

5th World Water Forum



Istanbul, Turkey – 16-22 March 2009

Opening Glass Doors: What regulation can improve openness and transparency?

I. Background on preparation

Under Theme 4: Governance and Management, WaDImena, AWC and UN-Habitat had convened session 4.2.5 on 18 March. Prior to the Forum, 80 contributions were sent through VMS, which were synthesized by Dr. Hammou Laamrani, WaDImena project coordinator. Contacts were established with key contributors to select the ones that present good case studies.

Coordination between WaDImena and the selected contributors took place for weeks; a lot of work was done in preparation. Background papers and presentations were prepared by contributors. An invitation to the session was sent widely by e-mail and was distributed at the Forum in different booths.

II. Main questions

The challenges associated with lack of access to clean water, water scarcity and the growing demand need to be put in perspective of water governance, scarcity of organizational capacity and scarcity of accountability rather on mere physical scarcity. Those structuring elements have ramifications beyond water sector and to be taken into consideration as such to make change happen in water sector.

Thus, solutions to water challenges should be sought in a spectrum of practical (ground tested) instruments and tools including transparent and inclusive decision making processes and access to justice, integrated planning, demand management, effective regulation of service providers and efficient allocation.

From regulation and institutional perspective, the session tried to portrait answers to the following main questions:

- a. What are the success factors for public participation and transparency in water services and management?
- b. How this works for the poor and marginalized (in effect) for groundwater management: country' experience?
- c. What lessons learned in terms of effective and efficient use, equity in access responsible use, demand management and sustainability of water resources?

III. Session structure

The session was structured in a way where a panel was formed with eight speakers who presented case studies, each for 10 minutes, the floor was also open for discussion by attending participants, approximately 200 persons.

Finally wrap-up of the session was made by Dr. Lamia El-Fattal, Senior Program Officer at IDRC, Mr. Ziad Moussa, a professional facilitator, assisted in moderating discussions and in keeping presentations concise with time.



R. Gakubia presenting Kenyan case study



Panel members at session 4.2.5

IV. Case studies and presentations

- Cambodia experience in regulation role in urban water management
Mr. Ekk Sonn Chan, Water Utility, Phnom Penn **Cambodia**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)
- Participatory regulation and groundwater management in Yemen
Dr. Gerhard Lichtenthaler, GTZ- Advisor NWRA **Yemen**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)
- How regulation increase transparency in water services Mexico
Ms. Natahlie Seguin, Freshwater Action **Mexico**
Background paper [Presentation](#)
- Regulation and rule of law water governance in Morocco
Ms. Houria Tazi Sadeq, ALMAE **Morocco**
Background paper [Presentation](#)
- Raising citizens voice in regulating water services, a South African Experience
Dr. Laila Smith, Mvula Trust, **South Africa**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)

- Lessons learnt from Water Services Regulatory Board, Kenya
Eng. Robert Gakubia, CEO of the Kenyan Water Services Regulatory Board- **Kenya**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)

- Governance, regulation and Water Conflicts resolution, the role of regulation in Korea
Prof. Ahn Moon Suk, Vice President Korea Water Forum, **Korea**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)

- Regulation and sustainable water management of Groundwater in Tunisia
Dr. Abdelkader Hamdane, **Tunisia**
[Background paper](#) [Presentation](#)

V. Discussion

A question on the Cambodian case study was about how to ensure that the public have access to the government officials and can reach him, as a policy maker, for their needs. The reply Mr. Sonn Chan was that poor communities know him very well and they can even reach him in his office telephone or on his cell phone number. In Cambodia there exists less water regulators and not many regulations, for authorities and government officials are so helpful and close to communities. The water sector makes profit to secure sustainability.



Another question was raised about water being an asset and not a commodity, water is not free and finances are required to bring it over. How do you propose to go about water finances? The answer came from Ms. Seguin who said that it is not exclusive that water has an economic value, water is a human right, basic amount of services must be provided to people, and then private operators can provide the rest. Ms. Smith added that a policy was put in SA to ensure free access and reach communities who are invisible.



A comment was made by a member of the WWF for youth who very enthusiastically said that it is not enough only to open glass doors but we need to break glass ceiling, decision makers must consider youth, there is something to learn from youth, real action is need, without which nothing can work.



Ms. Tazi from Morocco pointed that we need to stress on human rights versus human needs. Push for evolution and not revolution. Implementation of accountability, definitions of modalities...etc., finances and transparency are the problem.

A question on the way how the unaccounted for water was decreased from 72% to 6% in the Cambodian case study

A nice observation was also made by a participant who noticed that in a picture from Yemen women appeared to be responsible on getting the water from the well, whereas another picture showed only men in dialogue in the office of a municipal official.



VI. Session wrap-up

Dr. El-Fattal reported on the session presentations and discussions saying that we heard very good examples North and South Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia on how legislations and transparency can be made more effective and how to keep the door opened, transparent and glassy. Of the ideas brought in discussions;

- Putting ears and eyes on the ground when we do regulations to raise the voice of citizens, especially the marginalized, the poor, the youth, women, children. We bare the responsibility to encourage them to have a voice and in getting them to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Private water providers have to be accountable for youth and poor and respect their needs to build better communities.
- There is need to upgrade skills, competencies and training staff...
- Policy makers have to be willing and prepared to take risks in the sense and idea of democratizing in the context of environment...
- How the concepts of ethics and human right relate to water regulations.
- There is need to look at social adaptive capacity in regulating policy, some traditional measures and practices are worth holding up to.
- Expect that conflict will arise in the region over water issues, we need to be prepared for it through conflict resolution in a fair fashion.

VII. Session statement

TBD