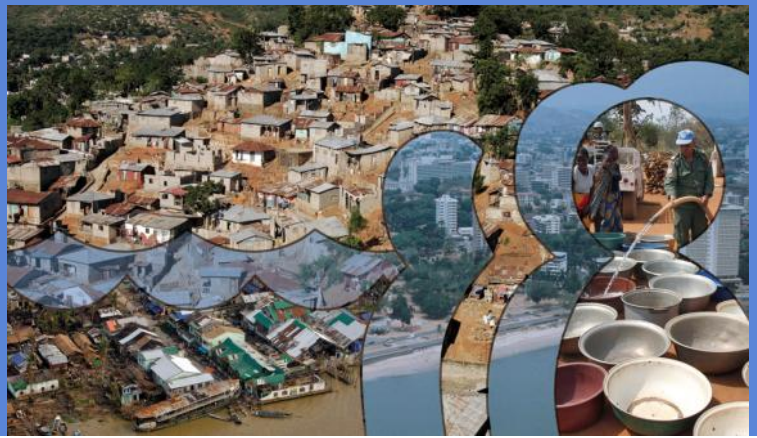


# SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT IN CITIES: ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE AND ACTION

13-17 December 2010 • Zaragoza, Spain

## Conference Daily

Final issue



### Building on yesterday's sessions

In yesterday's sessions, views of the media on how to improve communications on the issue of urban sustainable water management were shared, participants discussed how to reach more effective communication and information practices and how the media can engage the public and other key stakeholders on the theme of urban water management.



Conference participants brave the cold for a group picture

### Media engagement issues

#### Do journalists feel used?

No. We are really two different worlds. There are two different agendas. It is good to recognize that for realistic engagement. A good journalist is not expected to repeat, but to own and add value to a story. They won't choose the intended story. This can be good and bad. You can't hope to use them.

Roel Landingin (Philippines)

#### Engage with social media..

It is important to engage with the social media and tap into the new channels of media and how they can reach news audiences..particularly the young

Mohan Peck (UNDESA)

#### Pressure on journalists..

The problem I'm facing comes from the newsroom. That is where the pressure comes from. For them water is old news. I always have to convince my editor.

Rebecca Munetsi (Namibia)

#### Inaccessible research..

Sometimes as a journalist we are in big trouble. Experts expect that the journalists write about their research in their paper – but they do not try to simplify their research - and make it accessible for the reader.

Dalia Abdel-Salam (Egypt)

#### Tension between being a traditional journalist and an advocate

More cases shared by journalists on media engagement—will be made available in the conference proceedings

### Manila - a mega challenge for SWITCH?

By Roel Landingin/Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism

Zaragoza, Spain. 17 Dec 2010 -- Stakeholders. Engagement. Demonstration. I've never heard the three words mentioned so often as in the past four days in Zaragoza in Spain. They sounded the same as in Manila in the Philippines where I come from but the meanings are quite different.

Back home, when stakeholders engage with one other, it's often in a court of law where one group, say a community association, tries to stop a government agency or a water utility from pushing through with fare hike or a new dam project. Demonstration? For us, that often means a street protest against an unpopular government action.

Learning about other meanings of those words is one of the benefits of attending the conference on sustainable water management in cities in the historic city of Zaragoza.

As a journalist, I often write about conflicts, usually between the authorities and people affected by government decisions and actions. The last story I wrote on water policy was how a government water agency was trying to rush a deal to award a \$1 billion contract to build a water dam to a private company amid conditions marked by lack of competition and transparency.

In the course of the conference, I began to wonder if new forms of multi-stakeholder engagements, particularly learning alliances for strategic planning, could perhaps help promote more authentic public participation in the search for solutions to Metropolitan Manila's long-term water supply and wastewater problems.

About 97 per cent of the capital region's water supply comes from just one source that is also used for irrigation and power generation. While the need for new sources of water supply is widely recognized, there is no consensus on the best and most cost-effective way to do this. Less than a tenth of Metro Manila is sewered, and most of the wastewater just flows with no or minimal treatment into streams and rivers that eventually find their way into the large bodies of water near Manila.

Talking to two university professors from Brazil who attended the conference, I learned that it's possible to get various stakeholders who find themselves on opposing sides of a short-term problem or policy question to work together on long-term or strategic issues. I know a little about strategic planning from business school and often write stories about company strategies. But this is the first time for me to hear that strategic planning can be used as a tool to promote multi-stakeholder cooperation and public participation.

It sounds very interesting. The expectation is that broad agreement on the long-term vision and plan will help reduce future conflicts among various stakeholders either because they have learned to work together or they have outlined solutions to future problems that are often the trigger for conflicts.

Perhaps SWITCH should consider sending a learning alliance coordinator to Manila to work with any of the country's fine universities to see if the idea could work in the Philippines.

The country suffers from the rather unfortunate reputation of having millions of well-educated and earnest people who could not seem to work together for the country's steady progress. More than a tenth of the country's 90 million people have left the country to seek greener pastures abroad. If the going gets tough for the SWITCH coordinator, there are hundreds of lovely beaches around to help re-energize the body and spirit.



*I like the approach of this conference. It was devoid of Power-points. The interview system, the panel methodology and the group work have helped*

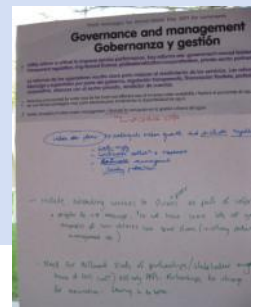
Timeyin Uwejamomere  
Senior Policy Analyst, Urban Issues, WaterAid

## Heading to World Water Day 2011

Today, WWD 2011 messages were shared. Participants gave their inputs to the messages by writing the comments on posters that were displayed in the corridors of the venue. Below a summary of the comments and inputs:

- Proposed slogan for the messages under the sanitation and pollution theme: waste water is a liquid asset stream
- Education and capacity building was missing in the WWD 2011 messages
- There need to be concrete messages for what people can do at household level
- We need more simple and fewer messages
- Create the messages in such a way that they provide the solution
- The word 'local government' is not reflected in the messages – they are the ones that have to make things happen at the local level
- Financing needs to go to local governments, not central governments

More inputs received on the messages—will be made available in the conference proceedings



### Making Water Accessible for All is a Social Business,” says WaterAid Official

By Ama Kudom-Agyemang, Ghana

The failure of public utilities service providers in most African countries to recognise their work as a social business has left a big market for private vendors to take advantage of. According to Timeyin Uwejamomere of WaterAid, UK, 'the provision of water is a business that must show revenue over cost, and the profit margin can be used for expansion works, maintenance of existing facilities and motivation of staff such as paying the school fees of brilliant wards of staff'.

He said this in an interview after participating in a panel discussion on Pro-poor practices in urban water, at this conference.

Mr. Uwejamomere, urged public water service providers to appreciate the business aspect of their work. 'Once they see themselves as social businesses, they can develop strategies to reach all target audiences especially the poor, whose right to safe water must also be met', he said.

Mr. Uwejamomere said the view that it was unprofitable for public water providers to focus on the poor was incorrect. 'When all blockages including 'pay before installation of facilities,' are removed, the poor can access water and pay in a flexibly structured manner; then providers will make money, while fulfilling their social responsibilities', he added.

Meanwhile, WaterAid and the Water and Sanitation for Urban Poor group, have undertaken a joint survey in some African countries to determine whether utilities are serving the poor and how. A publication on the results revealed that utilities do recognise the distinct needs and capabilities of the poor in urban areas, and have expressed commitment to serve them. However, only a few of them have pro-poor strategies to meet their needs. The study further revealed that the poor are paying twice as much as per liter at a utility water kiosk as higher income users with household connections.

The two organisations and the Water Operators Partnership Africa group have called on African governments and utilities to reach consumers of income levels by leading a programme that targets all consumers, particularly the poor and marginalised. Utilities should also institutionalise service delivery to the poor through deliberate and specific strategies and funding mechanisms targeted at serving the informal settlements.

**Conference daily** the issues of the conference daily can also be accessed online: [http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/swm\\_cities\\_zaragoza\\_2010/daily\\_newsletter.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/swm_cities_zaragoza_2010/daily_newsletter.shtml)

**Blog** read more on our conference blog

<http://sustainableurbanwatermanagement.wordpress.com/>

**Twitter** the Conference Twitter discussions are available at

<http://www.twitter.com/SUWMZaragoza>

**Facebook** online discussions and images from the Conference. At the Conference page on Facebook: "Conference: Sustainable Water Management in Cities".



### Looking back...

I came from the idea that solutions to the problems in the cities are not really so much technical or financial. The solutions come a lot of the times from actors in the cities and from the collaboration from actors in the cities.

This conference confirmed that idea, but on the other hand it has gone much more beyond that. We have had fantastic examples here, (red. like the SWITCH experiences) from Cali, Lima, Belo Horizonte, and Accra, in which you could

see how this is being done. It is a very cheap solution. The experiences created social capital in the cities: sustainable more long term relationships, with the different actors in the cities.

We also came out with very practical issues. I was expecting this but not to the extent that we have had. We came out with recommendations, like the importance of having facilitators in the cities to get all the actors together. The importance to link informal processes of relationships between different actors with formal processes.

We also discussed specific tools: *institutional mapping*, to know who you have to contact for different kind of issues; and *transitioning*, how do you move from one situation to the next.

The question we had to deal with in this conference was very difficult. It was about change, and change is a most dangerous thing for politicians. We had politicians talking about change, the conflicts that were generated because of change and how they resolved them.

My only feeling is maybe that we didn't have enough time. For the interview sessions, feedback sessions or a roundtable .....I felt we really didn't have enough time to really wrap up.

On the other hand, what was exciting about this conference was the diversity: of views, of people, of questions being tackled.

We thought it was important that this would be a *communicating conference*. A lot of times we have conferences and you forget what was going on the day before. The different days are not being linked and flow is lacking. We thought it was important that people in some way could make comments, maybe not in public, but through social media. We had the Conference Daily that helped as a reminder of what happened the day before, and informed also about what is happening today. We also had a video newsletter, with interviews. We did this not only for internal purposes but also for external purposes. In a conference like this we bring a world of experiences, which needs to be publicised and needs to be seen. We have an obligation, we spend resources on something like this. More people benefit from this, they can interact with us in real time. And that is why I think the work on the social media was so important. By using twitter, Facebook and the blog, we were able to widen the audience of the conference.

This article is based on the interview with Josefina Maestu that took place on 17 December 2010, at the end of the conference. The interview is available on video:

<http://sustainableurbanwatermanagement.wordpress.com/2010/12/18/final-interviews-of-the-day-with-josefina-alberto-kala-and-timeyin/>