

A Post-2015 Drive for Universal Access to Water and Sanitation¹

Leo Atakpu¹

Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation

Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Resolution A/res/55/2), which set out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).² There is no separate Goal for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, even though this was a major issue plaguing the poor of the world, responsible for millions of deaths annually. However, with target 10 of the MDGs, States committed themselves to “*halving, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.*” At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, States additionally committed themselves to the target of: “*halv[ing], by the year 2015...the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.*”

It is instructive to note that within the United Nations system, three initiatives were instigated to encourage achievement of the goals and targets:

- A process of national reporting to view progress towards achievement of the Goals;
- The Millennium Project was established, drawing together hundreds of policy makers, practitioners and experts from across a wide range of institutions and countries to research how progress can be accelerated and sustained; and
- The Millennium Development Goals campaign was launched to spread awareness and build global support for the Goal.³

As many as 800 million people are without access to an improved water source, and many more remain without access to or a supply of safe and sustainable water. Indeed, it is likely that the number of people using safe water supplies has been overestimated, since water quality testing was not feasible on a global scale at the time when the MDG target was formulated. In addition, disparities continue to exist between and within countries. For example, the poorest in Sub-Saharan Africa have only experienced limited progress in drinking-water coverage. Moreover, not enough attention has been given to the inter-linkages between service provision and management of surface and groundwater water resources, as well as to sustainable mechanisms for financing and maintaining water supply services and infrastructure. If sustainability aspects are not duly considered, there is considerable risk of slippage on the gains made in extending these services.⁴

Women play an important, if not essential role, in water management. The differences and inequalities between women and men influence how individuals respond to changes in water resources management. Understanding gender roles, relations, and inequalities can help explain the choices people make and their different options. Involving both women and men in integrated water resources initiatives can increase project effectiveness and efficiency.⁵

¹ This chapter is an abridged version of a longer and more full discussion of the challenges and prospects for sustainable development goals relating to water and sanitation.

It is essential to track the financing for achieving the MDG targets related to water and sanitation. In examining financing, there has been a strong focus on capital expenditure and identification of sources of funding for such capital expenditure, rather than on the adoption of an overall “sector financing” approach, examining in detail what may be needed to operate and maintain existing assets.

The allocation of development resources to the water and sanitation sector also continues to be shaped by the use of donor conditionality, donor-driven development initiatives, the reliance on market and private sector-led development, and the increased use of loan finance by several donors. These policies belie true development partnerships and undermine democratic country ownership and the potential for self-determination of development plans, as well as the establishment of strong and effective country-led institutions. For example, in 2008 alone, the World Bank (WB) Group financing in the water sector totalled US\$2.5 billion.

However, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Sub-Saharan Africa are critical of the role of the WB in this sector. “The World Bank has financed a couple of Water Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa putting conditionality, which focuses more on privatization of public utilities under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement, which in the end takes the poor further away from gaining access to this basic life need”, notes David Akuta, Programme Manager of Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN).⁶

The story is no different with bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA), which comes into the water sector with an avalanche of conditionality. Some make it compulsory for benefiting communities to pay between 10% and 20% of the cost of a water facility before they receive aid. Poor communities that are unable to

meet such conditions are cut off from benefiting from such aid.

Highlights of OECD ODA flows

The OECD collects and regularly updates statistics on aid for water supply and sanitation. The data collection is based on a standard methodology and agreed definitions, which ensures that data can be used to analyse trends and compare the efforts of donors.⁷ OECD analysis provides insight on how and where aid for water is spent. While aid to water supply and sanitation has increased in recent years, these contributions still seem to be insufficient considering the funding needs.⁸

- Aid was instrumental in encouraging progress towards the MDG targets on water supply and sanitation. Since 1990, drinking water and sanitation coverage in the developing world has increased by 16% and 20% respectively. However, much remains to be done. Drinking water coverage averages only 63% in LDCs, and much of sub-Saharan Africa and several of the most populous Asian countries remain off track in meeting the MDG sanitation target.
- In 2010-11, total annual average aid commitments to water and sanitation amounted to US\$7.6 billion, representing 6% of total sector allocable aid. The largest bilateral providers in 2010-11 were Japan (23% of total aid to the sector, or an average of US\$1.8 billion per year), Germany (11% or US\$868 million) and the United States (6% or US\$442 million). IDA provided US\$1.3 billion (17% of aid to sector) and the EU Institutions US\$538 million (7% of aid to the sector).
- In 2010-11, aid to water and sanitation targeted regions most in need of improved access to water and sanitation: Sub-Saharan Africa received 25% of total aid to the sector, and South and Central Asia, 23%.

The poorest countries (LDCs and other LICs) received 33% of total aid to the sector.

- Of total DAC members' aid to this sector in 2010-11, water supply activities represented 19%, sanitation 18%, and combined water supply and sanitation activities 42%; the remaining 21% consisted of sector budget support, contributions to funds managed by international organisations, waste management and education activities.

Other countries that have significantly increased their aid to the sector in recent years include Switzerland, Australia and Finland. Among those providing aid for water and sanitation, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), with 20% and 18% respectively, extended the highest proportion of their aid to the sector.

Africa is a priority recipient of European Union (EU) aid to the water sector, with 60% of the EU's ODA to the water sector going to Africa. According to the EU Water Initiative, these allocations provide a strong incentive to enhance co-ordination in policy dialogue between Europe and Africa, for example through the mechanisms of the European Union Water Initiative (AWG) and the Africa Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW).⁹

However, Wateraid (2011) notes that partner governments in developing countries and donors need to recognise that their allocations to the sector fall far short of what is required. Estimates show that the funding gap in Sub-Saharan Africa alone is as high as US\$15 billion a year, and although data is less certain, the financing gap across all developing countries is likely to be several times that amount. This 2011 estimate is now three years old, and the gap will certainly have increased.

Funding solutions may increasingly look to cost recovery and utility efficiency, contributions from households, and the private sector. But governments in particular must provide the lead and the lion's share of the step change in funding, with the support of donors and international agencies. These latter resources will also help secure a sustainable balance between domestic and external resources.

There are positive examples of donors increasing their aid to WASH, including the African Development Fund's substantial increase to US\$280 million,¹⁰ and Australia's increase from A\$45 million in 2008-09 to A\$175 million in 2010-11 and its plans to increase further to A\$350 million by 2014-15.¹¹ Others however, such as Sweden, Norway and the Inter-American Development Bank Special Fund have reduced their WASH aid budgets over recent years.¹² The UK, which as recently as 2009 announced its intention to increase its WASH funding for Africa to £200 million a year, spent only half that amount worldwide in 2010-11.¹³

Poor donor coordination and transparency

The evidence from various case studies suggests that much more that needs to be done to improve coordination and transparency, despite examples of donors participating in national coordination and harmonisation platforms. Ethiopia and Mozambique have 20 donors simultaneously providing resources to the WASH sector; Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya have eighteen. While in these cases a lead donor has been identified, for other countries — such as Niger where 15 donors are active — there is no lead donor. Nevertheless, procurement and reporting compliance is reducing the efficiency of the sector in Ethiopia. In Madagascar there is considerable fragmentation with 10 active donors generally

working outside of government systems. As non-DAC donors such as China, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates begin to increase their activity in the sector, effective donor coordination between DAC and non-DAC donors becomes an even more urgent priority. 14

The growing role of non-DAC donors also increases the importance of clear and transparent reporting of aid. Lack of transparency on aid allocation and disbursements is a general problem, which the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is addressing, but donor reporting on WASH is especially poor. Sanitation is the most off-track MDG sector but donor reporting makes it very difficult to disaggregate water supply from sanitation aid flows. This is important because the lack of accessible data about where aid resources go has a direct bearing on the rationality and accountability of decisions for the allocation of WASH resources. It is also difficult to establish how much donor funding is 'off-budget' or does not go through national government budgeting and accounts.¹⁵ All of these conditions make policy-making, monitoring and evaluation all the more difficult.

Financing Water and Sanitation Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

Despite these clear benefits for human development, many countries seem to have allocated insufficient resources to meet the MDG target for sanitation and drinking water by 2015. When compared with other sectors — particularly the other major social sectors of education and health — sanitation and drinking water receive a relatively low priority for both ODA and domestic allocations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the total spending required in developing countries to meet the water component of the

MDG target, excluding programme costs, is US\$42 billion; meanwhile, for sanitation the figure is pegged at US\$142 billion. The current national governments' budget allocation on water and sanitation does not seem likely to be sufficient to resolve these conditions soon enough. Hence, private sector investment in water and sanitation infrastructure is a prerequisite to achieve water and sanitation Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶

Current and future water challenges can be solved only by a multi-stakeholder approach, i.e. through cooperation among national governments, the international donor community, private sector, civil society and youth. National governments will need to allocate an adequate portion of their budget dedicated to water and sanitation, and the international donor community should prioritize investments in water and sanitation related infrastructure. Private sector investment should be encouraged through tax discounts, subsidies and awards.

Some recommendations for financing a Water and Sanitation SDG include: 1) increasing aid flow to Sub-Saharan Africa and other countries in critical conditions of WASH; and 2) fair, equitable and sustainable cost recovery strategies for a sustainable financing of WASH. Cost recovery must also be sought with a best possible use of tariffs, taxes and transfers, to cover needs related to infrastructure development and extension, operation and maintenance.

Situating water, sanitation and hygiene in the Post-2015 SDGs

One of the main outcomes of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, was the agreement by Member States to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs to succeed the Millennium Development Goals.

Rio+20 did not elaborate specific goals, but stated that the SDGs should be limited in number, aspirational, and easy to communicate. The goals should address in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015. A 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly was tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs.

Interestingly, a Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation had members meeting with over 260 CSOs, the poor in communities, governments, the private sector, UN agencies, and other stakeholders in over 60 countries. It recognised that water is a key determinant in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development, and must be a central focus of the post-2015 development agenda.

However, a number of CSOs working on water and sanitation issues have elaborated ideas for a proposed dedicated Goal for Water. The Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS) believes that given the weakness of the sanitation target in the MDGs, there is an express need for a dedicated goal for both water and sanitation.¹⁷ This also remains the position of organisations like Wateraid and campaigns such as the End Water Poverty (EWP).¹⁸ In like manner, the Africa Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) at the Fifth Africa Water Week (AWW) held in Dakar, Senegal in May 2014 demanded a dedicated Water Security and Sanitation Goal for the post-2015 SDGs.

Key elements of a dedicated water and sanitation goal

The much anticipated Water and Sanitation Goal directly addresses the development aim of societies, promotes human dignity, and ensures

the long-term sustainability of achievements, leading to the following development outcomes, among others:

- **Healthy People:** Through universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, improving water quality and raising service standards.
- **Increased Prosperity:** Through the sustainable use and development of water resources, increasing and sharing the available benefits.
- **Equitable Societies:** Through robust and effective water governance with more effective institutions and administrative systems, as well as through enforcement of right to water and sanitation.
- **Protected Ecosystems:** Through improved water quality and wastewater management taking account of environmental limits. An end to open defecation.
- **Resilient Communities:** Through reduced risk of water-related disasters to protect vulnerable groups and minimize economic losses.¹⁹

Recommendations for action to ensure water and sanitation for the poor

Achieving access to water, sanitation and hygiene requires the concerted and deliberate prioritization of water and sanitation in development agendas at the global, regional, national, and community levels. The following recommendations, based on field experience and some suggestions from *Water and Sanitation for The Unserved Poor*, could help the world achieve the desired results:

1. Formulate a distinct Goal for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in the post-2015 SDGs.
2. Target aid on the basis of need: to Sub-

Saharan Africa and South Asia in particular; to least developed, fragile and low income countries; and to lower middle income countries where need is high.

3. Provide aid as grants rather than loans, and focus on basic services for rural areas and poor urban areas.
4. Reduce the burden of red tape on developing country governments and align aid with national policies and systems.
5. G20 countries should consider innovative financing mechanisms, such as financial transaction taxes, carbon taxes, and international transport taxes as part of the funding solution and to mitigate the impacts of excessive financial volatility and dangerous climate change.
6. Double global aid flows to water, sanitation and hygiene to release an additional US\$10 billion per year in the run up to 2015 and beyond.
7. Governments and donor agencies should simultaneously pursue investment and reforms for improved water supply, sanitation and water management. Improvement in the use of finances through South-South and North-South knowledge exchange and cooperation is also strongly recommended.
8. Governments and donor agencies must empower local authorities and communities with the authority, resources and professional capacity required to manage water supply and sanitation service delivery.
9. Governments and utilities must ensure that users who can pay, do pay, in order to fund the operation, maintenance and expansion of services — but they must also ensure that the needs of poor households are met.
10. Governments and their civil society and private sector partners must support a wide range of water and sanitation technologies

and service levels that are technically, socially, environmentally and financially appropriate.

11. Institutional, financial and technological innovation must be promoted in strategic areas.
12. The UN system organizations and their Member States must ensure the provision of strong and effective support for the achievement of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene SDG and targets (if achieved), as well as for water resources management and development.

References

- Ethan Bilby (2012) *REUTERS*, September 28, 2012.
- Roberto Lenton, *Water and Sanitation for The Unserviced Poor*, Co-Coordinator of the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation, 2005.
- Sarajuddin Isar (2012) Was the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) a Success? *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development* Vol. 9, Issue 1 (2012), Pp. 107 – 122
- Mainstreaming gender in water, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UNCTAD (2014) World Investment Report 2014.
- 2006 Gender, water and sanitation. Policy brief. Interagency Task Force on Gender and Water, 2006
- The Post 2015 Water Consultation Report pp. 56-57.
- Wateraid 2011, Off-track, off-target: Why investment in water, sanitation and hygiene is not reaching those who need it most.
- Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the Promotion and Protection of Investments. Dar es Salaam, January 7, 1994.
- Action aid international, “Turning off the taps – Donor conditionality and water privatisation in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,” September 2004.

- PricewaterhouseCoopers, "Review of the city water services limited (the operator) submission on the grounds for an interim re-view of tariff under lease contract and equity contribution," November 2004.
- TRC Economic Solutions "Contract Renegotiations of Lease Contract between Dar es Salaam Water and Sewerage Authority (DAWASA) and City Water Services Ltd (CWS)," May 24, 2005.
- World Bank "Project Appraisal Document on a proposed credit in the amount of SDR 40.0 million (USD 61.5 million equivalent) to the United Republic of Tanzania for the Dar es Salaam water supply and sanitation project," April 10, 2003.
- OECD "Investor-To-State Dispute Settlement In Infrastructure Projects," Working Papers On International Investment Number 2006/2, March 2006.
- United Nations Conference On Trade And Development (UNCTAD), Latest Developments in Investor-State Dispute Settlement, IIA MONITOR No. 4 (2006) International Investment Agreements – UNCTAD/WEB/ITE/IIA/2006/11, Geneva, United Nations, 2006.
- 5 Source: (The) World's Women 2010. Trends and Statistics. UNDESA, 2010
 - 6 NEWSAN is a network of over 300 Civil Society Organisations working in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Nigeria. The World Bank financed Urban Water reform projects in Nigeria.
 - 7 Data cover flows from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), non-DAC providers of development assistance that report their assistance to the DAC, and multilateral agencies including the World Bank, regional development banks, UN agencies and other agencies such as the Arab institutions or Global Environment Facility. The coverage improves from year to year. In addition to aid flows, non-concessional developmental flows for water extended by bilateral development finance institutions and multilateral agencies are collected through the Creditor Reporting System (CRS). Data collection has also started from private charitable foundations. Data accessed at OECD-DAC, www.oecd.org/dac/stats/water, June 2013.
 - 8 It is estimated that about USD 18 billion per year are needed to expand water services in developing countries to achieve the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals. To maintain the existing water infrastructure, another USD 54 billion of investments per year are needed. OECD (2011), Meeting the Challenge of Financing Water and Sanitation: Tools and Approaches.

Endnotes

- 1 Leo Atakpu (2014) is Chairman, Board of Trustees, Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW) and a member of the Board of Reality of Aid (RoA) Africa. He is also the Deputy Executive Director of Africa Network on Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ). He has led several initiatives in Nigeria's Water and Sanitation sector culminating in the establishment of the National Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN), a coalition of over 300 NGOs working in the WASH sector in Nigeria. He can be reached on ohiroatakpu@yahoo.co.uk, @LAtakpu. skype: Leo.Atakpu
- 2 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
- 3 For more information on the progress of the MDG on water and sanitation and limitations of the goals, see Meeting the Millennium Development Goals
- 4 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation (2012): Progress and Sanitation and Drinking Water, 2012 Update, WHO, Geneva.
- 9 EUWI Africa Working Group Report titled: "Working Together to improve aid effectiveness in the water sector 2007-2008"
- 10 2007-2009 annual average, an increase of over ten times AfDB aid in 2000-2002.
- 11 See www.dfat.gov.au/facts/international_aid.html and www.wateraid.org/australia.
- 12 Sida for example spent much less in 2010 than in 2009 and 2008 (SEK 321 million compared with SEK 600 million and SEK 500 million respectively), Sida (2006-2010) Portfolio insights water and sanitation.
- 13 Bilateral aid: written Parliamentary Answer from Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for International Development Stephen O'Brien to Lindsay Roy MP (24 May 2011).
- 14 China for example has been active in the WASH sector in Africa over the past decade with significant water supply and infrastructure projects in Angola, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Mozambique and Nigeria. Saudi Arabia, as well as being active in North African countries over the past decades, has funded WASH projects in Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius and Senegal. Brazil has been a significant WASH donor in Angola and has worked with Japan in funding a

Chapter 3: Defining the post-2015 world: What roles for inclusive rights-based partnerships?

major WASH project in Zambezi province in Mozambique. In 2009, the United Arab Emirates funded WASH projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Kenya.

- 15 Off-budget funding by donors is where finance is disbursed directly to the implementing project, agency or to state or local government and is usually not recorded by the central government.
- 16 JMP 2012 Report.
- 17 ANEW is a network of networks of Civil Society Organisations working in thirty-three (33) African countries. It has its secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya. www.anew.org.
- 18 End Water Poverty is a global coalition campaigning to end the water and sanitation crisis. It was established in 2008 and since then it has grown to over 270 members in over 60 countries. Wateraid is a UK-based Charity with presence in over 60 countries of the world supporting Governments, Civil Society Organisations to achieve access to Water and Sanitation.
- 19 Extracts from UN Water Paper on a Global Goal for Water approved 27 January 2014.