

REPORT OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW MEETING TO THE
TWELFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD 12) ON WATER,
SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 8 – 12, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

In preparation for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD12), a regional implementation forum was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 8 to 12 December 2003, to review progress in implementation of Agenda 21, Habitat Agenda and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The deliberations in the meeting focused on water, sanitation and human settlements. An overall review of progress in implementation was undertaken, including the identification of constraints, opportunities and challenges facing African countries in these areas. The deliberations brought into sharp focus the water and sanitation crisis in Africa, as well as the challenge of rapid urbanization, as highlighted in Agenda 21 and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. While the review showed progress in implementation, it also highlighted the inability of some African countries to meet their goals and targets in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

The meeting recalled the commitments that have been undertaken by African countries, including in the Africa Water Vision, the Millennium Development Goals, the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It recalled the African Union decision 29 on sustainable urbanization in Africa adopted at the Maputo Summit. It also reaffirmed NEPAD as the sustainable development framework for Africa.

WATER AND SANITATION

Achievements

The meeting noted the achievements by African countries, including the following:

- African countries have committed themselves to implement several international agreements and goals on water and sanitation.
- African countries have placed water and sanitation high on their development agendas to contribute to poverty eradication.
- Stronger focus on water and sanitation in national policy formulation.
- Increased co-operation at sub-regional level and the creation of high-level forums at the regional level, such as the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW).

Constraints and Obstacles

The meeting identified the following constraints and obstacles to implementation:

- Low capacity for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress.
- Inadequate level of investment for access to safe water and sanitation.
- Insufficient planning for disaster (drought/floods) preparedness.
- Low level of integrated planning for the provision of decent shelter with basic water and sanitation services, including people in conflict areas.

- Insufficient capacity at local government level to plan and deliver water and sanitation services.
- Low level of integration between health and hygiene education and water and sanitation services delivery.
- Unsustainable and inefficient use of resources.
- Difficulty in mobilizing resources to implement long-term plans.
- Vulnerability of African countries to global environmental changes.
- Inability to manage rapid urbanization.
- HIV/Aids pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis, and other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Possible approaches and lessons learnt

The meeting identified possible approaches, including:

- Need to highlight water and sanitation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and other national development strategies.
- Linking water and sanitation to education and health and human settlements.
- Establishing innovative and accountable partnerships with private sector, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.
- Closer collaboration among African NGOs to assist capacity building and resource mobilization.
- Promoting the use of appropriate technology in water conservation, rainwater harvesting, sanitation, solid waste and wastewater treatment to increase access to safe water and adequate sanitation, and housing.
- Promote integrated land use and development planning to optimize capacity and resource utilization.
- Increase investment in research and development in water and sanitation.
- Increase of government financing to improve access to water and sanitation.
- Closer alignment of sectoral policies and programmes to NEPAD activities and other development processes.
- Promote regional and international cooperation for better water management and conflict prevention through trust and confidence building.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Achievements

The meeting noted the achievements by African countries, including the following:

- a) Adequate shelter for all:
- Improved access to land and secure tenure
 - Enhanced planning and management towards sustainable land-use policies
 - Provision of infrastructure and basic services
 - Improvement of the lives of slum dwellers through slum upgrading programmes and projects, among others.
 - Implementation of the Sustainable Cities Programme Integration of sustainable human settlements in national development strategies in some African countries.
 - Implementation of Local Agenda 21 projects in some countries.
 - Promotion of good urban governance.

b) Energy and transport in human settlements:

- Promotion and provision of access to energy and its diversification; and mainstreaming of energy efficiency measures in the housing sector.
- Construction and rehabilitation of roads.
- Promotion of different modes of transport, including non-motorised.

c) Provision of resources for implementation:

- Establishment of national housing funds and other mechanisms for housing finance in many countries.
- Promotion of informal credit services for housing.

Constraints and Obstacles

The meeting identified constraints and obstacles to implementation, including:

- Inadequate means of implementation including: lack of financial resources, increasing debt burden, inadequate technology transfer, and poor donor response.
- Rising poverty, especially urbanisation of poverty.
- Slow progress in good governance and prevalence of conflicts and civil unrest.
- Prevalence of diseases, and especially communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- Limited and / or absence of lending institutions in the financing of low-income housing.
- Slow pace of economic growth and vulnerability of African economies to external shocks.
- Weak institutional capacity in African countries.
- Inadequate access to land for human settlements.
- Weak regulatory and administrative frameworks.
- Inadequate enabling environment for participation of private sector.
- Non-involvement and/or lack of capacity in local authorities to undertake the expanded developmental role in management of human settlements.
- Poor human settlement planning
- Limited participation and involvement of civil society in human settlement development
- Slow pace of decentralisation
- Natural and man-made disasters
- The impacts of urbanisation on the African River basins affecting quantity and quality of water demand management.

Challenges

The meeting identified challenges to implementation, including:

- Inability to manage rapid urbanisation.
- Transforming African cities into assets for sustainable development.
- Mobilisation of domestic resources for human settlements development.
- Empowering local government and strengthening the relationship with civil society in implementing and managing human settlements programmes.

- Empowering women and youth and encouraging gender mainstreaming in human settlements.

Possible approaches and lessons learnt

The meeting identified possible approaches, including:

- Need for inspiring and committed leadership.
- Need for innovative and accountable partnerships, broad participation by all stakeholders, and to learn from best practices.
- Focus on slum upgrading, using local resources and technology and focusing on employment creation, as a point of departure to achieve the goals and objectives of Local Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, the JPOI and NEPAD.
- Importance of recognising the role of the informal sector in the development of policy and long-term economic planning.
- Complementary and integrated approaches to promote and implement sustainable human settlements.
- Need to enhance and strengthen sub regional and inter-regional cooperation in the development of sustainable human settlements.

Recommendations

The meeting made the following recommendations:

- Ensuring translation of international commitments into national policies, programmes and strategies, and acceleration of service delivery in water, sanitation and human settlements.
- Significantly increase the proportion of national, provincial and municipal budgets to provide water, sanitation and human settlements to the poor, to demonstrate commitment.
- Utilize integrated water resource management (IWRM) as framework for implementation and to this end prepare integrated water resources management strategies by the year 2005.
- Implement catchment conservation and water demand management to mitigate degradation of water and related land resources, and optimise available resources and infrastructure in both rural and urban settings.
- Initiate the devolution of water resource management to catchment-based institutions, where appropriate.
- Devolution of power and resources to local governments and enhancing their capacity to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate water, sanitation and human settlements.
- Increase investment in monitoring, assessment and information systems, to underpin integrated water resource management (IWRM).
- Promote water, sanitation and shelter as basic needs and fundamental human rights.
- Increase the efficient use of urban indicators and national and local urban observatories in human settlements development and management as well as other sources of data including proxy indicators.
- Mainstream gender and youth in the provision of water, sanitation and human settlements.
- Enforce corporate responsibility for environmental protection.

- Adopt best practices on technological innovations available from the experiences of civil society organizations including the use of indigenous knowledge for the provision of adequate housing, water and sanitation to the poor.
- Call upon development partners to honour their commitments, especially the provision of 0.7 per cent of GDP as official development assistance (ODA).
- Call upon the international community to fully implement debt swaps to support in-country programmes on water, sanitation and housing infrastructure.
- Request the international community to support the Global Shelter Assistance Facility (GSAF) to enable UN-Habitat to assist African countries to implement slum-upgrading programmes.
- Call upon the international community to increase its support for NEPAD to assist African countries to meet their goals and objectives in water, sanitation and human settlements.
- Adopt and operationalise partnerships at local, national and international levels, as well as create an enabling environment for broader participation from all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and in the provision of water and sanitation.
- Water and sanitation should be addressed within the framework of sustainable human settlement planning, development and management.
- Mainstream disaster management into the management of water, sanitation and human settlements.

LINKAGES BETWEEN WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The meeting recognized the importance of linkages between water, sanitation and human settlements. It encouraged African countries to promote policies that integrate these sectors in their efforts to eradicate poverty and promote socio-economic goals. Its recommendations also addressed these linkages. Areas in which these linkages are more pronounced include the following:

- Rapid urbanization and the prevalence of slums.
- Infrastructure development associated with water, sanitation and human settlements.
- Decentralization and devolution of responsibility in the provision of basic services.
- Capacity building to support decentralization for the effective implementation of programmes and projects.
- Need for integrated country teams involving key ministries for finance, budget and economic planning, housing, local government, water and environment, to plan and implement all issues pertaining to water, sanitation and human settlements.