



Local
actions
for a
global
challenge

SESSION REPORT

FT3.03 Solidarity and Decentralised forms of North/South and South/South
Funding

SESSION CONVENERS

Programme Solidarité Eau (pS-Eau)
UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments)
World Water Council

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Jean-Christophe Deberre, Director of Policy Development, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

André Santini, President, SEDIF (Syndicat des Eaux de l'Île de France)

Charles Josselin, President, CUF (Cités Unies France)

GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT THE SESSION

This session addressed alternative ways, based on solidarity, to meet the challenge of providing water supply and sanitation for all.

SYNOPSIS

In light of this challenge to provide access to water supply and sanitation for all, the session aimed to highlight the existence of a wide range of mechanisms to finance water and sanitation projects that are based on solidarity between peoples and decentralised forms of funding, and to promote such mechanisms as a means to contribute to reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Based on the building of sustainable ties of solidarity between people around the world and the decentralisation of responsibility for water and sanitation provision, such mechanisms are locally-driven, funding is targeted locally and they emphasise capacity building and experience sharing at local level to ensure the long-term viability of actions.

The local actions presented provided a few examples of such mechanisms, highlighting their specific characteristics, their added value and their potential to contribute to providing water and sanitation for all in a sustainable manner.

LOCAL ACTIONS PRESENTED DURING THE SESSION

LA0124 A solidarity between users from France (cent/m³) and from Niger to develop wells in Niger. District of Ouallam, Niger. This Local Action showed that water users in the North are prepared to show their solidarity with users in the South. The French local authority, SIVOA, takes 0.15 Euro cents per m³ billed, and contributes it to development projects in Niger. Its engineers also contribute expertise to these projects. These two actions represent 0.2% and 0.4% of the authority's budget. With the passing of the recent law in France, the Oudin-Santini law allowing local authorities and water agencies to contribute up to 1% of their budget to international cooperation actions in water and sanitation, SIVOA will be able to increase their contribution even further. In the North, their actions have helped to mobilise other local authorities in France, enabling different stakeholders to contribute different skills according to their specific competences. Solidarity mechanisms also create a leverage effect, attracting further financing for the projects from other sources such as French ODA. The people's personal commitment also raises awareness regarding water and sanitation issues. Their close involvement with the communities in Niger that they work with enables relationships and ties to be developed, so that information and experiences can be shared.

LA0969 Creating Sustainable Links between North and South to Finance Access to Water and Sanitation for All. This Local Action focused on the work of WaterAid to address the global lack of water and sanitation and the lack of funding and local capacities. By building a sense of solidarity between water users in the North and water users in the South, WaterAid raises significant funds for water and sanitation projects around the world. WaterAid works with the local water companies to communicate directly with water users when they receive their bill. This establishes a link between the service that they are able to benefit from and people who live without water or sanitation. It is an effective means of raising awareness and creating a sense of solidarity, and as a result donors are very loyal, giving regularly over an average of 8 years. Their communication activities and the work of dedicated donors within community groups such as church and rotary organisations widens their donor community significantly. In 2005-6 WaterAid raised a total of 25 million pounds. Working with local actors, they directly funds the provision of services to some of the poorest communities in Africa and Asia, and support the development of institutional capacity at a district-wide level: working to strengthen the capacity of local government, of services providers (including local NGOs or private sector) and of communities for both self-help management and awareness of rights and entitlements. WaterAid also supports local

partners to challenge the lack of prioritisation, efficiency and effectiveness of national and international funds to the sector.

LA0804 Creating Sustainable Links between North and South to Finance Access to Water and Sanitation for All. This Local Action to improve water supply in a rural town is based on solidarity between the SEDIF, the local water authority in the Paris region, France, GRET, a development NGO, and WASA, the water authority in a small town in Laos. This Local Action presented solidarity mechanisms from the point of view of those in the South. The advantages of this collaboration presented during the session were numerous, including innovation and replicability, support for decentralisation processes, long-term commitment, the ability to attract additional funding and the provision of expertise through the mobilisation of technicians from the French water authority.

LA0679 Impact of solidarity funding and of the lever effect of partnerships (a water basin agency, a solidarity NGO and a professional NGO) with the City of Gumri, Armenia. This Local Action shows another innovative form of solidarity. The actions involve the collaboration between many different players and the NGO leading this Local Action is one formed by the employees of a water company, wishing put their skills and time to help people in developing countries gain access to water and sanitation. This project to improve health and quality of life in Gumri, Armenia through improved water treatment and supply, involved the employee NGO, Aquassistance, an Armenian NGO, the local water utility and the inhabitants themselves.

LESSONS LEARNED

The work of the Camdessus panel and the Gurria task force have demonstrated that the problem of access to water and sanitation is a profoundly local one. And they call for local solutions. This session clearly showed that there are many examples of solidarity and decentralised financing mechanisms that exist and that are working at local level.

They offer a source of financing that comes from a local level from people who are committed and it targets local-level stakeholders.

The financing needed to reach the MDGs is extremely high. In particular, to achieve basic access to water and sanitation the amount is around 12 billion USD. Solidarity and decentralised mechanisms constitute a small but non-negligible contribution (potentially 2 billion Euros from the OECD countries) which complements ODA mechanisms, ensuring a more grass-roots level support. In addition to these figures, the people themselves are mobilised. 1€ given through a sense of solidarity has the capacity to mobilise a further 10€ and secure the investment of the 100 € needed to reach the MDGs.

The actions do not just involve money, they involve people and personal commitment and enable the capacity building that is required to ensure sustainability of projects and to raise confidence and attract further financing.

The different solidarity and decentralised mechanisms show that there is a real “pool” of solidarity from users in developed countries available to support users from developing countries.

There is no single solidarity and decentralised mechanism that can be applied to all countries or regions, but a multitude of mechanisms from which we must learn and adapt each initiative to the specific context.

Solidarity mechanisms could be developed not only between North and South, but also inside the developing countries themselves, between richest and poorest.

KEY MESSAGES

- Solidarity and decentralised financing mechanisms have already demonstrated their added value.
- Such mechanisms and their success must be analysed, and the lessons shared, so that they can be reinforced and extended.
- Local players in the water and sanitation sectors should share experiences and promote solidarity and decentralised forms of funding as a contribution to providing access to water and sanitation for all.

ORIENTATIONS FOR ACTION

To strengthen the implementation of solidarity and decentralised financing mechanisms, it is recommended that

- A global network be formed to share experiences and promote these forms of financing access to water and sanitation for all
- In the North such actions be promoted at all levels to increase the volume of funds and to sustain the commitment of those who support such actions
- In the South such actions should be promoted to demonstrate the viability of locally-driven water and sanitation provision and strengthen the legitimacy of local authorities