Civil society contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to water

Financing and Economic Instruments

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The human right to water:

The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, **physically accessible** and **affordable** water for personal and domestic uses. (General comment 15).

**Affordability**: Water, and water facilities and services, must be affordable for all. The UNDP suggests that water costs should not exceed **3 per cent** of household income.
Financial needs:

US$ 191 billion per year until 2030 and US$ 311 billion per year until 2050 of additional investment is needed to meet the MDGs.
The SDGs on water and sanitation:

**Goal 6**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
Stakeholders:

- Government
- International organizations and agencies
- Private sector
- Civil Society
States have the obligation to:

- **Respect** the right to water by refraining from interfering directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right;

- **Protect** the right to water by preventing third parties from interfering in any way with enjoyment of the right to water;

- **Fulfill** the right to water by adopting the necessary measures directed towards the full realisation of this right.
Progressive implementation:

Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and similar provisions contained in other treaties, require States to progressively achieve the realisation of human rights, using the maximum available resources in a non-discriminatory manner.

These obligations have a direct bearing on the budgets of States that are party to these treaties.
The 2006 UNDP Human Development Report recommended that governments should aim to spend a minimum of 1% of their Gross Domestic Product on water and sanitation, while the 2008 eThekwini Declaration commits more than 30 African governments to aim to spend 0.5% of their Gross Domestic Product on sanitation alone.
Civil Society

All non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic (E.U.)

Major Groups 1) Women, 2) Children and Youth, 3) Indigenous People and their Communities, 4) NGOs, 5) Local Authorities, 6) Workers and their Trade Unions, 7) Business & Industry, 8) the Scientific and Technological Community, and 9) Farmers (UNCED Agenda 21)
Right to information:

An NGO based in Andhra Pradesh, India, has been working with village communities to help them access local budgets in order to monitor allocation against spending. Using the Right to Information Act, they have succeeded in securing information about misspent funds, which has led to budgets being reinstated and services delivered.

The Berliner Wassertisch (Berlin Water Round Table), a coalition of concerned citizens and organisations, has played an important role in making public documentation accessible, including the contracts in the 1999 public private partnership process of the city’s utility.
Public participation:

The Council of Cities in Brazil, which has a system of representation from the very local community right up to national or state level. Communication proceeds in both directions, through well-defined channels, with focused discussions on draft policies and legislation discussed at every level of government, and community representatives attending the final decision-making processes at parliamentary level.

Water users associations in Bénin, since the adoption of decentralization reforms, were allowed to participate to municipal council’s meetings and to discuss local budgets.
Non discrimination:

The General Comment also stresses that States are obliged to ensure that the right to water is enjoyed without discrimination and on the basis of equality between men and women.

So women’s associations have a key role to play in combatting discrimination against women in general but also in relation with access to drinking water and sanitation services.
Accountability:

Catarina de Albuquerque said in her book *On the Right Track* that “Transparency and participation can be improved by bringing the control of water and sanitation services closer to the communities they serve.”

Accountability regards especially:

Governments (national and decentralized)

Drinking water and sanitation utilities (public and private)
Accountability takes form through monitoring, but closely relates to integrity, as well.

A substantial part of funds allocated to the water and sanitation sector are lost due to corruption and lack of integrity in different levels.

In 2008, the World Bank estimated that 20% to 40% of water sector finances are being lost to dishonest and corrupt practices.
There is no binding international instrument on integrity in the water sector, but there is a range of international provisions and recommendations trying to address this issue:

- Several Human Rights Council resolutions;
- The John Ruggie guiding principles;
- OECD guiding principles for multinational companies;
- UN convention against corruption.
However, to be effective, civil society participation needs capacity-building and sustainable funding.

**Capacity building:**

Even if there’s an appropriate legal framework and a political will for civil society participation, sometimes the lack of capacity is a barrier.

The Catchment Management Forums (CMF) established in South Africa by the National Water Act 1998, as non-statutory water-management institutions assisting in the setting up of statutory water-management institutions, couldn’t be effective due to a lack of capacity.
Sustainable funding:

NGOs acting for the right to water and sanitation implementation should be declared of public interest not only because they provide services to communities, but also because they improve public management. So they should have access to public funds to strengthen and maintain their activities.

International cooperation, and especially decentralized cooperation, should allocate funds to NGOs working in the field because they contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of their actions and achievements.

However, these funds should be allocated in a way that doesn’t threaten NGOs’ independence.
Civil Society – Private-sector Partnership:

• Water users associations in some countries (Senegal, Tunisia, Egypt) revealed their limitation after decades of implementation especially due to a lack of management capacities and technical skills.

• One solution that could be experienced for those facing these problems is to involve small and medium local companies in providing some services like maintenance of water systems, billing, recovery, etc.

• This could be profitable for the different stakeholders and can help local development (local economy, employment).

• In Jordan, Private Sector Participation in the water sector is very developed and is considered a part of the National Water Strategy.
Tariffs:

In order to make water and sanitation tariffs more fair and equitable, especially for the most vulnerable populations, there are different solutions and approaches:

- Making a distinction between domestic uses and other uses, especially those using water as a raw material;
- Polluter pays principle implementation;
- Progressive pricing (most Mediterranean countries);
- Free Basic Water Services (as adopted in South Africa);
- Public subsidies to the poorest.
Thank you for your attention

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