

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

13-17 December 2010 • Zaragoza, Spain

Conference Daily  
Friday, 17 December 2010



## Media engagement

### Building on yesterday's sessions

In yesterday's sessions the participants discussed the political opportunities and challenges to sustainable water management in cities. Recommendations on ways of overcoming challenges based upon specific experiences were shared. The specific questions of how decisions should be taken and the constraints on those decisions were addressed. Further-more, it was analysed how local authorities and other key stakeholders have effectively addressed issues of social inclusion in urban water management.

### From Zaragoza to Cape Town

#### A roadmap for World Water Day 2011

In the morning Bert Diphorn, director of the Human Settlements Financing Division and Chief of the Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch of UN-HABITAT, presented the plans for World Water Day 2011 (WWD 2011). This event will be celebrated in Cape Town on 22 March 2011 and is focusing on Water and Urbanisation.

The event is an opportunity to get the water community and the urban community together to share and learn from each other, as their perspectives and approaches are sometimes quite different.

WWD 2011 is also very much a media event. There will be interviews live on stage, with high level participation including politicians and artists. On the 22nd of March Cape Town will be connected to the world. Live contact will be established with World Water Day events in Fiji, Bangkok, Manila, Zaragoza, Amsterdam, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro and Washington. Diphorn expects that the United States will take up a leadership role on the theme of water and urbanization.

Messages for the WWD 2011 event have been prepared over the last months in preparatory meetings during the Stockholm World Water Week and in Addis Ababa. During this Conference these messages will be shared, and finalized with the participants inputs.

Diphorn ended his presentation saying 'we want your ideas on the key messages', we want to know if you want to organize a side event and we want to welcome you in Cape Town on 22 March 2011.'

### 'Let us not put the elephant in a small room', says Ugandan Mayor

By Rebecca Munetsi, Namibia

'The situation now, is like we have put an elephant in a small room, which we should avoid by planning our towns fast and in advance without waiting for the growing numbers of people staying in cities today' said Stephen Kabuye, Entebbe City Mayor. The Mayor made the remarks, during an interview session on strong and successful political engagement in implementing sustainable water management in cities.

He explained that it is everyone's duty to be proactive and alleviate the unprecedented growth of cities, especially informal settlements which are the most urgent challenge in solving water and sanitation problems, in the developing world.

Speaking during the conference about the World Water Day 2011, the UN-Habitat Director Human Settlement and Financing Division, Bert Diphorn, reiterated the Mayor's call. He said, 'UN-Habitat [Read more on page 3](#)

## Summary of lessons on political engagement

- Positive messages are critical. Politicians do not want to be associated with things that are bad.
- It is important to support and engage politicians by water and environmental education
- It is important to raise awareness among the public. Political will begins with the people.
- Tailor your approach. Political frameworks differ in the countries.
- Engage and treat politicians as stakeholders. Politicians have interest in providing water to the people.
- Find politicians who can influence changes in the legal frameworks.
- Highlight the benefit for engaging the politician.
- Science provides trust – it is a scope for politicians to rely on
- Politicians may only be decision-approvers whereas civil servants are sometimes the key decision-makers. The latter can be easier to engage too, so a good tactic.
- Important that good things are not compromised by political changes, they need to be institutionalized
- Create awareness and build alliances, before taking on some of the difficult and controversial things



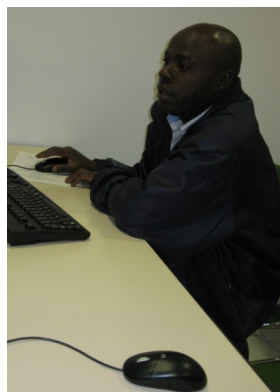
### Discussing political engagement

## Insights and feedback to the conference on the messages of World Water Day 2011 UN-Water Talk Show

This afternoon UN representatives in the Conference will provide feedback to the Conference participants on how the issues dealt with relate to the Agencies work programme and on the feedback received on the messages for the World Water Day. The Talk Show focuses on how the issues and examples discussed in the conference bring important lessons in relation to the work of the different agencies on water in cities. It will also provide feedback on the inputs from the conference on the messages for the World Water Day.

UN Agencies have been focusing on the importance of working towards the MDGS and the specific challenges related to urbanisation, both in megacities and in smaller cities, including the key relationship between the rural and the urban areas.

*Facilitator/moderator:* Josefina Maestu, Coordinator, UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication.



## Media representatives communicating the outcomes of the Conference

Rebecca Munetsi (Namibia) and Stephen Kiwanuka (Uganda)

## The Media on Stage

By Cheikh Tidiane Fall, Senegal

Last but not least, the media will be on stage today. After stakeholders, political authorities etc., opportunity will be given to different representatives of the various media and communication specialists. They will exchange on the best ways to involve the journalists in the approaches aiming to improve access to water and sanitation services, particularly for poor people of peri urban and rural areas.

Coming from Africa, Asia, Latin America and other continents, journalists have been following these last four days different communications, round tables and working groups focused on the alliances for a real commitment of stakeholders, the new tools to be more efficient, the local and global challenges related to water, sanitation, environment etc. For them, it's a very interesting and profitable experience and we can say that the organisers of the Zaragoza Conference were wise by inviting journalists who must be considered as real partners.

We hope that, after Zaragoza, participating journalists will get back home more capable to address the issues of water management in the cities with more professionalism and in full cognizance of the new challenges. The actors of water sector must, however, be conscious that without the journalists playing a key role in the ongoing or coming approaches, it will be difficult to reach the goals. The awareness raising and the sensitization of the populations depend also on the job done by the mass media. Establishing with them partnerships is crucial.

Today's reflections should help journalists, communication specialists and other actors to better understand their respective responsibilities, expectations and pave the way for a new collaboration with the media. Good relations with the press are, indeed, one of the main keys of success for the programs implemented in the cities which are, all over the world, under the pressure of a frenetic urbanization.

This truth, I am sure, will be more shared after the Zaragoza Conference where the journalists' voice is taken into account. This is not usually the case during similar international Conferences.

## Programme, Friday 17 December

08.15-09.00	Keynote address: <i>Managing water in the city of the future</i> . By Professor Kalanithy Vairavamoorthy
09.00-09.30	Welcome and highlights of the Conference
09.30-10.00	<i>City examples of strong and successful media engagement</i> . Interview session
10.00-10.30	Coffee break
10.30-12.00	<i>The role of media and communication in the process of change</i> . Parallel sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roundtable of media and communication representatives</li><li>• Stakeholders views (group discussions)</li></ul>
12.00-13.00	<i>Dialogue between stakeholders and media on strong and successful media engagement in the process of change</i> . Dialogue session
13.00-13.30	Light lunch
13.30-15.00	<i>Insights and feedback to the conference on the messages of World Water day 2011</i>

## In today's session we will look at

- how to communication better.
- how the media engages the public and other key stakeholders.
- how to communicate water supply and sanitation challenges and opportunities.
- how best communication practices and tools can be translated and used in other regions.
- the role and requirements of the media to communicate on SWM in cities
- views of the media on how to improve communications on the issue of urban sustainable water management.
- the roles politicians and media in water management in changes towards SWM in cities.
- successful examples of media engagement in cities.
- success stories of media reporting on water quality and sanitation.

## Today's key questions

- How to communicate better on urban SWM and what can we learn from media experiences?
- How can we be more effective at reaching the public?
- How can the media become partners for the city experts in times of reforms and changes?
- What has been and is the role of the media in water policy changes in cities?
- What challenges are connected to reporting on water?
- What is a successful media story?
- Are the media of help for the city experts in implementing reforms

'you are all experts and are all supporting water issues. We do not think outside the box, we need to think outside the building and reach out to people who do not give a damn about water issues and educate them  
Susan Leal, Harvard University

## Inspiring, motivating, suggesting...

Media can play an essential role in stimulating change by putting the issue of SWM high on the agenda (national and international). If we can change the media landscape to begin to highlight the challenges and need for sustainable water management it will be put high on the political agenda and get the attention needed.  
Bertha Darteh—Facilitator SWITCH Learning Alliance, Accra

**'This is not how you should do stakeholder engagement'**



Colin Green (University of Middlesex, UK) criticising the set up of yesterday's dialogue session with a panel of experts sitting on a stage

*Follow up from page 1: 'Let us not put the elephant in a small room', says Ugandan Mayor*

tends to under estimate the growths of slums in cities, but it is a political time bomb, that political leaders and the water community should realise as the most pressing at present'. 'More than 900 million people currently live in urban slums and the number is growing as rapid urbanization continues in the developing world', Diphorn says.

In a report, 'The State of the World's Cities 2010/ 2011', Anna Tibajuka, Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), said 'there is no room for complacency in face of the swelling numbers of slum dwellers worldwide'. Overall, the number of people residing in slums has climbed from 777 million in 2000 to almost 830 million in 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to nearly two-thirds of the world's slum population, with 200 million people, with South Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South-East Asia rounding out the top five regions with the largest number of slum dwellers.

Diphorn underscored that the growing of cities is a major concern emanating not only from the rural urban migration but city expansion and natural growth. Hence, the need to 'change as change is taking place in our cities, because if we do not, change will change us', said Entebbe City Mayor, Stephen Kabuye.

The conference urged countries to strengthen their focus on the growing urban crisis and improving the lives of slum dwellers by providing safe water and sanitation facilities as well. Proposed are specific investments and policy changes required at local and national levels to create a vibrant, equitable and productive urban environment. Besides the growing numbers of informal sectors or slums, delegates also highlighted that cities across the globe have to adapt to climate change and find good practices for effective urban water management in their cities.



Stephen Kabuye, Mayor of Entebbe

**'Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources. It may be the only form of disaster preparedness that the most vulnerable can afford'**

Syeda Amna Nasir on the role of the media in reporting on water and sanitation

Interview by Andrea van der Kerk



*What is the main challenge for the media in reporting on water and sanitation issues (especially at the city level)?*

Traditionally it has always been the role of the media, especially community media, to inform and educate the public, and provide them with information that helps them make informed decisions about their everyday lives. People need information as much as water, food, medicine or shelter. Information can save lives, livelihoods and resources. It may be the only form of disaster preparedness that the most vulnerable can afford. The right kind of information leads to a deeper understanding of needs and ways to respond. The wrong information can lead to inappropriate, even dangerous interventions. Local media can play a key role in informing the response and the process of reconstruction. Concerned departments and officials are not bothered to share information. A focused and responsible reporter will cover the reality on the ground, creating an understanding for a general audience.

*Could you provide an example of media contributing to improved water policies at the city level? If not, do you think the media can contribute to water policy changes at the city level and why?*

Contribution is absent in my part of the world. We need to cover every aspect of the water scenario: human health, ecosystem health, sustainable use and economy, hazards and environmental prediction, global water commitments. Media can raise voice and jot down pen on wasteful farming techniques, leakages in the irrigation network, climate change and the over-exploitation or pollution of natural aquifers and other water bodies to make people educate how to protect water wastage since future conflicts are rooted in disputes over water and to make aware of the links between sanitation and health. Media sensitization is need of the time to strengthen flow of communication. Through media cooperation and production of inputs into radio and TV programmes as well as newspaper articles, visibility of the coalitions' work will enhance. There is need:

- To publish articles on continuous basis and to launch environment friendly publications.
- To have TV debate and radio talks/programmes about raising public awareness on sanitation issues and water management.
- To organize press debates, discussing the role of media in reaching the MDG goals.
- To organize with due patronage of media 'Forums' on sanitation with the participation of national/International sector stakeholders, donors and civil society networks to discuss and seek common solutions for sanitation issues and water management in their respective countries.
- Simultaneously create a new situation since writing and investigation for journalistic articles implies a change in the cultural practices and habits of communication.

*How can local authorities and other stakeholders assist the media better in communicating on the issues of water and sanitation?*

Most of the time they are reluctant to share information since are not sure how the media will utilize given information. Governments and international agencies should encourage electronic media to propagate built-in sanitation and water management related messages in its entertaining programmes and to develop educational programmes on sanitation, water management and health related issues.

*Syeda Amna Nasir is a Freelance journalist for Dawn and The News International, Lahore and Karachi, Pakistan. She is stringer for [www.centralasiaonline.com/en](http://www.centralasiaonline.com/en)*

## Key messages for World Water Day 2011

On the last day of the conference we will zoom back on the World Water Day messages. Grab your chance and have a say: you are all invited to comment on and edit these messages on Friday between 11.30 and 12.00.

- 'Change towards Sustainable Water Management (SWM) in cities is possible. Stakeholders need to cooperate or collaborate in order to make change happen'. It is crucial that all stakeholders collaborate to make a change towards SWM now. **Bertha Darteh**—Facilitator SWITCH Accra Learning Alliance
- Change towards sustainable water management in cities is possible and stakeholders need to cooperate and collaborate in order to make the change happen. **Kalanithy Vairavamoorthy**—Scientific Director of SWITCH

*Knowledge is available to use water efficiently, it is not about technology, but about political leadership (and our ability to use it)*

From the keynote presentation of Peter Rogers

**In water, there is no ideology. Water is too important to have political conflicts about**

Luz Estrella Rodríguez de Zúñiga  
Mayor of the municipality of Apopa  
El Salvador

## The Southeastern County of Gran Canaria at the International Conference 'Sustainable Water Management in Cities'

By Juan Díaz Sánchez

The Southeastern County of Gran Canaria was founded in 1990 in order to solve the serious water shortage problems suffered by the citizens of the three municipalities that form part of it: Agüimes, Ingenio and Santa Lucía. Since that moment, after solving this main problem, it has been making an outstanding job in the environmental, economic and social development of this area, in the promotion of sustainable development, and the improvement of the quality of life of over 120,000 inhabitants.

The Southeastern County was established when the most important problem in the area was the shortage of water and the lack of a regular supply to citizens. Known as the "triangle of poverty", the region had a scarce population, an important infrastructure deficit, and low household incomes. Nowadays it has doubled its population and has grown to become one of the largest integrated and self-sustained systems in renewable energy, drinking water and agriculture. It is also implementing an ambitious Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development in which WATER is one of its essential axes.

One of the objectives of this Strategic Plan is to achieve the complete supply of water for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes, without having to depend on the rain or on fossil fuels, but using seawater desalination and wastewater treatments produced with renewable energy. The aim is to obtain over 80% of drinking water with these methods.

Today the Southeastern County is already carrying out a complete water treatment process, starting with desalination, passing through wastewater treatments and ending with water potabilization through tertiary processes, obtaining water that is being used in agriculture. Another objective of the Plan is to generate massive savings in drinkable water, for domestic use but also for agriculture and industries as well.

**The full article on the experiences of the Southeastern County of Gran Canaria will be made available on the conference blog:**  
<http://sustainableurbanwatermanagement.wordpress.com/>



Juan Díaz Sánchez,  
President of the Southeastern County of Gran Canaria,

## The water for life award

During yesterday's sessions, Josefina Maestu, Director of the United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015, which implements the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC), launched the 1st edition of the "Water for Life Best Practices" Award, and initiative in collaboration with and the UN World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP).

The purpose of the Award is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015 through recognition of outstanding best practices that can ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources and contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets as contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

The prize is going to be awarded yearly in two categories, one in **best water management practices** and another one in **best participatory, communication, awareness-raising and education practices**.

The award consists of:

- an invitation to participate in the UN event celebrated on the occasion of World Water Day, including travel and accommodation for one representative for each of the above mentioned categories representing the winning practice.
- A video produced on each of the winning best practice categories. These videos will be included on the UN database on good practices.
- A certificate especially designed for the award.

**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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