

# 6<sup>TH</sup> RWSN FORUM REPORT

## SUMMARY OF THE EVENT EVALUATION REPORTS

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### 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RWSN FORUM

The Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) Forum is a rural water supply event that takes place every three to four years. This year the forum took place during 29.11.2011-2.12.2011 and it was hosted by the Ministry of Water and Environment, Kampala, Uganda. The RWSN Forum was organised by Skat, UNICEF, the Water and Sanitation Programme of the World Bank (WSP), the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, WaterAid, Helvetas and the Ministry of Water and Environment in Uganda.

The official theme of this year's forum was "Rural Water Supply in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Myths of the Past, Visions for the Future". The forum brought together small private enterprises, political leaders from a local level, local and central government administrators, extension staff, NGO staff and donors to engage in lively discussions about the realities of improving rural water supplies around the globe. 422 participants from all over the world attended the event and shared their experiences and good practices on a wide range of aspects of rural water supplies.

There were about 3 sessions attended by all participants, 28 parallel sessions, 1 session for exhibition, poster presentation a side event and a field trip in three groups on the last day.

### 2. COWASH PARTICIPATION IN THE FORUM

The COWASH project covered the expenses of altogether 9 participants from the project office, MoWE and MoFED. Moreover, the RWSN Forum sponsored two local government representatives from two regions (Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz). This process of enabling the participation of the regional representatives was also facilitated by the COWASH project. The list of participants is listed below:

Kebede Gerba, State Minister of Water / MoWE

Yohannes Gebremedhin, Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Directorate / MoWE

Abiy Girma, Coordinator of the National WaSH Coordination Office / MoWE

Wossen Demissie, Expert / MoFED

Molla Mitiku, Process owner / Amhara Water Bureau

Faisal Ahmed, WaSH Coordinator / Benishangul-Gumuz Water Bureau

Yohannes Melaku, CMP Specialist / COWASH

Melaku Worku, Process Facilitation Specialist / COWASH

Abebaw Getachew, M&E Specialist / COWASH

Harri Mattila, Human Resources Development Specialist / COWASH

Linda Annala, Junior Professional Officer / COWASH

### 3. RESULTS OF THE RWSN PARTICIPATION

There were two main purposes for attending the 6<sup>th</sup> RWSN Forum:

1. To promote the CMP approach in order to convince other financiers to participate in funding the development of rural WaSH in Ethiopia.
2. To participate in the preparations of the CMP promotion activities in the World Water Forum in Marseille, March 12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

#### MAIN OUTPUTS OF THE FORUM PARTICIPATION

1. COWASH had prepared a 10 minutes short film on the CMP approach that was accepted to be presented in the forum. The short film was presented on 30.12.2011 in the plenary session accompanied by a short introduction presented by Yohannes Gebremedhin. During the introduction, the general WaSH situation in Ethiopia as well as the CMP approach was briefly presented.
2. Kebede Gerba, State Minister of MoWE Ethiopia presented opening remarks for the forum.
3. A meeting with World Bank representatives Alex Bakalian (Program Coordinator / Urban and Water Unit in Washington D.C.) and (Water and Sanitation Specialist in Washington D.C.) was organized together with Kebede Kerba, Yohannes Gebremedhin, Abiy Girma, Harri Mattila and Linda Annala in order to discuss potential funding for the Ethiopian WaSH sector. The meeting was very fruitful and the discussion continued the following week in Addis Abeba when Alex Bakalian was visiting the country.

Adding to these above mentioned direct results, the participants from Ethiopia were encouraged to be involved in discussions on rural water supply and sanitation development and to describe the results gained in Ethiopia as well as future plans to meet the GTP targets. Moreover, the different parallel sessions were shared in a manner that at least one representative was to attend each session to have complete information on the sessions. Each participant was requested to write a short evaluation report on the forum participation.

### 4. LESSONS LEARNT

The conference participants attended altogether 30 different plenaries and parallel sessions. Moreover, two different field trips were attended by 8 participants. The participation in the RWSN forum can be regarded as a capacity building effort for the participants.

The participants gained insight into topics such as self-supply, public-private partnerships in WaSH sector, harmonization and coordination approaches, monitoring & evaluation and decentralized service delivery. Also it was noted how capacity building activities with regard to the sustainability of the water services were emphasized during the forum. Learning from the experiences and innovative approaches of other countries was regarded of high value in all of the participants' evaluation reports. The presentations, discussions and exhibition were found to be informative and stimulating and they allowed the participants to develop new ideas that will help in contributing to the sector. Furthermore, the key achievements and challenges of improving water supplies in different contexts from local, national and international organizations were regarded as essential information.

In this following, the key lessons that were mentioned in the participants' forum evaluation reports will be summarized and categorized.

## PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION

- Within the private sector development of WaSH-related supply chains, a medium-term or long-term vision is a necessity in order to change the private sector's approach. Therefore, there should be a change from a project-based strategy to a market-based strategy with regard to the private sector development.
- The contracts of piped schemes for private operators should be simple and the selection criteria for the private operators should be flexible. The selection criteria shall not be based only on experience since peer-to-peer learning and learning by doing are also very important.
- Public-private partnerships are effective in institutional WaSH because they bring together local governments, civil society and school management committees, and in the process mobilize resources and improve the management and maintenance of projects.

## TECHNOLOGY

- *Piped water supplies:* When planning village and small town piped water supplies, the choice between stand-alone schemes (such as hand pumps) and multi-village piped schemes should be well justified. Currently most countries are favouring of piped schemes over stand-alone schemes. When planning alternative schemes at least the following issues shall be considered: capital cost, life cycle cost, technical issues, institutional consideration such as staffing and skills required. Without taking these points into consideration there is no compelling reason/evidence to choose regional/piped schemes over stand-alone schemes. Moreover, the advantage gained in the overall scheme management of piped schemes through the establishment and use of Umbrella organizations was presented in one of the forum papers.
- *Manual drilling:* The usage of manual drilling strengthens the local (rural) private sector and therefore the chances of sustainability. Baptist technology options should be explored where possible due to the easy of transport of light pipes and the smaller cost. The professionalizing of manual drilling should be promoted as manual drilling is cost effective, it provides easier access to sites, it creates employment opportunities and it contributes to local economic development as the tools are made locally. However, the mapping of suitable zones for manual drilling shall be conducted first. COWASH can apply one manual drilling technique implemented in Senegal in places where drilling in stone becomes problematic.
- *Fluoride removal:* Rural communities in Ethiopia are not able to cover the running costs for defluoridation of high fluoride raw water, and a subsidy of the running costs by the government or NGOs is required. It is important that water sources with relatively low fluoride concentrations are used as raw water in defluoridation filters. If the water tariffs are increased, appropriate solutions for the poor have to be found. COWASH has to consider the fluoride removal issue in project implementation, as high fluoride is a serious challenge in certain areas in Ethiopia.

## WASH IN SCHOOLS

- When there is an increased supply of water to schools, the implementers must be aware and incorporate the water demands of communities living near the schools who will also want a share of this water. This can be achieved by working out a water sharing agreement that is favourable to both groups, given the water demands of the school.

## O&M

- Whichever pump is being installed in rural conditions, the first condition should be that the users are willing and are able to manage the maintenance of the pump. It should be remembered that persons

who have not seen the new low cost options or have seen bad examples, often consider low cost options as substandard.

- The need for providing technical assistance in the post construction period and coordinate efforts to make the community projects sustainable is essential. Projects implemented in collaboration with the local offices are more sustainable than others. Aligning with government systems and partnerships is crucial with regard to the sustainability of water services.
- Training and capacity building of maintenance mechanics shall be introduced from the very beginning of the project implementation and not at a stage when functionality of the schemes is in danger.
- There is research-based evidence on how communities are ready to pay for repair if they trust the quality of the work.

## M&E

- Experiences on how water supply services can be monitored using geo-referenced data collected from the site level were presented. It was noted that the Ethiopian WaSH MIS being designed can benefit from the Ugandan and Malawi experiences.
- The Life Cycle Costs Analysis and its six different cost components, cost trend analysis and usefulness of GIS in cost comparison and analysis were well understood. At CMP level, some basic cost information will be collected through the monitoring formats as part of the routine data collection process so as to pave the way for future cost analysis.