

**Summary Report on UNW-DPAC Communication and Advocacy activities during the meetings of the WHO International Small Community Water Supply Management (SCWSM) network and of the WHO International Network of Drinking-Water Regulators (RegNet).**

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Zaragoza, Spain

Date: 4-8 June 2012.

From the 4-8<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 UNW-DPAC hosted meetings of a WHO Technical Working Group on a Risk Assessment Tool for Small Community Water Supplies, of the WHO International Small Community Water Supply Management (SCWSM) network and of the WHO International Network of Drinking-Water Regulators (RegNet). Issues addressed included risk assessment tools and questions related to the implementation of water safety plans, especially among small community water operators in both developing and developed countries.

UNW-DPAC organized an open *“Dialogue on Water Safety Plans”*, a *“consultation on water operators’ communications best practice guide”* and a *“brainstorming session for the preparation of a plan for advocacy and communication for water regulators”*. During the week there was a press conference for the launching of the MDGs campaign coordinator for Europe and LAC, *“Y tu sin enterarte”* to communicate positive progress on the achievements of the MDGs, including water. All these events had ample media coverage.

**4<sup>th</sup> of June 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Water Dialogue: “Water Safety Plans”**

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As part of the UN Water Dialogue Series on the International Agenda in water, UNW-DPAC organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> dialogue addressing the issue of Water Safety Plans (WSPs). Robert Bos (Coordinator, Water, Sanitation and Health in the World Health Organisation), engaged in a dialogue with Margarita Palau (Head of Water and Health in the Ministry of Health); and Javier Ruza (Deputy Director for Water Public Domain-Chief Water Regulator in Spain) on the process of preparation and the challenges for the implementation of water safety plans. Xavier de Pedro (President of the Ebro River Basin Authority) made an introductory presentation and provided insights and J. Maestu (Coordinator of UNW-DPAC) facilitated the session.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality recommends the adoption and implementation of Water Safety Plans as the most effective means to consistently ensure the safety of drinking-water supplies at all levels, from catchment to consumer. This integrated tool requires engaging all stakeholders, from health and environment authorities to water operators and consumers. Issues debated during the dialogue included the difficulty of coordinating across many administrations in charge of different aspects in the drinking water supply chain; the importance of water quality information systems to track implementation and take public action (an example being the SINAC); the need to consider the 5 golden rules: 1) protection of the water sources so as to implement drinking water solutions that require minimum treatment - and hence lower costs- 2) reduce abstraction needs through demand management; 3) coordinate under one organization the supply chain, 4) bring together small water and sanitation operators systems to a minimum viable size, 5) tariffs need to cover costs. Other issues discussed include the need for capacity development as alternative for new infrastructures that bring water from cleaner sources; thresholds of population for wastewater treatment; creating incentives to those living upstream for protecting the water sources (including PES systems of different types); and the potential for treatment systems generating pollution.

Full Report (in Spanish) forthcoming



Left to right: Mr Robert Bos, Ms Margarita Palau, Mr Xavier de Pedro, Mr Javier Ruza and Ms Josefina Maestu

### **5<sup>th</sup> of June Consultation on Water Operator’s Communication Best Practice Guide: Water Smart Campaign**

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UNW-DPAC has presented for consultation, to the small water supplier’s network, a draft of the Communication Guide for Water Operators. This Guide has been prepared by the Champions of the Water Smart Campaign (lead by the Champion in the European Region: The Canal de Isabel II) and aims to present practical information on how to prepare communication and information campaigns with the objective of improving hygiene practices, reduce the impact of water borne diseases and improve efficiency of water use. The Water Smart campaign considers that as providers of basic services for the majority of the world’s population, water operators have great power to communicate, show by example, and inspire their customers about the urgent need to act together to achieve common environmental and development goals.

The decision to launch the Water Smart Campaign stems from concerns about the need to meet internationally agreed goals on water resources management and on basic water and sanitation services. Water operators are key partners in this. The campaign involves them in a series of awareness raising activities on the urgency to act on specific water issues, encouraging them to act as amplifiers of public efforts. It is essential to improve access to safe water supply and basic sanitation, reconciling human needs with the protection of the water environment. The Water Smart Campaign is coordinated by UNW-DPAC in partnerships with the GWOPA.

The objective of the consultation was to get feedback on the main types of issues to be addressed, the structure and contents of the Guidance and to obtain information from water operators on cases of good practice that could be incorporated into the Guide. Participants in the small water operators network meeting provided feedback that including the need to coordinate and link with specific campaigns such as “hand washing Day”, 5 year drive “end open defecation campaign”. Participants highlighted the Malé Water and Sewerage Company (Maldivas) campaign for rational and efficient

water use and the need to cooperate with institutions such as the IRC on the development of the campaign.

Additional comments included:

#### Safe water and health

- The need to have campaigns aimed at exceptional circumstances- including deteriorating water quality and health hazards (such as in Lake Constanze). The companies were struggling. It is important to have information campaigns ready to warn the population to get prepared and make provisions for this.
- For emergencies operators have used “door hangers” warning the population when water is not safe to drink.
- Who provides hygiene education: The government or the water operator?. There may be a combination. In the case of educational campaigns for children there are books and games on water and health and hygienic behavior as well as for improving their understanding on the water cycle. Some are produced by governments and water operators use them for their consumers.
- Communication campaigns may be designed to promote people drinking tap water and inform them that, water may taste differently in different places, but it is safe to drink.
- When campaigning/informing on risk on of water quality issues there may be a cost because we can lose the confidence and we will need to rebuild it. It is important to have something positive to communicate.

#### Water saving

- There is a difficulty in measuring how effective a communication and awareness rising campaign is. In the case of water quantity this may be monitored through reduced per capital consumption.
- There are issues related to the incentives for water operators to do campaigns to reduce water consumption. The key is to maintain level of income through increase prices per m<sup>3</sup> or by realizing cost savings: avoiding having to obtain supplies from more expensive sources during droughts, for example.
- For people to change behavior there may be two approaches: stick or carrot. It would be possible to increase prices or provide incentives. Another way is to provide information on how to identify appliances that will save water. Educating kids also work from the point of view of educating parents.
- In Australia there is a Water efficiency labeling scheme (indoor appliances) including a component to “Educate industry” (green plumbers programme). The Evaluation, of the Institution for Sustainable Futures in Sidney, reports on this, as a way to insure that consumers make educated choices.

See water smart campaign webpage: <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/watersmart.shtml>

## 6<sup>th</sup> of June Press Conference for Launching of the MDGs Campaign “y Tu sin enterarte”

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On the 6th of June of 2012 the MDGs coordinator for LAC and Europe launched the “Y tu sin enterarte Campaign”. The campaign emphasizes the progress in the achievement of the MDGs and the need to recognize the efforts of international action. The campaign that has been designed and produced through voluntary contributions. It uses a combination of posters in the street and main squares and new media. It invites social media users to donate their facebook profile to pass on the good news. The campaign was presented in a Press Conference with wide coverage in national news at prime time. UNW-DPAC participates in the Campaign



as part of the joint local visibility activities of all UN agencies in Spain. The achievements in access to basic drinking water supply services was emphasized by J Maestu, including the low costs of achieving the MDGS (4600 million dollars p.a. as per recent publication of WHO) and the important benefits that multiply by 8 the costs. See campaign at: <http://ytusinenterarte.org/>

## 8<sup>th</sup> of June: Presentation on UN-Water and of UNW-DPAC programme and Brainstorming Session on advocacy and communication of Water Regulators

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Ms Josefina Maestu (UNW-DPAC) and Robert Bos (WHO) presented the objectives and organization of UN-Water, including the three programmes and the flagship reports. They also presented the forthcoming activities of UN-Water in Rio+20. Ms Ulrike Kelm and Ms Josefina Maestu presented a discussion document to support the network with ideas for communication and advocacy of regulation of water quality. The discussion opener included an analysis of objectives of communication, main messages



(positive and negative); audiences for communication and main tools for communication. During the debate the regulators emphasized their interest to focus on the consumers/citizens as their main audience but also governments and parliamentarians. Participants also emphasized the importance of communication to educate and empower people (inform the of their rights). There may be differences if the communication is implemented by the service provider or the regulator. There is a question of credibility and trust in relation to the type of information being provided. The participants discussed a number of options to follow up including sharing the existing ideas from the small water suppliers communication strategy, the preparation of a 1 or 2 pager with key messages; the implementation of a perceptions analysis as *“the message is not what you say but what others understand”*

Full report available on request

## **Media coverage**

Robert Bos, Coordinator of WHO's Water, Sanitation and Health Unit and the Coordinator of DPAC were interviewed by TV and national radio, press agencies and newspapers. There has been **45 news** in the written media covering the events and emphasizing the importance of water safety, the progress in access to basic water and sanitation services, the costs and benefits of achieving the MDGs and Universal access both for LIC and HICs.



Photos: Mr Robert Bos attending the Media

Media clipping and photos available on request

### **Annex: Information on WHO networks meetings**

- 4-5 June 2012: Risk Assessment Tool for Small Community Water Supplies Working Group Meeting. The goal of the International Small Community Water Supply Management (SCWSM) Network is to support the mainstreaming and improved management of small community water supplies in collaboration with stakeholders at all levels to achieve universal, sustainable access to safe drinking water. The SCWSM has recommended and commissioned the development of a Risk Assessment Tool for small community water supplies. During this meeting, the working group reviewed and provided comments and suggestions to the work done to date to ensure that the risk assessment tool is complete and includes issues related to the risk assessment and risk management process.

- 5-7 June 2012: 6th meeting of the International Small Community Water Supply Management Network. During this meeting, the network reviewed and updated its work programme, made recommendations for technical documents and tools, and served as a platform for the exchange of information between network members.

- 7-8 June 2012: The International Network of Drinking-Water Regulators (RegNet). The International Network of Drinking-Water Regulators (RegNet) was established in response to requests from WHO Member States to share and discuss strategies to address water-regulation issues in an international forum. The goal of RegNet is to increase, by 2015, WHO Member States' awareness of the primary importance of ensuring that preventing waterborne disease and protecting and promoting public health, as it relates to drinking water, is reflected in their regulatory frameworks. During this meeting, the network discussed issues related to its work programme including issues related to the WHO Lexicon, progress on the development of the risk assessment tool, and updates on case study development and on the publishing of Valuing Water, Valuing Livelihoods among others.