

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

13-17 December 2010 • Zaragoza, Spain

Conference Daily

Tuesday, 14 December 2010



Stakeholder engagement: city experiences



Welcome to Zaragoza

The Zaragoza City Council, the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication, the SWITCH consortium and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), want to give a warm welcome to all participants joining the five day conference 'Sustainable Water Management in Cities: Engaging stakeholders for effective change and action'.

This global meeting brings together experts, local government officials, media specialists, key water operators and political representatives of cities and stakeholder groups, to discuss the issues and propose practical ways to move forward the international agenda and share solutions for engaging stakeholders to better contribute to the sustainable management of water in cities. This event is also an intermediary step in the preparation for World Water Day 2010, which focuses on the issue of urban water management.

The organizers look forward to meet you and to your active participation to make this Conference a great success.

'Life is not possible without water'

Lessons from yesterday's Water Tour, based on an article by Aleksandra Hac, Journalist, Gazeta Wyborcza, Lodz, Poland

Throughout centuries Zaragoza fought with the river. 'River sides were practically the city dump, with no public spaces along it. We forgot about Ebro and built walls to defend ourselves from it. Though an utopia remained on everybodies mind: that of people enjoying the river, spending time and having fun on its sides. The Expo helped making that dream come true' said Prof. Fransisco Pellicer Corellano, Deputy Manager of Operations Department of Expo2008, during the Water Tour that was offered to the Conference Participants by the Zaragoza City Council.

The municipality along with the regional and national government prepared a project that led to a situation in which Zaragoza embraced Ebro. Key was to create urban and landscape projects changing the river sides. Getting rid of places full of garbage, eroded land with basically no grass, trees and plants. Brick walls were turned into gardens with pedestrian lanes. Landscape elements and infrastructure that kids can use safely even when the water level gets high. The dirty dessert on the sides of Ebro turned green. Zaragoza created a gateway to the river that would pull the nature inside the city. Within few years a big park, botanic garden, and public spaces were built. All designed in a way that it could be flooded when the river rises.

'Citizens participation is a very symbolic aspect of the water and the most important legacy of the Expo' says. Prof. Corellano. Zaragoza was looking for 15.000 volunteers for the exhibition. 50.000 took part.

During the tour participants also visited the Water Treatment Plant. A dec

'It's all about sharing'

Expectations about the conference

"...sharing of experiences, particularly of success stories." – Peter Rogers, Professor Environmental Engineering and City and Regional Planning, Harvard University.

"...to share the methodology and knowledge I developed on a systematic approach to social inclusion to marginalized communities, to make new contacts related to water issues in the international arena and to participate on the World Water Day." – Monica Sanz, UNESCO-IHE.

"...very high, I believe that it is an important opportunity to share thoughts and programmes of the United Nations with the citizens and to bring the reality of the problems as well as the good practices closer." – Javier Celma, Director of the Environmental and Sustainability Agency, Zaragoza City Council.

"...to have an interesting engagement and dialogue with a key group of stakeholders that are, or potentially are, involved directly with on the ground activities relating to water." – David Coates, Programme Officer Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

"...to learn from the experiences of how different cities are coping with the challenges to achieve sustainable water management and to realise the Millennium Development Goals." – Alberto Galvis, Professor at the Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia.

"...I think the conference is a good opportunity to sharing experiences and also to learn from others. We would like to interact, share and promote ideas and contribute to the World Water Day 2011 in Accra." – Bertha Darteh, SWITCH Accra Learning Alliance Facilitator.



Photos Water Tour: Daniel Marcos

ade ago Zaragoza was using the water from Ebro. Nowadays it's taken from the river Yesa in the Pyrenees. Before the water is distributed it's being purified with filters, active carbon, in settling tanks and disinfected.

Within the last 12 years Zaragoza spent almost 100 million Euro on improving their water management, most of the money was spent on restoration and improvement of the network. Not only was the infrastructure renewed but also people's attitude towards water consumption changed. In 2009 a person in Zaragoza was using 228 litres of water per day compared to the 507 litres back at 1979 and 396 at 1990.

The water is not only treated for drinking but also before it's dumped to Ebro. It's what they call an Integral Water Cycle – controlling it from the moment of taking from the river till putting it back. And that is where the tour ended, at the Waste Water Treatment Plant just outside Zaragoza.

'One fifth of the world population has no access to water, people have to work for hours to find it. It is our responsibility to use it in a rational and sustainable way. Life is impossible without water' said Lola Campos from the Zaragoza's Environmental Department.

What's for today?

"Solutions that are generated locally with stakeholders are more likely to lead to appropriate actions, to promote flexible and adaptive working practices, and to foster and strengthen the development capacity of local organizations and communities"

Today's key questions

- What is sustainable urban water management? How far are we away from it?
- What are the main challenges related to sustainable urban water management?
- What makes multi-stakeholder processes interesting and effective?
- What are the challenges, benefits and opportunities of working with the multi-stakeholder approach?
- How to engage the wide variety of stakeholders involved in urban water management?
- How do the challenges differ between cities and how can we learn from each other?

In today's session we will look at

- the concepts of Learning Alliances, stakeholder engagement and social inclusion
- city experiences on water management in order to identify challenges and solutions
- experiences on stakeholder engagement in urban water management
- the need to do research, demonstration activities, communication, networking and learning

A cup of coffee with...John Butterworth



Senior Programme Officer at IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

What are your expectations of the Conference?

That a wide range of different types of stakeholders from a number of cities will share best practices in order to improve stakeholder engagement in urban water management. We hope that cities will be encouraged and inspired to enhance stakeholder engagement and to improve sustainable water management (SWM) in cities.

How does the conference contribute to improving sustainable water management (SWM) in the world's cities?

It promotes learning about best practices. Many cities are facing similar challenges. At this Conference, cities learn from each other's challenges and they share experiences on tools, approaches and solutions. Of course I hope that this learning process does not stop after the Conference and that cities proceed to share experiences. What will happen after the Conference, of course largely depends on the cities involved. World Water Day (WWD) 2011 will be an important next step in the process of improving SWM in cities. The Conference provides a good opportunity to get inspired and share ideas on the WWD 2011. SWITCH is committed to several official WWD 2011 activities and is prepared to support city initiatives on other WWD 2011 activities.

What do you think is the biggest challenge in relation to urban SWM?

Firstly, how to achieve cooperation between different kinds of expertise within the urban water sector and, secondly, how to link the technological solutions to financial aspects and to political opportunities. Many good technological solutions are available, but we need to explore what is politically possible and how solutions can be financed. The media is essential in communicating and engaging the public and other key stakeholders. The Conference provides a great opportunity to face these current challenges, since technical, political and media delegates are exploring solutions together.

Learning Alliances as tools to strengthen cooperation within the urban water sector....

Programme, Tuesday 14 December

08.15-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.40	<i>A look at the ocean.</i> Opening session
09.45-10.15	<i>Streams to the sea.</i> Stakeholders in the city: integrating and strengthening sustainable water management
10.15-10.45	Coffee break
10.45-11.30	<i>Following the streams.</i> Presentation of experiences in cities
11.30-13.30	<i>Discussions of city experiences.</i> Small group discussions
13.30-15.00	Lunch and informal discussions
15.00-16.00	<i>Streaming to the sea.</i> Talk show on key lessons from city experiences of stakeholder engagement
16.00-17:00	Group discussions
18:30-20:00	<i>Cooperation in action: the Water Alliance.</i> Open session. Debate series

Cooperation in action: the Water Alliance

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

The Water Alliance presents its current and future activities. This Alliance, based in Zaragoza, aims to expand and improve access to drinking water and basic sanitation in Central America. It involves public institutions, water corporations, research centres, associations and foundations from Spain and Central America. The projects employed by the Alliance benefited and improved the access to water supply or sanitation of around 100.000 people in Central America.

Introduction: UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015

Panel: M^a Jesús Cajal (Water Alliance); Manuel Calderón Chévez, (Mayor of León, Nicaragua); César Samperio Blanco (AMVISA, Vitoria); Javier Rodríguez Melón (Social Participation, Municipality of Zaragoza)

As most problems in urban water management involve more than one actor, solutions require coordination. In many cities, the connections between stakeholders are not strong enough. SWITCH aims to strengthen these connections and improve coordination via Learning Alliances. In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, for example, Learning Alliances between stakeholders were created at different levels. This led to the creation of a wide array of policy options and to the critical assessment of technological solutions on their social impacts. Concrete results of this multiple stakeholder approach were for example an ecological river restoration project, and the establishment of several demonstrations in parks, community gardens and schools.

How to enhance social inclusion and public participation in urban water management?

An essential tool is stakeholder analysis. This tool examines which stakeholders are involved in the process and why certain stakeholders are excluded. One SWITCH example of social inclusion is the pollution reduction project in Bogota, Colombia. Almost 100 household-level tanneries represent a serious pollution threat near the source of the Rio Bogota upstream of the city. Despite initial hesitation by sceptics, these small-scale companies are now working together with other stakeholders to reduce pollution via low-cost technologies.

So tell us John, what coffee do you actually prefer?

Definitely an espresso for me!