

e-Conference

“Sanitation:

The Deadly Cost of Doing Nothing”

e-Conference Objectives

Building messages shared by African and European Partners

To contribute to:

- The preparation of a high-level Africa-Europe meeting,
- The AfricaSan+5 meeting
- Various events that will be organised during 2008, International Year of Sanitation

e-Conference Themes

Week 1 (5-10 November): **How to build sound sanitation policies?**

Week 2 (12-17 November): **How to empower and support local governments to face the challenge of providing sanitation services?**

Week 3 (19-24 November): **How to finance sanitation infrastructure and services?**

e-Conference Participants

- 100 participants registered
- 49 contributions from 33 contributors (1/3 of those registered)
- Representatives of NGOs, consultancies, local authorities, research bodies, States, and bi- and multi-lateral organisations
- 2/3 of contributors from Africa & 1/3 from Europe

→ **Exchanging ideas in French and English**

Summary of Discussions

A summary of the rich debates and discussions, is underway.

Hereafter: Some key provisional messages emerging for each of the themes

Theme 1 How to build sound sanitation policies?

Challenge 1.1: How to encourage African decision-makers to consider sanitation as a public service, for which they are responsible?

1. Lobbying actions are essential for African political decision-makers to give due consideration to sanitation
2. Such lobbying actions must be based on economic and social arguments: the lack of sanitation hinders growth and aggravates poverty
3. Civil society, with the right support (in terms of organisation and communications strategy), is the best placed to carry out these lobbying actions

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Challenge 1.2: How to ensure a single, strong national leadership for sanitation?

1. To ensure it has real coordinating power, the national authority responsible for sanitation must be recognised in the country's legislation
2. To influence sector development, the national authority must be a cross-sector structure, covering the various ministries concerned with sanitation
3. This authority is not a project manager. It is, above all, an arena for consensus, reflection and promotion of approaches, tools and solutions to be implemented to meet the sanitation challenge

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Challenge 1.3: How to promote on-site and semi-collective systems as relevant solutions for sanitation needs?

1. On-site sanitation is the most widely developed. Popular with households it has proven to be the most viable system in the African context to date
2. This type of sanitation can only be developed and improved in response to a real demand on the part of the households
3. To be viable, on-site and semi-collective sanitation must not overshadow the rest of the sanitation chain: effluent collection and treatment

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**Summary Theme 1:
How to build sound sanitation policies?**

- Preponderance of on-site sanitation
- Importance of lobbying based on proving the benefits of sanitation (not only health and environmental but also economic and social)
- The importance of having a central government department responsible for the national coordination of the sanitation sector, supported by all stakeholders, in particular local authorities and users.

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**Theme 2 :
How to empower and support
local governments to face the
challenge of providing sanitation
services?**

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Challenge 2.1: How to ensure that roles and responsibilities of local governments are built into national legislation?

1. Lobby governments to strengthen decentralisation laws to ensure that the transfer of skills goes hand-in-hand with a transfer of resources
2. Turn to national associations of local authorities for support
3. Encouragement/support of local authorities so they can develop a sanitation plan and implementation strategy

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Challenge 2.2: How to increase financial support to and capacity of local governments to improve sanitation services?

1. Set up, for elected representatives and technical departments, specific training modules on policy and strategy implementation, service management and project design
2. Plan national budget transfers to local authorities, using local development funds or at least involve local authorities in planning and implementation
3. Set up tariff bracket systems at national and local level / Make use of solidarity financing mechanisms and decentralised cooperation

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Challenge 2.3: How to promote and support tools and procedures tailored for local governments?

1. Take advantage of/adapt existing tools – develop tools that are lacking
2. Integrate a capacity building element into all projects or partnerships
3. Strengthen exchanges and cooperation between State departments and local authorities and between local authorities
4. Have simple tools to present to local authorities their role in the complex task of managing sanitation services

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Challenge 2.4: How to support local governments in building local sanitation strategies?

1. As an addition to, and in line with existing communal development and urbanisation plans, specific strategies for sanitation must be drawn up
2. Set up incentive measures at national level to encourage local authorities to carry out these strategies
3. Encourage development partners to support local authorities in developing sanitation strategies before designing projects
4. Ensure expert support is available and used
5. Strengthen national expertise and capacity to support strategy formulation

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Challenge 2.5: How to increase the involvement of local sanitation stakeholders in sanitation service management?

1. Identify all service stakeholders at local level and involve them in strategy formulation
2. Involve them in implementing the strategies
3. Ensure that the institutional framework facilitates their involvement and recognition

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**Summary Theme 2 :
How to empower and support local governments to face the challenge of providing sanitation services?**

- Key role of national associations of local authorities
- Importance of building the capacities of local authorities and their local partners to understand the sanitation chain, formulate strategies, plan actions and manage services
- Decentralisation must include resource transfer
- Implementation of a sustainable service requires the participation of all stakeholders (AGREEMENT)
- Need for dialogue supported/informed by expert advice
- The problem lies not only in defining a legislative framework, but also in implementing it.

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**Theme 3:
How to finance sanitation infrastructure and services?**

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Challenge 3.1: *How to increase local and national resources allocated to sanitation service improvement?*

1. Clearly identify the complementarity between national and local financing, household sources and development partner funding in relation to each part of the sanitation sector
2. Support the emergence and consolidation of a dynamic sanitation market
3. Raise private sector interest to encourage them to become more involved in the sanitation sector

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Challenge 3.2: *How to ensure that sanitation is seen as a priority and that then necessary funds are made available?*

1. Prove the benefits of sanitation and integration of sanitation issues into national strategies to national decision-makers and parliamentarians
2. Organise experience-sharing workshops between African countries
3. Encourage a citizens' watchdog role / Facilitate the circulation of information on the situation and prospects for improvement (Observatories)

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Challenge 3.3: *How to improve knowledge of sanitation financing? How to build sustainable financing of sanitation services?*

1. Carry out an exhaustive and comparative study of mechanisms and initiatives for financing sanitation / Make the information easily and widely available
2. Organise specific training for local authorities and partners based on the information gathered
3. Set up tax systems that help to mobilise sustainable resources to improve access to sanitation for all

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Summary Theme 3: *How to finance sanitation infrastructure and services?*

- How to find a balance between funding for collective sanitation and on-site sanitation?
- Need to identify the complementarity between the different sources of financing and the sections of the chain to be financed
- Provide decision-making tools to implement sustainable local financing for the whole sanitation chain
- Encourage the emergence and consolidation of a dynamic sanitation market
- The major challenge lies in developing effective financing mechanisms to support household investment

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