

E-conference

“Sanitation, the deadly cost of inaction”

November 5 to 24, 2007

<http://groups.google.fr/group/sanitation-assainissement>

1 Context

Numerous commitments have been made for sanitation in Africa, at the global level, by the international community (governments and donors), by African policy makers, by local governments, by NGOs... (Africa-2000, WSSD Jo'burg 2002, Africasan-2002, Africities3-2003, WASH, AMIWASH, etc.).



The benefits and the impacts on health, the environment, school attendance, economic activity, welfare and dignity, of appropriate sanitation are well known, and have been clearly demonstrated by various, recent cost-benefits analyses.

However, even if sanitation is has gained much more prominence since Jo'burg (2002), there are still considerable difficulties in moving from sanitation advocacy to action. Particularly in Africa, there is a huge gap to fill.

Before embarking on new commitments, it appears worthwhile to examine why commitments are not being met, and to identify ways of working towards implementing them.

2 Background and objectives of the e-conference

During its meeting in Ouagadougou in April 2007, the Africa working group (AWG) of the EU Water initiative (EUWI) decided to launch a debate on sanitation. The objective for the AWG is **to build joint Africa-Europe messages on sanitation**. These message will be used to prepare a high level Africa-Europe meeting, the AfricaSan+5 meeting (to be held in Durban in February 2008) and will also provide a critical input into other events that are being organized for the International year of sanitation.

These messages will build on the outputs of the present e-conference.

This 3-week e-conference will focus on one specific topic per week:

- Week 1 (5 to 10 November): How to promote sound national policies for sanitation?
- Week 2 (12 to 17 November): How to empower and support local governments to face the challenge of providing sanitation services?
- Week 3 (19 to 24 November): How to finance sanitation infrastructure and services?

3 Issues to be debated and discussed during the e-conference

3.1 How to build sound national sanitation policies?

Why is it important?

Sound national sanitation policies and strategies provide:

- a political willingness to consider sanitation issues as public service issues which require the implementation of specific sanitation projects
- clear responsibility-sharing between state departments and strong leadership of the entity in charge of coordination at the national level
- a framework to design efficient sanitation services which takes into account the three necessary stages of the sanitation chain
- tools and methodologies to implement demand-driven approaches

Elaboration of national sanitation policies, there's a long way to go – the case of Mali

During the Western and Central AfricaSan Conference in Ouagadougou on February 2005, the Malian representatives committed to elaborate a national policy for sanitation.

The first step to implement this commitment was the organisation of a National Forum for sanitation, held in April 2006, which aimed to mobilize all stakeholders (state departments, local governments, NGOs, private sector, user associations and development partners) and to define with them shared objectives and a global framework to elaborate a sanitation national policy.

Following this Forum, a working group carried on the process in order to clarify the role of each state department, to specify the role of the different stakeholders, and to draft a first National Policy. In December 2007, a 2nd National Forum for sanitation will be organised to validate with all sanitation stakeholders the draft of the national sanitation policy, and its strategy. The final version is expected to be validated in 2008.

This Malian example shows, (i) that a large mobilisation of all stakeholders is needed and possible (ii) that to implement a such process with all stakeholders, time is needed.

What are the challenges that need to be addressed?

FACTS / ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION	CHALLENGE
Because most decision-makers do not yet consider sanitation a big public service issue , households have become used to finding and developing their own solutions, without any financial or technical help.	#1 <i>How to encourage African decision-makers to consider sanitation as a public service, for which they are responsible?</i>
Because in most African countries numerous ministers and state departments are involved in sanitation without any strong leadership, coordination and coherence between all sanitation activities are missing.	#2 <i>How to ensure a single, strong national leadership for sanitation?</i>
Because decision-makers don't know the various technological options for sanitation, they often consider only sewerage systems as the relevant solution to face sanitation issues, and they are unaware of the complementarity with on-site and semi-collective solutions .	#3 <i>How to promote on-site and semi-collective systems as relevant solutions for sanitation needs?</i>
Because national decision-makers do not have enough knowledge and understanding of the three necessary stages for a sound sanitation service (i. access to sanitation, ii. wastewater and excreta collecting, iii. treatment), sanitation projects focus on only one stage without giving enough attention to the other ones. The result of such segregating approaches is a lack of links between stages and an overall lack of efficiency of the service.	#4 <i>How to improve understanding of a sound sanitation service?</i>
Because tools and methodologies to identify user demand are missing, many projects are unable to propose solutions responding to user expectations.	#5 <i>How to develop sanitation services that are able to identify and respond to user demand?</i>

Questions for the E-conference

- *Do you agree with the 5 challenges listed above?*
- *What solutions can you suggest to address each of these challenges?*
- *Are there any challenges you would like to add to the above list? If so, what are these challenges?*

3.2 How to empower and support local governments to face the challenge of providing sanitation services?

Why is it important?

Local governments can play a substantive role in sanitation improvement, because:

- they are closer to the users and to the local suppliers;
- sanitation, more than water supply, is a local public service, especially when a majority of households have access to sanitation through on-site solutions.

Mobilisation of African Local governments

Every 3 years, United Cities and Local Government of Africa (UCLGA) and the Municipal Development Partnership (MDP) organise the Africities Summit, the Pan-African Local Government Days.

Africities 3, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, was focused on “Improving access to basic services in African cities”. One of the thematic session was on sanitation. During this summit, African local government committed to :

- move from a political willingness for sanitation to the implementation of action plans with specific allocated budgets
- move from a vision for sanitation services to a municipal strategy, elaborated with all stakeholders and responding to the users' expectations.

Following these commitments, MDP launched a programme to improve the methodology for the elaboration of municipal strategies, and support African local government to do it.

What are the challenges that need to be addressed?

FACTS / ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION	CHALLENGE
Because the roles and responsibilities of local governments in sanitation service improvement are not clearly mentioned in national legislation, they are often missing in the implementation and the improvement of sanitation services at local level.	#1 <i>How to ensure that roles and responsibilities of local governments are built into national legislation?</i>
Because the skills transfer from national to local governments is not accompanied by financial and capacity building support , local governments do not have means to improve sanitation services.	#2 <i>How to increase financial support to and capacity of local governments to improve sanitation services?</i>
Because donors don't have tools and procedures adapted to work with and to support local governments and local stakeholders, the latter cruelly lack financial means.	#3 <i>How to promote and support tools and procedures tailored for local governments?</i>
Because local governments don't have clear local strategies for sanitation , elaborated with local stakeholders participation and in respect with the national policies, they have difficulties in identifying priorities and in responding to user expectations.	#4 <i>How to support local governments in building local sanitation strategies?</i>
Because local sanitation stakeholders (local private sector, community organisations, NGOs) are not sufficiently recognized and involved in sanitation service management and improvement, the sanitation improvement efficiency is low.	#5 <i>How to increase the involvement of local sanitation stakeholders in sanitation service management?</i>

Questions for the E-conference

- *Do you agree with the 5 challenges listed above?*
- *What solutions would you suggest to address each of them?*
- *Are there any challenges you would like to add to the above list? If so, what are these challenges?*

3.3 How to finance sanitation infrastructure and services?

Why is it important?

Financing sanitation services needs to be based on:

- a good understanding of the complementarity between on-site and sewerage systems.
- a consideration of how to finance each of the sanitation clusters, from household level (up-stream) to transportation and treatment.
- an identification of the way to find sustainable support to improve household infrastructures and to maintain treatment plants
- a clear mobilisation of national and local decision makers, in conjunction with development partners
- a distinction between financing for “investments”, “operation and maintenance”, “promotion of hygiene and behaviour change”, etc. and a distinction between the nature of the beneficiaries (“government or utility level”, “household level”, etc.)

Strategic sanitation plan in Burkina Faso

Based on the “polluter pays” principle, Burkina Faso decided in 1985 to create a 5% tax for sanitation index-linked to the water bill. This tax is directly collected and used by the National Office for Water and Sanitation (ONEA).

This tax provided an opportunity for ONEA to develop sanitation strategic plans for the two main cities of Burkina Faso : Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso. These strategic sanitation plans recommend the development both of improved on-site sanitation for most of the population and sewerage systems.

The tax is allocated for:

- development of improved autonomous sanitation through promotion campaigns aimed at households, subsidies and training of local tradesmen. Nearly 50,000 infrastructures have been completed in 10 years,
- maintenance of collective sanitation of the industrial zone and city centre,

Without the political will, associated with the sanitation tax, these two programmes would not have succeeded in improving access to sanitation for all by responding to the needs and demand of the whole population of big cities. The new challenge for ONEA is to develop strategic sanitation plans in the other cities of Burkina Faso.

What are the challenges that need to be addressed?

FACTS / ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION	CHALLENGE
Because of delays in putting sanitation infrastructures in place and the rapid population growth particularly in urban areas and small towns, local and national resources are not sufficient to develop and improve sanitation services for all and to manage it, based on complementarity between on-site and sewerage systems	#1 <i>How to increase local and national resources allocated to sanitation service improvement?</i>
Because sanitation used to be only a component of water supply projects and is not given sufficient priority, money is continuing to be more focused on water supply and not enough on sanitation.	#2 <i>How to ensure that sanitation is seen as a priority and that then necessary funds are made available?</i>
Because of insufficient knowledge of sanitation financing issues, most planners and local and national decision-makers have difficulties in building a sustainable financing approach for sanitation services, including investments, and for cost recovery of operations and maintenance.	#3 <i>How to improve knowledge of sanitation financing? How to build sustainable financing of sanitation services?</i>

Questions for the E-conference

- *Do you agree with the 3 challenges listed above?*
- *What solutions can you suggest to address each of them?*
- *Are there any challenges you would like to add to the above list? If so, what are these challenges?*