ACCESS BY VULNERABLE GROUPS AND GROUPS WITH SPECIFIC NEED TO WATER AND SANITATION: MODERN SITUATION AND POLICY MEASURES IN RUSSIA

(Workshop on equitable access to water and sanitation: Challenges, good practices and lessons learned)

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Context and Challenges

- The access of all members of society to water and sanitation is among the top priorities of the social policy in Russia.

- There are the national strategy and local strategies to assist different groups of population in meeting their needs in improved water supply sources and improved sanitation facilities.

- Such groups of population as refugees, immigrants (especially illegal immigrants), persons having some diseases and disabled people as well as street leavers, tramps, losers of dwelling and other categories of homeless persons often experience shortage of safe water and improved sanitation.

- Homeless people and illegal immigrants among above mentioned groups are the most affected by lack or limited access to water and sanitation.
Policy Measures Adopted


- Because of the negative consequences of the financial and economic crisis of the years 2008-2009 for economy and society the expert team at the Government of the Russian Federation on updating “The Concept of Long-Term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the Year 2020” was launched at the beginning of the year 2011 (see: [http://2020strategy.ru/21c](http://2020strategy.ru/21c)). The problems of improving living conditions of vulnerable groups and groups with specific needs in terms of access to water and sanitation are given special attention.

- The Russian Government elaborates now the new concept of migration policy which includes measures to promote improving of living conditions for immigrants including their access to water and sanitation as well as to take out the illegal immigration from the “shadow”.

- The regional and local authorities undertake efforts to reside homeless people to special dwellings where the improved access to water and sanitation is provided.
Assessment of Results Achieved

- In Russia the regional and local administrations/authorities are mainly responsible for promoting policies of better access to water supply and sanitation by population.

- Different measures and tools of improving access to water and sanitation for vulnerable groups and groups with specific needs are currently applied.

- More and more settlements are being equipped with modern water supply and sanitation systems. These policy measures result in increased pipe water supply, better access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation.

- Because of fast increases in communal services tariffs (the prices of water and sanitation services) the State program of protecting low-incomes families by providing them with means-tested housing subsidies was adopted and is currently being implemented. This led to increase of affordability to water and sanitation by low-incomes households.
Success Factors, Lessons Learned and Remaining Challenges

- In Russia there are huge geographical/regional disparities in access to safe water and improved sanitation for vulnerable groups of population because of the fact that regions of Russia vary significantly by such indicators as living conditions, climate, level of economic development, density of population, share of urban and rural population, etc.

- People living in rural areas have significantly lower levels of access to safe water and centralized water supply as well as improved sanitation.

- Statistics on the number of persons with bad access to water and sanitation have to be significantly improved.

- The lack of coordination among decision makers and inflexible administrative structures/governance could create situations in which access to safe water and improved sanitation by vulnerable groups and groups with specific needs is getting worth.

- Water quality standards and sanitary norms should be improved.

- Strategies with respect to improving access to water and sanitation should include various approaches depending the affected groups as well as other reasons (climate, number and share of urban and rural population, location of improved water supply sources and improved sanitation facilities, etc.). These strategies should be based on targeted financial recourses and have to result in better governance and management of water and sanitation facilities.
Thank you for your attention!