

## Read-out- on World Water Day

Today on 22 March 2021, World Water Day (WWD) has been colourfully celebrated in Addis Ababa, capital hotel with a motto of “Valuing Water” in attendance of various WASH sector partners and Stakeholders.



Group photo/WWD 22 March 2021/Melaku Tekola

The event commenced with inspiring songs made by Children who communicated messages related to protection of water. Following the children’s song, His Excellency, Dr. Negash Wagesho, State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy made a warm welcome note. In his note, Dr. Negash stated that the World Water Day is a reminder to partners to work together to solve critical challenges of water. He highlighted key areas where we value water. Representing the WASH sector Stakeholders, Michele Servadei, Deputy Representatives of UNICEF, made a remark on the event. Michele also noted that water is one of the most critical resources that need attention. He also echoed the “valuing water “messages and provided number of evidences towards the theme. Following Michele, the event was officially opened by message from His Excellency, Dr. Engineer, Seleshi Bekelle, as forwarded by His Excellency, Motumma Mekassa, Advisor to the Minister.

Following the official opening, short video on the theme displayed and number of presentations were made. The first presentations were made by Dr. Tena Alamirew, from Addis Ababa University. In his presentations, Dr. Tena emphasized on the protection of not only water but mainly on the catchment. He said “Water **does not**

**come from tap. It does not come from the dam/reservoir but Water comes from the catchment. A healthy catchment gives us healthy water.”** He reiterated on catchment protection. As a way forward, he called upon transformation from campaign to culture and behavioural change, continuation of the green legacy, and promotion of watersheds and investment in watersheds.

His Excellency, Dr. Beshah Mogessie, made presentations on the theme “Values of Water Services: Drinking water, sanitation and health services”. On his presentations Dr. Beshah shared the role of water to households, schools, workplaces, health care facilities and COVID-19 prevention. He also presented “WASH services’ subsidy and challenges in developing countries”. He concluded his presentations by highlighting key financial gaps in relations to WASH financing. (Dr. Beshah’s note has been shared on CMP page earlier).

Ato. Tedla Mulatu, from Millennium Water Alliance, made another great presentation on “Valuing Water: as an input to production and socio-economic activity”. Ato. Tedla made a comparison on “The ‘Diamond-Water Paradox’” and challenged the participants to give weight for water. The ‘Diamond-Water Paradox’ compares the high value of a diamond to the low value of water. He said “Water is an input for production, socio-economic activities with its immense influence on socio-cultural aspects. “ Ato. Tedla noted the ‘The value of water is much more than the price’. He outlined the various dimensions where water can be used as means of production such as Agriculture, Socio-Economic Activity and Socio-cultural aspects. In his conclusions he called upon the below;

- To think of the citizens who could not get access to safe water.
- Called for harmony of approach to deliver SDG 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.
- Safeguarding water and its resources
- Efficient use of water and investment in creating advocacy for water saving investment

Following the presentations, short panel discussion on valuing of water, its practical applications and recommendations for the future were made and the recognition of World Water Day 2021 came to an end with a concluding remark by State Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Dr. Abreham Adugna.

Overall, the key take away of the World Water Day commemoration of 2021 in Ethiopia called upon the below call to action points:

- Recognize and embrace the multiple values of water
- Reconcile values and promote caring society for water
- Protect the sources of water
- Educate and Empower the public on water use and efficient management

- The need of Investment, technology and innovation to protects water and efficient services
- Valuing water as an input to production and socio-economic activity – food and agriculture, energy and industry, business and employment
- Valuing socio-cultural aspects of water – recreational, cultural and spiritual attributes

Last, while the Rapporteur appreciates all the key take-away points and call to actions, one need to emphasize further execution of the agreed points so we will not come back on the same point next year. As stated in the meetings, it is time to shift from campaign to tradition.



Group photo/WWD 22 March 2021/Melaku Tekola

COWASH congratulates World Water Day 2021 Organizers, WASH partners and the WASH stakeholders for efficient deliberations of World Water Day.