

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



### The Alternative World Water Forum: 'Water for life, not for profit'



The Alternative World Water Forum was held from 14 to 17 March to discuss ideas on themes not fully covered by the 'official' forum.

One of the key subjects addressed by the Alternative World Water Forum was the promotion of the public management of water, for no profit.

#### **Challenging the effectiveness of PPP**

During a roundtable held to discuss the issue, many participants challenged the idea that management through a 'public-private partnership' is more effective than public management.

One of these participants, a representative from a public operator in El Salvador, maintained that the apparent effectiveness lauded by private companies is based solely on economic indicators, whereas service effectiveness also needs to be assessed using social criteria, such as citizen participation in the service or management transparency. The Italian NGO, Acra, noted that, in Africa, the water supply systems delegated to the private sector are often those that are already functional and profitable, whereas the poorer, less profitable areas remain under public or community-based management. In these areas, state intervention would appear to be vital, regardless of the management method selected.

All were in agreement that a solid argument needs to be constructed, based on objective data, to promote the public water management model.

#### **Involving the communities in water management**

Certain Latin American countries underlined the importance of ensuring communities remain at the heart of water management. As such, the example of Bolivia, where the state has taken back control of the water supply systems previously managed by the communities, is not conducive to democratic water supply management.

In Senegal, the partnership between Cherbourg (France)

and the local authorities of Tenghory are also campaigning against the state's project to transfer the management of certain rural water supply systems to private operators, which would undermine the role currently being played by the ASUFOR (users' associations).

#### **Partnerships for defending and improving public water management**

'Public-public' partnerships, like the one between Cherbourg and Tenghory, can help mutually improve the effectiveness of public water operators and promote the public water management model.

To this end, some Latin American countries, such as Uruguay, would like to participate in South-South or South-North partnerships to help other countries benefit from their own 'water privatization' experiences.

- [www.fame2012.org/en](http://www.fame2012.org/en)
- <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/reports/public-public-partnerships-europe/>



## Decentralized cooperation: French water syndicates get involved!



Mr Marcovitch (SIAAP) and Mr Cambon (SEDIF)

On Friday, 16 March, a Bedouin tent constructed in the Drylands and Oasis area of the Forum was the location for a side-event held to increase French water, sanitation and river syndicates' participation in decentralized cooperation actions.

Organized by SEDIF, SIAAP and pS-Eau, this session was led by elected officials and members of a large panel of authorities, invited to discuss the reasons for their commitment and the ways in which they implement their actions.

Estimated at over 3.5 million euros in 2010, the water syndicates' commitment is clear, yet there is still much room for improvement. To increase this contribution, "the large authorities need to help the smaller authorities to encourage them to get involved", stated Christian Cambon, vice-president of SEDIF.

"There is no limit to getting involved", Hervé Paul, elected official on the Rhone-Mediterranean and Corsica Water Agency River Basin Committee, maintained. Particularly as agencies strongly encourage the authorities' participa-

tion by financially supporting the actions put in place: for 1 euro contributed by an authority, the agencies provide an average of 5 euros in co-financing. This has a sizeable leveraging effect.

In addition to pooling funding, Jérôme Bouquet, head of projects for decentralized cooperation within the river Orge valley authority, Syndicat de la vallée de l'Orge aval (SIVOA), added "there are real advantages to bringing together several local water syndicates on the same project as full use can be made of the complementary skills and knowledge held by each project member in their respective areas of expertise".

However, as highlighted by Emmanuel Ngnikam from ERA Cameroon, it is important to always uphold one of the key principles of decentralized cooperation, namely ensuring that "the training of engineers and technicians takes place in the country of intervention and is able to meet the service organization and management needs of local contracting authorities", rather than *ad vitam aeternam* calling on expertise from the North. This view was shared by Daniel Marcovitch, vice-president of SIAAP, who stressed that "if we do not provide training to build local capacities, the actions undertaken will not last".

## Sanitation is not just about toilets

In recent years, sanitation has become cause for growing concern and is thus a sector in which increasing amounts of effort have been made. Whilst these efforts are all welcome, sanitation (and this was the focus of the session organized by GRET) needs to be developed through to the end of the chain and not simply be restricted to latrines!

This session showed that endeavoring to develop the sanitation chain further is a complicated process. This is because addressing the challenges of evacuating and treating wastewater raises numerous questions and, for each of these questions, there is often more than one possible response! Issues mainly relate to the technical aspects (what are the technological options for wastewater evacuation? For treatment?), financial aspects (what cost recovery strategies can be used?), management aspects (what is the division of roles and responsibilities?). Each of these questions needs to be dealt with using an area-wide approach in order to ensure there is

coherence throughout the entire chain.

Three key messages came out of this session:

- 1) there is no single solution, but there are solutions for sanitation;
- 2) there is no action or sanitation project required, but rather an intervention strategy, implemented over the long-term;
- 3) it is essential that planning is not geographically restricted to just one or two neighborhoods, but is undertaken using an overarching approach that covers the entire local authority area.



## Our Forum evaluation !

### Greater solidarity for access to water after the 6th World Water Forum?

#### Interview



**Pierre-Marie Grondin, Director of programme Solidarité Eau (pS-Eau)**

*What were pS-Eau expectations for this 6th World Water Forum with regard to the decentralized cooperation and advocacy component?*

Our main expectation was that this World Water Forum would pay particular attention to decentralized cooperation within the field of water supply and sanitation and especially to expanding the 1% in solidarity for water principle to all European countries. We hoped that any related obstacles and potential misunderstandings would be overcome, and that the political leaders of European countries as a whole, as well as the European Union institutions, would take in interest in solidarity in the field of water supply.

This Forum also provided an opportunity to develop new partnerships between the local authorities and water authorities of Europe and Africa.

*Have these expectations been met?*

As far as raising interest in the 1% solidarity principle is concerned, we can say that we have achieved our objectives. Everybody heard, read or saw something on this subject at some point during the Forum.

However, in terms of ensuring understanding of what the princi-

ple really entails, we still have some way to go. There are still some concerns among the actors involved that need to be addressed. Whilst the basic principle, namely solidarity of the 'rich' with the 'poor' for water, is almost universally accepted, different perceptions about the form of any action to be undertaken remain and each country is relatively critical of the different approaches adopted by their neighbors.

Finally, on our second point, I think that everyone is fairly satisfied with the contacts the Forum has enabled us to make and we can already see future partnerships emerging that should lead to the development of new initiatives.

*What other action do you still need to take?*

I am convinced that we will be far more effective as a group, once several European partners join together to support actions, both at international and community level within developing countries. By working together, we can iron out any misunderstandings. We need to develop more partnerships between interested countries so we can innovate, work together to create new mechanisms and share experiences of those initiatives that have already been piloted.

Our main challenge today: ensure that locally-raised solidarity funding is above all used for training and supporting the local contracting authority and that this funding

serves simply to kick-start the financing of infrastructure through the more traditional ODA channels.

We would also like these partnerships to work on innovating and implementing new solutions to address the complex issues encountered in the small towns and peri-urban areas of developing countries. To this end, we consider it vital that the skills and knowledge of local service managers (local authorities, private or in-house operators, etc.) are called upon to assist these towns with setting up and managing services.

*What resources are you going to put in place to achieve these objectives?*

It seems appropriate to us to build a fully operational discussion platform at European level, one of the first outputs of which would be ensuring the European Union puts a budgetary tool in place aimed specifically at supporting local initiatives.

I call upon all European actors that would like to work with us on the development of innovative water solidarity mechanisms to join us so we can create this platform together. A dedicated website has been developed for this: [www.water-1percent.org](http://www.water-1percent.org)





## Sharing ideas, forging partnerships, identifying solutions

### Interview



**Christophe Le Jallé, programme Solidarité Eau (pS-Eau)**

*What were pS-Eau expectations for this 6th World Water Forum with regard to the Research and Development component?*

We had two levels of expectations.

Firstly, this World Water Forum gave us an opportunity to listen to the viewpoints of other sector actors, both those of partners we know well and those of partners with whom we are less familiar. We particularly wanted to listen to people from English-speaking countries, to find out what they are doing and to get to know and understand them better with a view to seeing how we can work together.

At the same time, we wanted to use the opportunity afforded by this key event to share the work we have been undertaking over the last few years, expand upon the ideas we have been proposing and compare these with the approaches adopted by other actors.

*Have these expectations been met?*

I would say that this has worked out quite well. We had many opportunities to meet people. And we even sometimes rearranged sessions as we went along to ensure actors we met at the Forum were able to take part.

As for myself, I mainly focused on the theme of sanitation. This Forum was an important step for this topic. In previous forums (Kyoto, Mexico, Istanbul), we were mar-

ginalized when speaking about sanitation. This Forum was the first to pay any real attention to this topic and all elements of the issue were dealt with.

Furthermore, the actors that participated in the preparatory process demonstrated a clear will to discuss and continue working together on this subject.

*What innovative solutions caught your attention, the key ideas that came out of the various discussions?*

Sanitation planning is a topic that particularly interests us and seems to us to be crucial, particularly the connection between the different levels, national and local, as well as perhaps between new intermediary levels that need to be explored.

Although we knew this already, it was also confirmed by other actors that planning is only effective when it is conducted in consultation with and by involving all relevant stakeholders. We will, therefore, continue to work on this issue.

In addition, this forum has shown that the theme of sanitation is increasingly being dealt with in a more all-encompassing manner. Previously, each aspect was covered separately. However, through the strategic planning process, it has become clear that all elements need to be considered together as part of an overarching approach.

*What are your plans for the next few months, the themes to be explored, and partnerships to be developed?*

In my opinion, there are four main issues to be addressed over the next few months:

1) Firstly, we have made a commitment to ensure that the two

targets linked to the planning of, particularly local but also national, sanitation strategies are achieved. We will therefore work with local actors in each country to promote and support the development and implementation of these strategies.

2) As far as we were concerned, most notably absent from the Forum was the subject of rainwater management. Whilst it was touched upon in a few sessions, notably those with AESN, it needs to be given far greater prominence. We cannot wait until the next forum before starting work on this topic, but need to begin giving serious consideration to this issue right away.

3) One project that we are going to start work on immediately is that of small-bore sewers or mini-sewers. This is an option that appears appropriate for certain contexts and one we want to explore further to better define these contexts and thus be able to promote this solution. As a result of an agreement signed this very day by the President of SIAAP and the Director of pS-Eau, we will be able to start conducting a study on this topic.

4) Finally, the issue of access to finance for local stakeholders was dealt with in several sessions, yet there remains much work to be done on this aspect; as such, this is another area that pS-Eau will be working on over the coming months.



**Maurice Ouzoulias, president of SIAAP  
Pierre-Marie Grondin, director of pS-Eau**

Signing of the SIAAP / pS-Eau agreement  
for the study on mini-sewers

## The Butterfly Effect: structured and influential NGO representation

### Interview



**Sophie Tolachides,**  
**Advocacy Director,**  
**Eau Vive**

*Can this 6th World Water Forum be said to have marked a turning point in NGO representation at this type of event?*

This 6th World Water Forum was notable for us on three levels: for the extensive scale of the NGO preparatory process within the Butterfly Effect; for the wide-scale NGO participation in official and parallel sessions; and for the importance afforded to NGOs, particularly as part of the political process.

We have worked hard over the last eighteen months to ensure we were well-structured and coordinated upon arrival in Marseille. The Butterfly Effect was launched on December 2010 with 4 NGO groups (Coalition Eau, International Secretariat for Water, Fresh Water Action Network and Women for Water Partnership), as well as Eau Vive. When we arrived at the Forum, this had expanded to include 90 groups from all over the world. At previous Forums, we have never been this well-organized; working together on this scale is totally new and is something we would like to continue for other upcoming international events, not only the Water Forums, but also UN summits. This World Water Forum is not an end in itself, but an initial key step towards improved NGO organization on an international scale.

Furthermore, for the first time,

there was a truly inclusive official preparatory process. The success of this approach varied depending on the process concerned. The regional process was the most difficult. As far as the thematic process was concerned, there were mainly logistical, internet connection or translation related issues. However, we are very satisfied with our involvement in the political process, even though we expected this to be the least open. We chose to concentrate on the ministerial process, to link to Rio+20 and target national decision-makers. We were invited to take part in two Prep Com (preparatory meetings) held to draw up the Ministerial Declaration. Three seats were allocated to NGOs, one for environmental NGOs, one for development NGOs and one for humanitarian NGOs.

NGO expectations and recommendations were taken into account from the outset, from the first draft of the declaration, and this is an approach that we would really like to see continued for future forums.

*Which NGO messages were finally included in the Ministerial Declaration?*

The Ministerial Declaration adopted during the Forum is a considerable improvement on the first draft. It has been made more binding. We called on states to demonstrate ambition and to take action. The issue of regional and international solidarity was initially overlooked, yet is far more prominent in the final declaration. We also stressed the importance of funding issues and called upon international donors to commit to supporting those countries in

greatest need. Humanitarian issues were adequately addressed, particularly the importance of coordinating activities to ensure the transition from emergency through to the rehabilitation phase.

*What other action do you still intend to take?*

One vital issue remains: that of the human right to water and sanitation. No clear debates took place on this topic during the Prep Com. Certain countries abstained from recognizing this right at the UN General Assembly and the effects of this were felt during the Prep Com. As the Ministerial Declaration has to be adopted by consensus, it was difficult for France and the political commission to render the declaration binding on this issue.

As an NGO coalition, we are going to continue to push this topic. A number of questions remain unanswered: how to implement this right, how to ensure it is written into constitutions, how to render it opposable, and within what timeframe? A deadline of 2030 has been mentioned. The MDG are not an end in themselves. There is unequal access to water in some regions, there are still issues around water quality and, in addition, civil society has a role to play in discussions and consultations with local elected officials, users and the public authorities to ensure these objectives are achieved.



On the way to the 6th World Water Forum – Marseille 2012  
SHARING OUR SOLUTIONS