

BRIEF REPORT ON THE 7:30 BREAKFAST DEBATE – MAY 30TH 2008

“A DROP IN THE BUCKET: HOW DO WE IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY TO DAR ES SALAAM’S POOR?”

Dar es Salaam has grown from a town of about 50,000 inhabitants in the 1950s to a city of over three million to date. Until the late 1970s, the city’s water supply services more or less kept pace with the rate of population growth. But the availability and quality of water thereafter began to deteriorate. The responsible body at the time, the National Urban Water Authority (NUWA), failed to improve the declining services resulting from poor maintenance and lack of new investment. Meanwhile, the demand for water continued to increase as the population swelled and suburbs expanded. By 1997, many household were no longer getting their water directly from the municipal supply and were instead reliant upon private vendors.

Policy Forum and HakiElimu dedicated May’s breakfast debate to the issue of water supply in Dar es Salaam. The presentations were done by Mr. Ben Taylor, Policy Team Leader, WaterAid Tanzania and Mr. Alex Kaaya, CEO, Dar es Salaam Water and Sewage Corporation. There was also a brief comment from Mr. Francis Ato Brown on the strides made in improving the water supply system in Dar es Salaam. Miss Mugizi of the Policy Forum secretariat facilitated the debate.

The first presentation was done by Mr. Ben Taylor who he started by giving an outline of the current situation of water supply to the poor in Dar es Salaam. He said that up to the year 2007, only 44,000 out of 600,000 households (7%) had connections to water supply and the remaining accessed water from neighbors or small private vendors. He added that those who had DAWASCO connection paid between 10/- and 13/- for 20 liters while those without paid 200/-.

He also gave an overview of the City Water Services (CWS) experience and the challenges it inherited when taking up the 10-year lease of the water supply infrastructure. Why did City Water fail? According to Ben Taylor, it was due to limited information available prior to tendering. CWS did not know what they were getting into and there were incentives on all sides to act quickly rather than focus on quality and sustainability. He said the failure of checks and balances from the media, civil society and parliament also contributed to the water supply restructuring not succeeding. Other attributing problems included the poor state of the supply network, substandard customer database and inefficient billing system.

Concluding, he came up with optional solutions to the problem by saying that we need to have first time connection fee by targeting the middle-poor rather than poorest. He also suggested the use of tariff structures and the kiosk approach which is the most effective way of delivering subsidies to the poor. The kiosks, he said, can be built with public funds.

The second presentation was from Mr. Alex Kaaya who gave a very short and brief presentation by being honest that water supply in the city is at a destitute state. He said, for instance, that currently from the Quality Plaza area along Nyerere road to the Airport, there exists no DAWASCO water supply. It is only the city center and the Oysterbay area that gets water for 24 hours. The consumption capacity is 2500 cm³ so in such a situation there has to be rationing.

Why are we where we are? Mr. Kaaya explained that the population increase is inversely proportional to the expansion of the pipe system. There has been no pipe expansion since the 1970s and while in 1986 the city’s population was at around 780,000, it is now at about 1.5 million. He also said that the delay of donor funds for pipe system expansion since 1996 has also been a major reason for the rationing we are having now. So far, the measures taken have included looking into the possibility of constructing a borehole south of the city that will supply the entire Temeke Municipal, a constituent of Dar es Salaam.

For Mr. Francis Ato Brown, he gave some few comments on the issue and said DAWASCO has had management problems and infrastructure inadequacies. For instance, he mentioned that the Ruvu water pipeline has not been given proper attention for almost 30 years now.

Comments and Questions from Plenary Discussion:

- Why doesn't WaterAid Tanzania publicize the original report in the website?
- Why are the Kiosks constructed not providing water to the people?
- More investment is needed to improve DAWASCO's billing system and the customer database.
- What is DAWASCO doing to solve the problem of water leakages and illegal connections?
- On the provision of water to the poor, are Kiosks the real the solution?

Response to the Comments:

- The full report is available and provided upon request by e-mail to Wateraid. The email address is at the back page of the summary report. The reason why you need to request it is that the report is too big to upload on the website.
- On the issue of Kiosks, it is all about water allocation. If a kiosk is placed in an area where water is rationed, then it will never work as it was intended for. So it is a solution only if the system is well connected.
- On illegal connections, the problem is caused by scattered settlements (i.e. some households are 2 kilometers apart).
- It is not that DAWASCO is doing nothing. The issue is complicated and the company is doing a lot to improve the water supply network considering the scale of the problem.

Miss Mugizi from policy forum closed the discussion and welcomed the participants to the next month's breakfast debate.



policy forum