

ACTIONS TO SECURE WATER IN UGANDA

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Uganda's fresh water, like elsewhere globally, is a strategic natural resource vital for life sustenance, social economic development and maintenance of the environment. The resource is finite and indeed vulnerable. There are also already worrying cases of pollution, and degradation of water resources afflicted by both natural and human factors.

The majority of Ugandans have no access to clean safe water in easy reach. Many water sources are not well managed and maintained.

In order to secure water in rural and urban centers, the government of Uganda enacted the water statute 1995; the water resources regulation 1998 and finally the National Water policy 1999. The National Water Policy involves water resource management with objectives and strategies for monitoring, assessment, allocation and protection of the water resources as well as water use and development which basically deals with the domestic water supply. The latter involves provision of a clean, safe and sufficient supply of water for domestic purposes to all persons. This policy promotes a new integrated approach to water resources management in ways that are sustainable and most beneficial to Ugandans.

The Government of Uganda through the Directorate of Water Development (DWD) and National Water and Sewerage Cooperation (NWSC) with donor assistance has embarked on a number of rural water and sanitation projects with an ultimate goal of raising the service level of the rural water supply from 30% in 1999 to 100% by 2015.

The Project involves drilling boreholes, digging shallow wells, spring protection, rainwater harvesting systems, construction of town water supply, construction of gravity flow water schemes and technical assistance in the study and design of water systems. Notable among the donors is JICA with a project in Mubende, Kiboga and Mpigi districts from 1998-2000 with a total of US\$13m for borehole drilling and repair in the three districts. Other projects are supported by UNICEF, DANIDA, EU/SNV.

By September 2003(Water Quarterly Bullet-Directorate of Water Development), the rural water supply increased by 4% up from 54.8% in June 2002 to 58.5% in June 2003.

1992 springs and 1315 shallow wells were constructed. 507 boreholes drilled and 255 boreholes rehabilitated. 216 public taps; 201 rain water tanks for rural for rural primary schools; 91 valley tanks, and 100 gravity public taps were established.

Efforts to mainstream gender in the water sector at National level are supported by the Water Sector Gender Strategy (WSGS) as part of the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment Strategy. It involves enhancing equity, participation, access and control of water resources of both men and women. It has been realized that equal participation is necessary to enhance long-term efficient operation and management of water and sanitation facilities for longer periods. Consequently, although gender therefore forms the major components of the sector plans, policies and operations at management level, efforts to build capacity in this area need to be improved.