

## The 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum - Marseille 2012



### Water debate: what legitimacy for private operators?

The fact that the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum is being held in France is highly symbolic as there have always been vast ideological differences here between the defenders and critics of private sector service management. There are significant management challenges that still need to be addressed. Can private sector involvement provide a solution to these? A dedicated session organized by the International Forum Committee tried to answer the question.

Maria Teresa N. Lauron, Global Water Justice representative in Manila,



Mr Mamadou Dia, Chief Executive of Sénégalaise des Eaux (SDE)

noted that water is a symbolic good, not a simple commodity. Mrs Lauron criticized the privatization of services in Manila, as, in spite of the World Bank's promises and enthusiasm, there has been no resulting improvement in services.

David Boys, Public Service International (PSI) representative, went further, highlighting the private

operators' systemic focus on profit-making and the states that fall under their power.

For Gérard Payen, President of AquaFed, the International Federation of Private Water Operators, discussions on how to manage services tend to lose sight of the main objective: that of ensuring universal access to services.

According to Mamadou Dia, Chief Executive of Sénégalaise des Eaux (SDE), service management methods are ultimately less important than the joint development of innovative solutions to effectively implement the right to water. He underlined the need for a performance and complementarity-based approach, particularly mentioning the transfer of knowledge and skills between operators. He added that *"the technologies exist; financially, if your strategy is 'bankable', the donors will follow you, but the issue for the operator lies in obtaining skilled human resources. These are the assets of a good operator"*.

### An alliance for sustainable action to fight outbreaks of cholera

98% of the world's cholera outbreaks occur in Africa (WHO). Between 2002 and 2008, over 150,000 new cases were reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo; this equates to 15% of all cholera cases across the globe and around 20% of all cholera-related deaths worldwide.

These were the figures cited during the session entitled *Water and Health: an Integrated Approach for the Fight against Cholera*.

In light of this observation, the Global Alliance Against Cholera (GAAC) has brought together a wide panel of experts and, since 2011, has been initi-

ating a new strategy, the pilot phase of which, implemented in a dozen towns within the Great Lakes region in the east of the country, has so far achieved promising results.

The GAAC representatives underlined the uniqueness and effectiveness of their approach:

- Assemble an expert team of actors with complementary skills;
- Following zoning of the breeding grounds for the cholera bacteria, focus resources on those areas at the source of the outbreak.

For more information on the GAAC strategy : <http://fondation.veolia.com>

## The Diaspora's contribution

With their deep attachment to their country of origin, many migrants, originally from North-west, sub-Saharan, Central Africa, or the Comoros and now settled in France, have formed associations to help improve the living conditions of their families back home. Thus, together they contribute to the construction and installation of infrastructure to support local development in their villages and regions of origin, particularly within the rapidly expanding water supply and sanitation sector.

The example of Senegal is particularly illustrative. In 10 years, activities costing an average of 30,000 euros, involving the con-

struction of modern wells, the rehabilitation or extension of small-scale networks and financed out of the migrant associations' own funds, have developed into comprehensive interventions covering all aspects of water supply systems (abstraction, production, storage, distribution, access) with an average cost of 130,000 euros.

This development has been made possible through the various technical and financial partnerships set up between the different international solidarity stakeholder groups (migrants, governments, local authorities, company foundations, NGOs,



**« The migrants and decentralized cooperation stakeholders are valuable assets to my community », Monzon Coulibaly, Mayor of Sandaré (Mali) declared during the session on the Diaspora's contribution to access to water and sanitation.**

## Sustainable pro-poor financing for water and sanitation

Mobilizing finance remains a sensitive issue in the development and management of water and sanitation services for all. Two complementary sessions today dealt with this aspect.

The first session, organized by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the International Secretariat for Water (ISW), focused on financing for local authorities and local operators.

It was divided into two parts:

The first part centered on subsidies from national budgets, local taxes, ODA funds and international solidarity funds, including decentralized cooperation;

The second covered mechanisms for accessing capital markets and repayable funds. The lessons learned from implementing output-based aid (OBA) and revolving fund mechanisms were also shared during this session.

The debates that followed highlighted the need to build local stakeholder capacities on presenting acceptable business plans to banks in order to access capital markets.

The second session, organized by IRC and WSUP focused on pro-poor financing solutions for water and sanitation that last.

Six key financing solutions were debated as part of small group discussions: using the life-cycle cost approach; optimizing the involvement of the local small-scale private sector; using innovative pricing systems; cross-subsidies between water and sanitation services; Output-Based Aid; and a new approach, 'Progress-Linked Finance'.

The small group discussions were highly fruitful.

From these debates, access to bank loans was identified as the key issue hampering local small-scale private operator involvement, with external partners needing to facilitate this access through the provision of bank guarantees.

## Go visit a slum in the Village of Solutions

Projection, the young professionals' network, is again demonstrating its energy and enthusiasm at this 6th World Water Forum. Indeed, Projection has constructed part of a slum within the Forum site. "Original", "unnerving", "surprising", "incredible" ... these are just a few of the many enthusiastic comments from visitors to this unconventional space. Through this educational exhibit, Projection want to highlight that it is also necessary to resolve spontaneous and precarious housing related issues when addressing access to water and sanitation challenges in large cities. The slum contains around a dozen concrete and clearly illustrated water and sanitation solutions. Projection is presenting conferences, debates and fun events here each day.

<http://www.reseauprojection.org/>



## Harmonize the water, the rain, the land



### Rainwater can pose a health and environmental risk.

In Zinder, in Niger, where there is a highly variable seasonal climate, the heavy rains trigger landslides and subsidence and stagnant water causes disease. In Hué, in Vietnam, silting of the drainage channels causes rising waters to enter the imperial city. In Northern countries, increased soil sealing in urban areas also increases the volumes of water

to be evacuated and can lead to precipitate decisions being made on the design of underground water storage facilities. The issue of treating rainwater, which picks up pollutants as it travels over the surface of the land, is also becoming more pressing.

The solutions presented during the parallel event organized by the water agency, Agence de l'Eau Seine Normandie (AESN), at Espace France, drawn from the key findings of the workshop 'Rainwater in the city, up to 2030' organized by AESN and its partners in September 2011 were varied; however, **on one point all participants were agreed: an integrated approach to rainwater management is required.**

It needs to combine prevention, urban planning and technological inno-

vation; urban planners need to work with engineers and the population needs to be involved. Topography has to be central to the approach: managing surface runoff will help improve drainage.

As rainwater management is not a Priority for Action at this 6th World Water Forum (despite it being covered in numerous thematic areas), the French stakeholders taking part in this parallel event all confirmed they would like to see this included as a priority in the next Forum, in Korea.

More information can be found on the Agence de l'Eau Seine-Normandie website: [www.eau-seine-normandie.fr/](http://www.eau-seine-normandie.fr/)