INNOVATIVE WATER TECHNOLOGIES CONFERENCE HELD IN OUAGDOUGOU ON MAY 11-13, 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary goal of the USAID WA-WASH Program is to increase access to safe water, sanitation, and improved hygiene in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Niger. The Innovative Water Technologies Conference organized by the USAID WA-WASH Program was held from 11-13 May 2015 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The goal of the conference was to share successful experiences from the implementation of innovative and appropriate low-cost technologies for community drinking water supply from various organizations including the USAID WA-WASH Program which has been working for three and a half years of self-supply implementation.

The conference brought together 137 participants, including state actors, professionals, sub-regional institutions, civil society, international NGOs, youth networks, technical and financial partners, the media, educational and research institutions. The opening ceremony was presided over by Mrs. Seraphine Medah, Head of Social Work Services in the Municipality of Ouagadougou, representing the President of the special delegation. She welcomed the participants and contextualized the issues of access to basic services in terms of water supply, hygiene, and sanitation. In addition, Dr. Lakhdar Boukerrou, the Regional Director of the USAID WA-WASH Program, provided a background to the conference and outlined its objectives. Finally, Mr. Ali Traore, the Secretary General in the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Sanitation and Food Security thanked the USAID WA-WASH Program for its intervention in the water and sanitation sector and officially opened the conference.

The conference was divided into six thematic sessions: (1) sharing experiences on innovative technologies for managing water service delivery in rural areas; (2) roundtable discussion on household water treatment technologies; (3) promotion of low-cost technologies for drinking water provision at the household level; (4) the role of the youth networks in implementing innovative water technologies; (5) technologies for providing drinking water services at the community level; and (6) group work on the practical application of low-cost technologies. These sessions were followed by a wrap–up of the conference which included a set of recommendations and a final declaration.

The key lessons learned include: (1) the development of low-cost technologies does not compete with the conventional water service provision but is rather an alternative for populations in need; (2) the promotion of low-cost technologies requires the parallel development of services and supply networks as well as guidance on compliance with technical standards at the local level; (3) there is potential for job creation in the WASH sector through youth involvement in creating and popularizing new water technologies; (4) innovative technologies such as solar and rope pumps, sand dams, and rain water harvesting would facilitate access to water for multiple use in rural and semi-urban areas because of the many advantages they offer.

The main concerns raised were: (1) the integration of financial resources for monitoring and evaluation in municipal budgets; (2) the capacity building of municipal officials and water user associations (WUAs) on monitoring tools such as water accounting, mobile tracking technology, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks; (3) the evaluation of the long-term effects of residual chlorine on human health and the environment; (4) the need to raise awareness on the use of household water treatment products such as Aquatabs; (5) the sustainable and efficient management of different technologies.

A number of recommendations targeting local and national government were formulated to: (1) encourage local authorities to include the cost of monitoring and evaluation in municipal budgets; (3) strengthen the capacity of the municipal water and sanitation technical staff on monitoring and evaluation, infrastructure management, and database

use; (3) encourage the availability of funds from the national government to support the municipalities; (4) support the acquisition of computer systems and training to facilitate data collection and analysis at the municipal level; (5) advocate for improved internet access in rural areas to facilitate the use of information technology.

Another set of recommendations targeting various stakeholders were formulated to promote the use of low-cost technologies, including: (1) integration of household water treatments in the national drinking water policy; (2) involving public health workers in monitoring the effects of water treatment (any adverse effects due to prolonged use of the product); (3) engaging the water resources ministries right from the experimental phase of innovations; (4) advocating for the inclusion of low-cost technologies in the government policies for rural households; (5) involving the media in the promotion of projects using innovative technologies; and (6) demonstrating the benefits of the low cost technologies such as manual drilling, rope pumps, impluvium, and sand dams for self-financing or financing by micro-credit.

Participants also identified the need to strengthen commercial marketing and develop public-private partnerships (PPP) to finance low-cost water infrastructure an self-supply; create an enabling environment for the private sector to promote innovative technologies, encourage the integration of appropriate low-cost technologies in municipal development plans; encourage the participation of youth networks in WASH sector conferences and fora in order to build their knowledge; provide technical and financial support to scale-up technology developed by young professionals and entrepreneurs; create partnerships between industry stakeholders and youth networks; encourage research and training institutions to invest in WASH sector expertise and undertake research on innovative technologies; facilitate access to funding to communities for the acquisition of the innovative water technologies; and promote the implementation of the 3R approach in WASH development at the municipality and village levels.

Finally, they all agreed to continue to meet at regular intervals to share experiences on how they are solving challenges in the water supply sector for the well-being of communities.

This is an Executive Summary of a report dated May 2015. The full report is available (in English) 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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