waterpoints

WUISACC – Network for climate change in developing countries

Global warming is causing considerable changes in climate. Current climate models predict that global temperatures will rise by 1.4 to 5.8° C and global mean precipitation will change by −5 to +15% (with some regions showing increases, some decreases, and considerable inter-annual variability) by the end of the 21st century. These changes affect water availability and the timing and magnitude of floods and droughts.

All of these factors will have an impact on urban infrastructure systems, including urban water infrastructure like water supply systems (surface and underground), storage reservoirs, water treatment plants, water distribution networks and urban drainage. Some developing countries are likely to experience the most extreme effects of climate change and at the same time they have the least adaptive capacity to respond to it. Hence, climate change is likely to impact developing countries disproportionately, exacerbating inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water and other resources.

In developed countries much progress has been made over the last five years in the understanding of climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. However, in developing countries impact studies are still isolated or limited by scientific and technical capacity. In order to build greater awareness in developing countries the network WUISACC (network for climate change in developing countries) has been formed. The main aim of WUISACC is to establish a coherent, forward-looking international network in the area of climate change and its impact on urban water infrastructure in developing countries. WUISACC will consider all aspects of water infrastructure including: urban water supply and wastewater management; storm water management; coastal management; and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

The first objective of the network will be to generate awareness among key decision makers of the potential impacts of climate change to their urban infrastructure. This will be achieved by developing modelling and visualization tools that can be used to display potential impacts of various climate change scenarios to the urban infrastructure. In addition these tools can be used to predict the impact of a selection of adaptation measures (including estimation of both costs due to damage and the cost of adaptation).

With this in mind, the members of WUISACC will liaise with responsible authorities in their countries to identify future climate change scenarios, the impacts that are of particular concern in their region and the collection of relevant data to implement scenario analysis. All members of WUISACC will work collaboratively in generating awareness through the dissemination of the activities of the network.

For further information on WUISACC, contact: Dr Kalanithy Vairavamoorthy, email: K.Vairavamoorthy@lboro.ac.uk

Water tax in pipeline for West Bengal

Calcutta authorities have decided to impose a water tax across West Bengal and a few municipal corporations have already put it into operation, reports the Indian Telegraph. The move is aimed at covering at least 75 per cent of the operation and maintenance costs. The Public Health Engineering (PHE) department has 900 water supply schemes in areas outside the jurisdiction of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority.

The department is collecting opinions from experts and economists to formulate a revised tax structure and build a system for collection of tax. 'Though we have imposed water tax in some districts, the collection is very poor – between Rs 30 and Rs 40 (US$0.68–0.91) per connection every day. We have to impose a fixed and reasonable tax structure. If we fail to raise funds, we may have to close down the schemes as the government will stop providing subsidies,' said chief engineer Prabir Dutta.

Web site: Govt. West Bengal – Public Health Engineering Department [http://www.wbgov.com/e-gov/English/Departments/DepartmentFrameNew.asp?DpId=200]; IRC – Financing and Cost Recovery

Source: Indian Telegraph [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1050630/asp/bengal/story_4931849.asp], 29 Jun 2005

Schooling for all – but where are the toilets?

In Kenya, Nakumatt Supermarket and Unicef have launched a KSh10 million ($130 000) programme to improve sanitation in ten schools in Kibera and Baba Dogo slums in Nairobi. Since the government introduced free primary education three years go, few children living in slums could attend school due to lack of space and basic facilities like toilets.

Just as in Kenya, the increased enrolment of children in Uganda due to the introduction of universal primary education has not been met with a corresponding increase in sanitation facilities. The Buganda Cultural and Development Foundation reported appalling conditions in a baseline survey of hygiene practices and sanitation in primary schools in Kasanje Sub County, Wakiso District. However, under the UPE School Facilitation Grant (SFG) there is a provision for school sanitation.

Source: Aidah Nanyonjo, New Vision / allAfrica.com [http://allafrica.com/stories/200507051166.html], 5 Jul 2005 ; UWASNET News, vol. 6, no. 2, May–Aug 2005

Japanese grant for Cochabamba, Bolivia

The Japanese embassy in La Paz recently approved 'Proyecto de Agua para el Sur' for Cochabamba's south, financed by a US$9.8 million Japanese government grant. The project will provide about 80 000 people with access to potable water. The project includes the construction of a distribution network and 17 000 household connections to be completed in 2006. According to the municipality's potable water and

sanitation service (Semapa) head Gonzalo Ugalde the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) has agreed to allocate US$3 million to the project.

Meanwhile, the Bolivian Government announced that it will buy shares of Aguas del Illimani water corporation, in order to end the company's contract with the Bolivian government to supply water in the municipalities of La Paz and El Alto. The Bolivian municipalities will not spend their resources on buying shares; government representatives said these procurements will be made in the name of La Paz and El Alto municipalities, but that these municipalities will not invest money. Before the contract can be ended, however, the government and the company have to reach agreement about the price of the shares.

In December 2004, five years after Cochabamba erupted in broad public protest and ousted the water company Bechtel, the city of El Alto threatened to do the same against Aguas de Ilimani, a local company jointly owned by the French water multinational, Suez. The protestors threatened to take back the water company by force, unless the Bolivian government agreed to cancel Suez's contract.

Since privatization in 1997, Suez is said to have raised water prices in El Alto by 35 per cent, while making new water and sewerage connections unaffordable. Both community groups and government officials said that the company Suez has failed to connect 200 000 people living on the city's outskirts. The company claimed that the number of people living in areas outside the network is only about 30 000 and that it is not required to extend service to them. But even when Suez leaves, it remains unclear where the funds will come from to provide poor families with basic access to safe water.

Source Weekly, 13 July 2005, 27 January 2005

MDGs– increased access to water, slow progress towards sanitation

During the 1990s, access to improved drinking water sources increased substantially. However, over a billion people have yet to benefit, with lowest coverage in rural areas and urban slums. Much slower progress has been made globally in improving sanitation. An estimated 2.6 billion people – representing half the developing world – lack toilets and other forms of improved sanitation.

These are some of the findings presented in a UN report[1] that takes stock of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN General Assembly reviewed progress on all areas of the Millennium Declaration at a summit held in September 2005.

The proportion of population using safe sources of drinking water in the developing world rose from 71 per cent in 1990 to 79 per cent in 2002. Most gains were made in Southern Asia, primarily in India. Despite this progress, 1.1 billion people were still using water from unimproved sources in 2002. In sub-Saharan Africa 42 per cent of the population is still unserved. Progress is hampered by conflict, political instability, low priority assigned to investments in water and sanitation, and high population growth rates.

Sanitation coverage in the developing world rose from 34 per cent in 1990 to 49 per cent in 2002. If present trends continue, however, close to 2.4 billion people worldwide will still be without improved sanitation in 2015, that is, almost as many as there are today.

Basic sanitation must reach 138 million more people every year through 2015 – close to 2 billion in total – to halve the proportion of people living without safe water and basic sanitation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF warn.[2] Meeting this MDG target would cost US$11.3 billion per year, but the payback would be an injection of an extra $84 billion per year into developing economies – money saved by averted deaths, lower health care costs and productivity gains. Improved water supplies and basic toilets generate returns ranging from 3 to 34 times the original investment, depending on the type of investment and the country.

References

1 UN (2005) *The Millennium Development Goals report 2005*, New York, NY, USA, United Nations, http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_dev_report.htm

2 WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2005) *Water for life: making it happen,* Geneva, Switzerland, World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/monitoring/jmp2005/en/index.html

Urban sanitation workshop in Indonesia

In Indonesia urban sanitation infrastructure is less developed than water supply and other forms of infrastructure. The existing sewerage services in urban areas only serve about 2 per cent of the population. These were among the topics that were discussed in a Sanitation Workshop held in Makassar in April 2005 to promote dialogue and to build understanding among Indonesian stakeholders on the importance of sanitation. The workshop, attended by 61 participants, helped to exchange and disseminate good practices from experiences in Indonesia, neighbouring countries and globally, that can lead to city-wide solutions for sanitation.

Forum Komunikasi Air Limbah (FORKALIM), the newly established forum for communication on sanitation in Indonesia, jointly organized the workshop with the World Bank. It was also carried out in conjunction with the preparation for the implementation phase of the sanitation component of the proposed World Bank-financed Urban Water and Sanitation Improvement and Expansion Project (UWSIEP).

The sanitation component of the project will test the scaling up of successfully proven community systems in urban areas, in particular concentrating on generating community-demand for sanitation services, developing institutional and partnership links between the communities and local governments and preparing scaling up strategies for transforming community-based sanitation (CBS) schemes to city-wide schemes.

According to Basah Hernowo, Director for Settlement and Housing, BAPPENAS, the losses due to a lack of sanitation are estimated to be as much as 2.4 per cent of GDP. Research shows that labourers use one-third of their income on medicine to cure water-borne diseases caused by poor sanitation.
Source: World Bank (2005) Indonesia Urban Water and Sanitation Improvement and Expansion Project (UWSIEP): report on sanitation workshop