

HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL IN AFRICA IN ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary goal of the USAID West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program is to increase sustainable access to safe water and sanitation and improve hygiene in West Africa. The Program is designed to strengthen the national and regional enabling environment for integrated WASH. Consequently, the Program collaborated with Water and Sanitation for Africa to organize the 3rd edition of the High Level Forum for Water and Sanitation in Abidjan, Ivory Coast from 21 to 23 November, 2013. The forum aimed to promote effective cooperation between the developing countries to accelerate access to potable water, hygiene, and sanitation in Africa. The forum brought together over 400 specialists from the water and sanitation sector in Africa. The proceedings of the forum include recommendations on four main areas: (1) triangular cooperation; (2) business opportunities and financing; (3) sustainability in the water and sanitation sector; and (4) knowledge management, information sharing, and capacity building in the water and sanitation sector.

In relation to triangular cooperation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Government agency primarily responsible for administering foreign aid, presented its 2013-2018 water and development strategy. The strategy aims to save lives and advance development through improved water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs, and through sound management and use of water for food security. In line with this goal, the agency funded the USAID West Africa, Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program through which several program activities significantly address the challenges in the WASH sector in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Niger. The USAID WA-WASH Program has four objectives that include: (1) to support catalytic approaches to accelerate access to water and sanitation services and improved hygiene behavior; (2) to develop and implement improved models for sustainability of the provision of WASH services; (3) to build synergies between the WASH and the critical regional priorities of USAID/West Africa in terms of food security, climate change and sustainable resource management; and (4) to strengthen the national and regional enabling environment for integrated WASH. The Program is implemented within the legal and legislative contexts of the host countries. In one of the presentation on public-private partnerships, the national lottery of Burkina Faso shared its experience with the USAID WA-WASH program for public contributions to the improving access to potable water.

In reference to business support and financing opportunities between Africa and the southern countries, the forum highlighted innovative technologies that could benefit from financial support such as the biogas production in rural areas as an alternative source of energy and a means of waste management and the desalination of sea water. The forum highlighted other innovative programs such as the market structuring of fecal sludge management program implemented by the Water and Sanitation for Africa (WSA) which aims to improve access to affordable sanitation in Dakar, Senegal, and the Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) public-private partnership model. The model is based on: (1) increasing the demand by increasing the willingness and the capacity of people to pay for sanitation services; and (2) improving the provision of services taking while into account the factors that influences the price of the service.

In relation to sources of finance, the benefits of Islamic finance were presented to the participants. However, the Islamic financial resources should be supported by a favorable regulatory and fiscal framework and strengthened capacity of human resources. In addition, the water index is an innovation that enables insuring WASH related businesses to help them acquire loans from financial institutions. Further, mobilizing multiple sources of funds for WASH programs, for example the 1% Dakar project in Senegal that aims to improve the living conditions of people. The project is financed by: (1) the use of 1% of the water fees paid to municipalities; (2) private enterprises through corporate social responsibility; and (3) international donors who fund more than 50% of the project costs. During the forum, the innovative financing mechanisms were operationalized by the signing of 36 letters of intent to finance worth approximately \$ 5.7 billion for WASH programs in Africa.

Sanitation for all remains one of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that lags behind in terms of achievements. Therefore, the forum identified three approaches to address the situation: (1) demand-led approaches to sanitation; (2) household level sanitation services; and (3) commercial sanitation services. Other recommendations from the forum include involving small and medium enterprises in the WASH sector, capacity building of human resources, fund raising efforts, and good governance.

The forum highlighted the role of the Pan-African Intergovernmental Agency for Water and Sanitation for Africa that was established to support the resource mobilization strategy in: (1) mobilizing resources from the private sector; (2) assessing and encouraging a greater involvement of the different beneficiaries; and (3) mobilizing resources through public-private partnerships.

In terms of knowledge management, information sharing, and capacity building in the water and sanitation sector, the forum recommended the establishment of a platform for exchange and sharing between involved actors for improved skills. Effective cooperation to address the challenges posed by global warming and the rapid population growth was emphasized in the forum. Moreover, given the negative impact of waste water on climate change, sanitation initiatives such as sensitizing the major waste water producers such (factories, municipalities, etc.) were recommended. In addition, to effectively meet the water needs of people, the forum recommended setting-up water treatment plants that would be funded through public-private partnerships. Investment planning for water and sanitation infrastructure as well as capacity building on partnerships among the southern countries was recommended. This calls for the development of a master plan by creating a business model that promotes technical skills and institutional capacity.

To enhance the sustainability of the WASH sector investments, the forum recommended using local materials, establishing national standards, and integrating the cultural and social dimension in WASH programs and studies. Furthermore, the forum supported the development of a system to extend the implementation of sanitation infrastructure projects in rural areas and encourage public-private partnership based on community management models. The water and sanitation companies were urged to promote the various operating, distribution, and water treatment technologies developed as part of water infrastructure projects. The forum recommendations were consolidated into a final document.

The full report is available (in French) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>

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