

From our water correspondent

Our water correspondent is Laura Hucks from WaterAid in Tanzania.

Stormy waters

On 31 October 2010 around 17 million Tanzanians will go to the polls. These are the fourth general elections since the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1992. Results of polls are contested but suggest that Jakwaya Kikwete from the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi is the frontrunner ahead of the Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema) candidate, Dr Willbrod Slaa. The elections have slowed the implementation of WaterAid's programme work, in particular our local governance programme, which supports counsellors to use waterpoint mapping data to scrutinize and challenge decisions relating to resource allocations. The campaign has also had an impact on the sector at the national level with some decisions in limbo: for example, the National Hygiene and Sanitation Policy will not be approved until a new cabinet is nominated.

Politics also had an impact on the tone of the recent Joint Water Sector Review, with the Minister pledging publicly to

double the WASH budget. He also insisted that 'the glass is half full' when faced with strong criticism from development partners about the slow progress of the Water Sector Development Programme (WSDP). The programme has been through a turbulent 6 months. The World Bank-led mid-term review, which took place in April 2010, graded the progress of the programme as unsatisfactory and shortly afterwards the key development partners suspended disbursements to the water sector basket. The Government of Tanzania has also not honoured its financial commitment to the programme. Funds provided by the government thus far are around two-thirds short of its original commitment for the period from FY07/08 to FY09/10. This shortage of funds has led to a financial crisis in the water sector and has caused a serious delay in programme implementation, with works halted in some cases. The total amount of outstanding payment certificates to contractors, suppliers and consultants is around US\$45 million as of August 2010.

The main reason given for the suspension of donor funds is insufficient compliance with the

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© Practical Action Publishing, 2011, www.practicalactionpublishing.org
doi: 10.3362/1756-3488.2011.007, ISSN: 0262-8104 (print) 1756-3488 (online)

Memorandum of Understanding governing the programme, in particular a failure on the part of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation to account for some \$73 m. The Ministry of Water and Irrigation, the Prime Minister's Office for Regional and Local Government, and implementing agencies have struggled to comply with the World Bank's financial, procurement and safeguard procedures. At the time of writing the prospects for resuming the normal operation of the basket fund are bleak. The suspension has had a negative impact on relations between the Ministry and development partners, and on the sector dialogue mechanism.

The mid-term review also revealed that, although the overall budget has increased by 20 per cent from \$950 m to \$1.2 bn (with new commitments coming from KfW Entwicklungsbank, AfD (*Agence Française de Développement*) and the AfDB (African Development Bank), the original programme targets will not be met. The accomplished output and outcome levels by the programme for the last three years are much lower than their original targets as a result of inflated unit costs, changed technology mix and over-ambitious original targets. WSDP was formulated on the basis that 48 per cent of the rural water supply schemes would be

hand-pump schemes; however, analysis of investments planned for the remaining two years of the programme (2010/2012) show that out of 506 villages, 210 villages (41.5 per cent) have selected gravity schemes, 270 villages (53.4 per cent) have selected pumped schemes, while only 26 villages (5.1 per cent) have selected hand-pumped schemes. The technology choices have not been within agreed unit costs; may go beyond the resource envelope available to the district; and are likely to stretch community ability to pay for operation and maintenance. As a result, the rural component of the programme is likely to be scaled back by two-thirds, significantly reducing the number of people who will benefit and the programme's contribution towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

One positive development which has resulted from the mid-term review is the acknowledgement that it's time to rethink the strategy for sanitation under WSDP. An increase of funding for sanitation, hygiene and school WASH activities under the programme is also on the cards. The AfDB will release \$20 m for a national 'campaign' to begin in July 2011, with a shift of leadership for implementation to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

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