbit into the car. Biodiversity should be driving the car, rather than being the victim'*

Early in the morning, participants enjoyed a key note address by David Coates, Environmental Affairs Officer, Inland Waters at the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. He shared the outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP-10, held in Nagoya, Japan, in October of this year.

*Photo: slide 7 of the presentation by David Coates. The full presentation will be made available at [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/swm\\_cities\\_zaragoza\\_2010](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/swm_cities_zaragoza_2010)*

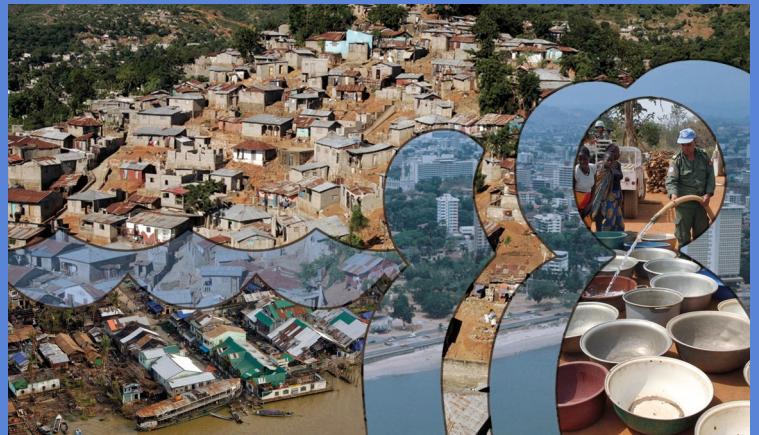
#### Accra water situation in focus

By Ama Kudom-Agyemang

According to global statistics "every second, the urban population grows by two people! 27% of the urban population in the developing world does not have piped water in its houses! 250 to 500 m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water leaks from supply systems in many mega cities each year!" these and many other statistics collated by the UN are applicable to Ghana.

Ghana's major cities like Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi, are experiencing rapid urbanisation coupled with unprecedented population growth. Over the past few years new and unplanned settlements have sprung up and residents have absolutely no access to piped water. They have resorted to digging wells, which often fail to yield water during the *harmattan* or dry season (December to February). The normal dry season in the northern part of the country is from October to February. The other option by which they access water, is buying water from water tanker operators and this is quite expensive.

What is interesting about the water situation in Accra in particular, is that old settlement areas or urban suburbs that used to enjoy regular and uninterrupted piped water supply are now also experiencing water shortages. It is now a regular feature to see people [Read more on page 2](#)



#### Engaging stakeholders: how to make it happen? Summary of lessons from the interview with Bertha Darteh and Alistair Sutherland

- A clear objective of what you want to achieve is needed
- Good connections and social capital are required to set up a multi stakeholder platform
- A key skill when facilitating a learning alliance is to be able to develop trust among the stakeholders. Creating a safe space where issues can be discussed.
- You need to be able to manage conflicts and get people to listen to each other
- Ensure that researchers are members of the learning alliances
- Meetings are a useful tool for planning purposes, ensure to have the right people are around the table.
- Multi stakeholder platform objectives versus project deliverables: if you are a research project, be clear about your project deliverables from the beginning.
- Key in ensuring vulnerable groups are listened to is a good stakeholder analysis
- Rather than impact indicators, the setting of process indicators are likely to be most useful for a short term (e.g. 3-5 yr) project).



#### About lessons learned...

By Cheikh Tidiane Fall, Senegal

This Conference is a good opportunity to learn for those who believe that without a common vision and a clear and shared strategy nothing great can be achieved in the crucial battle aiming to reduce the number of inhabitants who have no access to drinking water and adequate sanitation services.

The different ongoing experiences in various countries under the umbrella of SWITCH programs are relevant and I followed the presentations with a high interest. The reason: I come from Dakar (Senegal) where SWITCH is not implemented. One of the main lessons I learned here in Zaragoza is the necessity to move this way with the creation of a safe platform to make the stakeholders aware of the challenges related to water and sanitation and engage them to improve a situation which is unacceptable, particularly where there are no pro poor programs.

United we are stronger and more efficient. The spirit of the learning alliances come from that strong belief and I hope that all the participants will, in some days, get back home, with many useful tools in their bags. Thus, they will be more capable to play a key role in the processes for a better management of water in the cities. After experiences sharing in the rooms of the Seminario, it will be time for actions on the field with real change in the way of thinking and doing things. As some one said, more than in an evolution, we must be actors of a revolution.

We need to 'work with conflicts as opportunities. We often think about social inclusion as the poor being without services, but also polluters in the informal sector are excluded and need support'

Mónica Sanz, UNESCO-IHE, Bogotá, Colombia. Photo by Dalia Abdel-Salam

The transitioning framework produced by SWITCH seems an interesting tool that we can use to help promote innovations (such as sustainability) in urban water management. It wasn't available at the start of the project, but now based on that experience, can be used by other cities to better plan their transition process.

# What's for today?

## Today's key questions

- How can local politicians make a change towards more sustainable urban water management?
- How to effectively address issues of social inclusion in urban water management?
- How to support progress towards international commitments including the Millennium Development Goals?
- How to resolve conflicts between stakeholders?
- Which tools help politicians to make better informed decisions?
- Which political approaches promote effective change?
- What are the transferable lessons?
- What are the barriers to change and how are those barriers to overcome?
- What are the most important requirements for successful cooperation or collaboration?

## Talk show Target 2015: water to fight poverty

### Are we going to realise the MDG targets on water?

*Open session in Spanish* tonight at 18:30 hrs at the University of Zaragoza "Paraninfo", Plaza Basilio Paraíso, 4, Zaragoza city centre.

The United Nations International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015 coincides with the set time frame for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to reduce by half the proportion of people living without access to drinking water and basic sanitation. Water is essential for enjoying a good health and quality of life, and crucial for improving the future perspectives of people living in the world's poorest countries. These aspects have been discussed in the most recent Millennium Summit, where the world's governments reinforced their commitment to fight poverty and agreed on the actions that need to be undertaken. Participants in this Summit and authoritative international experts will discuss the current situation and progress in developing countries.

Interviewer: Maria Dolores Campos (Counselor, Municipality of Zaragoza)

Interviewees: Alberto Tejada-Guibert (Director a.i. Division of Water Sciences, IHP-UNESCO), Antonio Embid (Professor of Water Law, University of Zaragoza), Helena Caballero (Advisor on Water and Environment, UNO-IDfa, UNW-DPAC).



Alberto Galvis (Cali, Colombia) one of the panelists of yesterday's debate, in the 'Paraninfo' in Zaragoza city centre, on integrated solutions for the cities of the future.

Reports of the debates are being published on the conference blog: <http://sustainableurbanwatermanagement.wordpress.com/>

### Follow up from page 1: Accra water situation in focus

in old residential areas like Dzoworlu, Ablempke, Pig Farm and even in the plush areas like Roman Ridge and East Legon, carrying various containers in search of water.

In Accra, water is supplied from two main sources to residents and other users grouped into Accra West and Accra East. Accra West is supplied with water from the Weija Treatment Plant on the Weija Dam, on the river Densu, which forms part of the Densu River Basin. The area is also one of the six coastal wetlands of international importance in the country. Accra East is supplied with water from the Kpong Treatment Plant and Dam built on one of the tributaries of the River Volta. The Ghana Water Company is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that the water needs of the over two million population of Accra and industry are met. As the country's main water operator, one of its senior officials is here in Zaragoza participating in the on-going conference.

I asked Mr. Senyo Amengor why the situation of water

access for Accra residents has deteriorated over the years. He explained that water facilities including the treatment plant are facing severe pressure in Accra because of haphazard development and inadequate infrastructure. This, he said has resulted in a shortfall in supply of water to residents.

Mr. Amengor said to remedy the situation; plans are underway to expand the Kpong Water Treatment Plant, while existing infrastructure is being extended to new settlement areas. Additionally, old and obsolete equipment are being replaced under the World Bank funded Urban Water Infrastructure Improvement Project.

I also talked to Daniel Amartey Mensah, Chief Executive of the Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly of Teshie-Nungua in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, who is here at the conference. I asked him how the Assembly is helping to meet the water needs of the people. He said his area is basically served from the Kpong treatment plant, which pumps water using the pressure system. Mr. Mensah explained, "we are at the end of the receiving line, and we are always the last to get the supply, so whenever, the pressure is low, which is very

often, we do not get water." He says his participation in the Learning Alliance has given him insight about the importance of rain harvesting in meeting the water needs of urban dwellers. Therefore, the Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Assembly has adopted an innovative scheme to motivate people in the area to engage in proper rain harvesting. "Anybody in the area who incorporates rain harvesting in his or her building plan will get a 15% reduction in the cost of acquiring the building permit," he stated.

## Programme, Thursday 16 December

08.15-09.00	Keynote address: <i>Running out of water: prospects for cities?</i> By Peter Rogers, Professor Harvard University
09.00-09.30	Welcome and highlights of the Conference
09.30-10.30	<i>Strong and successful political engagement in implementing Sustainable Water Management in Cities.</i> Interview session
10.30-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-12.30	<i>Political opportunities and challenges in implementing Sustainable Water Management in Cities.</i> Parallel sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roundtable with mayors and political representatives</li><li>• Stakeholders views (group discussions)</li></ul>
12.30-13.30	<i>Integrating views of political representatives and stakeholders on the political challenges in implementing SWM in cities.</i> Dialogue session <i>Closing address</i> , by Eva Almunia, counsellor of Presidency, Government of Aragon
13.30-15.00	Lunch and informal discussions
16.00-18.00	Side events <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Water and development in Asia: challenges and good practices for Urban Water Management in Asian Cities</i></li><li>• <i>Bringing nature back into cities for water</i></li></ul>
18.30-20:00	<i>Talk show. Target 2015: water to fight poverty.</i> Open session. Debate series

## In today's session we will look at

- the challenge to make the change to SWM in cities starting from different starting places.
- political opportunities and challenges to sustainable water management in cities.
- recommendations on overcoming challenges based upon specific experiences.
- examples of successful political engagement in specific cases of change practices.
- key messages of the UN Water statement on SWM in cities for the World Water Day 2011.
- how water management may be appropriately included in wider issues of urban management.
- how local authorities and other key stakeholders have effectively addressed issues of social inclusion in urban water management.



Mr. Senyo Amengor, Chief Operations Officer, Ghana Water Company. Photo by Ama Kudom-Agyemang

## Barbara Anton on sustainable water management

*Why is the theme SWM in cities important for ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability?*

ICLEI is all about working with and for cities to advance the management of natural resources in the direction of more sustainability. So urban water management is obviously one of our core themes.



*How could cooperation between local authorities and other local stake-holders in urban water management be advanced? What is the main challenge?*

People – or organizations – only start cooperating with each other if they are convinced that this will lead to better outcomes and that this is feasible with a reasonable effort and at an acceptable cost. It is crucial to convince politicians and other relevant decision-makers about the benefits of sharing responsibilities in urban water management and to make clear that this can help them fulfill their political or organizational man-dates and missions at the same time. It is essential to provide sound evidence that this is practically doable and to demonstrate that innovative strategies, methodologies and tools have already revealed their potential in other places with the aim to elicit their attention and interest in replication. But where will such messages fall on fertile ground? What is necessary to mobilize the critical mass of political will? Well, both poor and good water management are eventually all man-made. So it needs a nucleus of well-positioned people who are open-minded, able to think outside the box and ready to take risks. Of course, sustainability as such also has to be on their agenda. These people should have the necessary authority to convene a larger group of stakeholders to conduct the necessary negotiations concerning their stakes and claims in water. So it's those visionaries and forerunners who can get the ball rolling – and who should be in focus when trying to find champions for up-scaling innovation in water and sustainability.

*Could you provide an example of local authorities effectively addressing issues of social inclusion in urban water management?*

Starting in 2003, the water and sanitation programme of eThekweni in South Africa - the Metropolitan Municipality including the city of Durban – has been quite exemplary when it comes to working together with disadvantaged communities. Under the apartheid regime, poorer communities in urban areas were hardly served with any water and sanitation facilities. After the political changes, eThekweni became the first local government in South Africa providing a bulk supply of 200 liters of water to each household within the city for free. To make this happen, Project Steering Committees were formed for each project that provided a platform for community participation. The representation of women was particularly highly in these Committees, because the Municipality made a point of regarding them as essential to the success of the programme. Facilitators were drawn from the community and trained in the delivery of health and hygiene education. In terms of construction work, the employment policy targeted the most needy within the community, in particular – again - women, but also young, unemployed or disabled people.

Later, in the 2006, the Council of eThekweni Municipality adopted an overall Public Participation Policy. It clearly states that youth, women, aged and disabled people are to be empowered to participate effectively in the social and economic development of their lives.

*How could social inclusion in SWM in cities be improved at the local level?*

As the example shows, social inclusion can best become effective and be scaled up if it is steered at highest political levels. Once an official policy, it is difficult to ignore and turn away from expectations raised. Also disadvantaged people are voters; so a lot to gain for sharpening one's profile as a politician. After all it's pretty much

a matter of political will. Inclusion is by no means easy considering the differences in local languages, in education and culture and maybe also because of a lack of trust in both directions. But once those in charge of urban water management are positive about water serving all strands of society they will also find ways and means to overcome such barriers. Providing training for the disadvantaged to enable them to truly participate is a key for achieving fairness in participation.

Capacity-building should also support disadvantaged groups in properly organizing themselves, formulating their interests clearly and selecting the right representatives to advocate for their interests. So basically everything that is important for any other stakeholder group, too – and that makes local governance more efficient.

*What inputs for the Istanbul Consensus would you like to achieve at this Conference?*

Following the political process around the Istanbul Water Consensus, approx. 700 cities have signed up to make a commitment at global level for more sustainable and participatory water management at local level. Having made such an explicit commitment puts the politicians of these cities into the lime light. If no visible progress is made, stakeholders might challenge their politicians and urge them for action. And they will lose or gain political credit depending on how they react. So I see the link of the Istanbul Water Consensus to this conference rather in providing an example for a mechanism on how to strengthen political accountability for better water management. And in the best of all worlds, there would be more mayors at the end of the event who are ready to sign up for it.

[Barbara Anton is the Project Coordinator Water at ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability, European Secretariat](#)



*How do we make sure we institutionalize the process and make it part of the local government operations?* Pireh Otieno, UN-Habitat

### Critical voices

*'Today I was expecting something deeper..I was looking for detailed information on how to go about multiple stakeholder platforms. I was looking for good practices along the line'*

Kanisiua Dursin, Editor, Sinar Harapan Daily

*'There hasn't been a chance for other people who have done some of this too, to bring some of their experiences in..'*

Patricia Bakir, Independent consultant

### Impressions of the conference

Manuel Calderón Chévez, Mayor of the city of León, Nicaragua, shared his impressions on the Conference. 'The experience of the city of Zaragoza is very interesting. It can help us a lot in Nicaragua. It touches upon a lot of aspects, aspects of water storage, water distribution and also water demand'.

The Mayor is very much looking forward to the sessions of today, Thursday 16 December, with the other mayors and political representatives 'in which we will be able to learn how problems and opportunities are managed in the different places'.

Manuel Calderón he likes about the SWITCH approach the way diversity is dealt with at all levels. He said 'every persons head is a world on its own, and it is possible every persons head can come up with a solution'.

What the Mayor still would like to see back in the sessions is to hear how in SWITCH mechanisms have been set up to safeguard continuity of the initiatives.



Manuel Calderón Chévez, Mayor of the city of León, Nicaragua together with Yadira Campbell

## Key messages for World Water Day 2011

Participants of this Conference have been giving their view on what they consider the main key messages for World Water Day 2011. World Water Day 2011 (WWD 2011) on 22 March 2011, will be dedicated to the theme of Water and Urbanisation. This day is an important opportunity to encourage action by governments, cities, towns, public and private organizations, multilaterals, banks, donors, philanthropic initiatives, communities and individuals around the world to actively engage in addressing challenges of water and waste in the urban environment.

This meeting is an intermediary step in the preparation for World Water Day 2011. Today's sessions will be used to jointly elaborate on the messages.

- Promoting public participation, supporting transitioning towards Sustainable Water Management (SWM), using tools for rapid urban water assessment, engaging grassroots and neighborhood level organisations, are all important tools for stakeholder engagement towards SWM in cities." – **Sônia Knauer**, Belo Horizonte City Council.
- Learning Alliances facilitate change by building bridges between experts, implementers and policy makers." - **John Butterworth**, Senior Programme Officer, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre.
- It is no longer possible for a single organisation to be effective on its own. The better we understand things through continuous scientific progress and the more societal and technological options we have to take advantage of what we know, the more complex the web of human and institutional interaction. Ignoring this complexity is not an option – building good relationships and improving our communication patterns at all levels will be a key for human welfare in the future." - **Barbara Anton**, ICLEI European Secretariat.

## A cup of coffee with...Kala Vairavamoorthy

Scientific Director SWITCH

*What solutions or approaches in relation to these challenges would you like to highlight at this Conference?*

There is a need for a fundamental change in the way we manage urban water based on a foundation of research, technology and innovation. In particular I hope that the conference can stress the importance of conducting research within an alliance of practitioners, researchers and policy makers. This can lead to greater impact and more potential for taking innovations to scale. In addition by working with stakeholders can create the imperative for change that is essential for a sustainable urban water management. What makes it difficult is that in many places we have well functioning but unsustainable systems, where the decline is very slow. The imperative for change requires a change in the mindset of governments, financiers, consulting firms and the general public. Finally multi-stakeholder alliances will ultimately guide and support the implementation of research by taking account of local problems and needs. We should stop talking and start to create the change on the ground.

*Thinking about the City of the Future, what main change in urban water management would you like to see being realised? Why is this change achievable (or not), taking into account the current trends?*

To ensure a more sustainable future there is a need for a paradigm shift. More is needed than simply improving the performance and efficiency of the component parts – change is needed at a system-wide level as well. This paradigm shift should be based on innovation and cities like Zaragoza should become 'cities of the future', always looking ahead, always willing to challenge conventional wisdom and always seeking to break new ground. To achieve sustainable development, we need to recognize the high-level relationships among water resources, energy, and land use in an urbanizing world.

We need to reconsider the way water is used and reused. The challenge of servicing more people with scarcer water resources requires us to critically look into water use practices and to develop strategies that maximize the benefits of water services while minimizing the usage of both water and energy. SWITCH has developed innovations that promote increased recycling of wastewater that will ensure that water can be used multiple times, by cascading it from higher to lower-quality needs.

Energy efficient treatment options are being developed around natural systems, capable of removing multiple contaminants in a single system. SWITCH has developed water saving concepts and technologies that are intelligent and self-regulating based on feedback control systems, underpinned by decision support systems.

Finally, we need to learn how to design and manage systems in an uncertain world, since most external pressures, such as climate change, show a huge degree of uncertainties associated with them. These uncertainties cause difficulties when developing urban water management strategies. SWITCH has developed a framework that can generate flexible urban water systems that are robust and adaptable to new, different, or changing requirements. For example, SWITCH has investigated the potential of small-scale decentralized stormwater measures such as green roofs. These decentralised options provide internal degrees of freedom, allowing many different combinations of stormwater options to be considered so that their flexibility can be optimized over time.

*This is a summarized version the interview. The complete interview, will be made available at the conference blog: <http://sustainableurbanwatermanagement.wordpress.com/>*



**Conference daily** You can send your contributions to this conference daily to  
Petra Brussee: [brussee@irc.nl](mailto:brussee@irc.nl)

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