Regional workshop on achieving equitable access to water and sanitation: from assessment to action

The possible facilitating role of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

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22 March 2016, World Water Day
INTRODUCING NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (NHRIs)

- **Independent** public bodies (est. parliaments)
- Legitimate body with constitutional powers at nat. level for monitoring of governments compliance
- Neutral fact finders: collect national level data, perform independent research, initiate field investigations ex officio etc.
- Bridging role - **facilitation of dialogue**:
  - Among Government Depts. and Ministries
  - Among national stakeholders: civil society, government etc.
  - Link between international accountability mechanisms (ref. UN TB) and nat. authorities
- Advisory functions to governments/legislative powers

ALL FUNCTIONS can be helpful to UN agencies in implementing and monitoring future SDG6

EXAMPLES
Translating national level implementation efforts of SDGs can be supported by the promotional mandate and experience:

- public awareness raising
- independent research,
- education programmes to a wide range of stakeholders: civil society, governmental entities and other public bodies etc.,
- media relations,
- independent reports, statements,
- press release etc.

**e.g. South African Human Rights Commission**
- 2012-13 chose right to water and sanitation as strategic focus area
- Independent primary research – Report
- 9 public hearings in provinces plus national Conference

**Findings and Recommendations:**
- Engaged with various government departments
NATIONAL LEVEL MONITORING

✓ Uniquely placed to ensure a human rights-based monitoring of SDG6 implementation

✓ Monitor progress towards achieving internationally agreed development goal based on indicators and benchmarks, collecting data from various stakeholders (national statistical offices, Government, public bodies, civil society etc.).

✓ Act as a catalyst for monitoring that is participatory, evidence based, transparent and accountable

✓ Several developed a specialized monitoring methodology: e.g. Colombia

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e.g. Columbia – Ombudsman’s Office
- Constitutional and statutory mission to promote, disseminate and protect human rights
- Asked to evaluate performance of State obligations in respect of human right to water
- Classified municipalities “best” to “worst” re water supply and environmental sustainability

Indicators based on:
1. Human right to water,
2. Environmental sustainability,

RESULTS:
- 46 of 1098 “high risk” and health emergency
- 117 had data inadequate so further research
- Only 17% population acceptable levels of vulnerability
- Urgent need to build regenerative capacity and reduce water scarcity
**COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

- Bridging role: link civil society to the Government
- Unbiased meeting point: encourage dialogue, facilitate cooperation among stakeholders in the national implementation of SDGs
- Bring all concerned stakeholders around one table
- Collect and channel data: collaboration with civil society, statistical offices, research institutions and academics.
- Experience in the UN human rights protection mechanisms: well suited to channel information on national level SDG implementation efforts into the future international review mechanism of the post-2015 Agenda.

**e.g. Argentinian Ombudsman’s Office**
- Last 10 years partnership with other institutions
- Matanza- Riachuelo River Basin - one of world’s most polluted watersheds
- Ombudsman received complaints from residents, organizations, individuals
- Group of NGOs, Universities, local ombudsmen

**SUCCESS:**
- Drafted first special report on the situation
- Major Cleanup Works began July 2014
INDEPENDENT ADVISORY FUNCTION

✓ Uniquely placed to influence SDG6 national implementation process
✓ Positive impact on the national enabling environment
✓ Involved in translating and tailoring the globally agreed goal into national frameworks: development of national indicators, benchmarks etc.
✓ Involved in the national level review process: e.g. to verify if financial assistance supporting the implementation of SDG6 is in line with human rights commitments

e.g. Peruvian Defensoria del Pueblo
- *Citizens without water: analysis of a rights violation report*
- Included 19 recommendations for government
- Addressed to range of ministries and providers
- Calls on State and Water Service suppliers to improve Access to water and sanitation
- Concentrations of arsenic and aluminium in water supply
- Recommendations to approve rules for operators that fail to provide suitable potable water
NHRI WATER INITIATIVE

- NHRI training manual
- NHRI Online Platform – launch TODAY in Geneva on World Water Day
- NHRI XXL program - incl. CSOs
- Partnership: Danish Institute for Human Rights
- Regional Training Nov’15 in Malaysia with 18 NHRI from different countries

Proud to say:
i) Very high evaluation and learning scores
RECOMMENDATIONS

✓ Consider NHRIs as key national partners to support the promotion, implementation and monitoring of SDG6 at national level

✓ NHRIs, as independent public bodies, partner and cooperate with UN country teams to feed into national level implementation and monitoring of SDG 6

✓ Consider piloting the involvement of NHRIs in the pilot projects of the GEMI
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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