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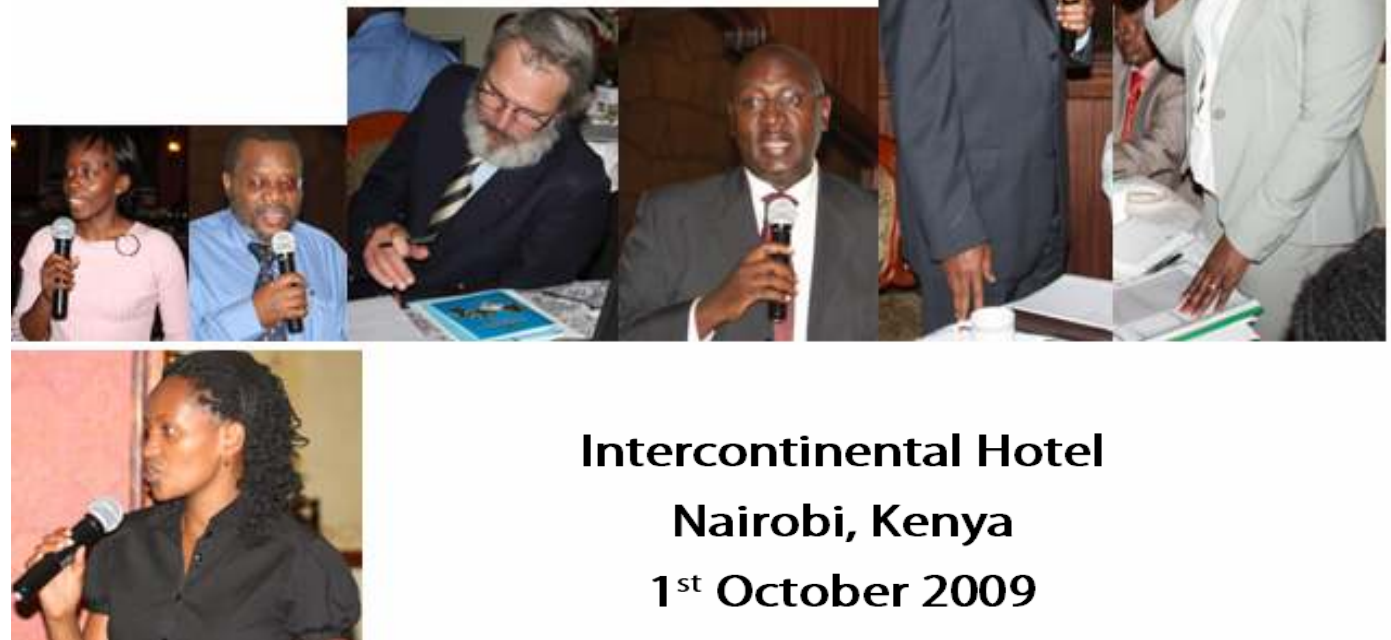
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Water, Climate Change and the Media

*A media break fast meeting between
the Kenya Editor's Guild and
water sector managers in Kenya*



Intercontinental Hotel

Nairobi, Kenya

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| <p>Background and rationale</p> | <p>Today there are concerns within the water and climate change arena that need special attention by media practitioners. A lot of effort and emphasis has been focusing on the journalists and reporters who are the foot soldiers in the media industry. But little has been done to create awareness among editors who are the gate keepers and implementers of the editorial policies of media houses.</p> <p>For that matter the following areas have been accorded limited share of ink and share of voice in the media and yet they affect investment and livelihoods options within the Eastern Africa region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declining water levels in water bodies hence reduced energy generation and loss of aquatic life. Yet energy drives industry and the more constrained we are in this sector the fewer the investments. 2. Climate variability causing drought and famine leading to a reduction in labour productivity. 3. Desertification hence reduced output at community level - livestock, agriculture and dairy produce. <p>All these affect the performance of the productive sectors of the economy in the region specifically in terms of investment. Observably, there is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced raw materials for industries e.g in food processing, textiles & breweries 2. Reduced labour productivity and increased unemployment 3. Reduced fish stocks meaning that fish processors run idle capacity <p>The media needs to grab this opportunity to raise the profile of water and climate linkage in order to stimulate public</p> |
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| | <p>debate on issues within the water sector. Such issues include among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and hydropower production and the need for regional trade in energy and food products. • Conflicts over water and other natural resources between competing communities which have become more acute with population explosion and environmental degradation. • Catchment based strategies to address water resources management and climate change – intended to take care of stakeholders interests. • Water and sanitation issues • The roles of stakeholders and parliaments in providing enabling policy and legal environment for regional cooperation |
| <p>Objectives of the media breakfast meeting</p> | <p>In view of the above a media breakfast was organised that brought together the media and water sector players.</p> <p>The objective of this mentoring breakfast meeting was two-fold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build the capacity of the editors and senior media practitioners to appreciate the role of water in development. 2. Build the capacity of the water resources managers on how to build media relations and package information for media absorption and use. |
| <p>Participation and methodology</p> | <p>The Kenya Water Partnership mobilised senior water sector practitioners to attend the brake fast. The participants include among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Water and Irrigation. • Directors from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation • Heads of Water Institutions |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of Development Partners • Civil Society representative • Private Sector • Academia (Kenya Water Institute, University of Nairobi) <p>The Kenya Editor's Guild mobilized editors from key media institutions in Kenya including the Nation Group (Nations Newspaper, NTV), The Standard Group, Royal Media, Capital FM, Kameme FM, The Star, and others.</p> <p>The guiding questions for the breakfast meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can the media offer to raise the share of ink and share of voice for the water sector in Kenya (more space in print and electronic)? • What kind of information is available from the water sector and how can it be packaged for media consumption? |
| <p>Programme</p> | <p>Registration & Introductions</p> |
| | <p>Key note speeches - Kenya Water Partnership, Global Water Partnership Eastern Africa, Kenya Editor's Guild, Ministry of Water and Irrigation.</p> |
| | <p>Presentations: The media, water and climate change in Burundi and Uganda – cases from media trips organized by GWP Eastern Africa.</p> |
| | <p>Question and Answer Session: Facilitated by Mr. Macharia Gaitho, Kenya Editor's Guild Theme: How to improve media coverage of water resources and climate change.</p> |
| | <p>Discussion Panel: Eng. John Nyaoro – Director, Water Resources Eng. Robert Gakubia (CEO)– Water Services Regulation Board (WSREB) Mr J.K Mugo (CEO)- Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company</p> |

Speech by the Permanent Secretary, Eng. David Stower, CBS OGW, Read by John Nyaoro, Director, Water resources Management, Ministry Of Water And Irrigation

Key note presentation



This meeting is significant more so because the water sector has been accorded a limited share of ink and voice in the media yet the sector affects the investment and livelihoods of the people.

The need for special attention and capacity building of the media and senior media practitioners to advance the water and climate change agenda is crucial to enable them appreciate the role the sector plays in development.

Secondly, water is given coverage only during the "bad time"; floods, drought silting, eutrophication, pollution, fall in water level etc with limited illustration of its back-bone role in support tourism, agriculture and energy production.

But, on the other hand, water sector practitioners have been blamed for the poor coverage accorded to the sector. It is said that editors end up spiking water sector stories due to poor packaging of themselves and their messages and for using technical jargon, being evasive and failure to release information. These are no less critical issues that will have to be addressed if climate change and water scarcity debate is to be appreciated and put in the center stage.

The current declining water levels in water bodies have affected the performance of the productive sectors of the economy in the region specifically in terms of investment. Energy drives industry and the more constrained water sources are in this sector the fewer investments can be realized.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation, has adopted the principle that water should be treated and managed as a scarce resource with social and economic values whose demand for domestic, livestock, industrial and environmental needs is ever increasing. There is therefore a growing need for managing water resources in an equitable, sustainable and efficient manner.

The increasing levels of water catchment degradation and scarce water resources are a worrying trend in Kenya. Kenya is classified as a water scarce country. Her water endowment at 647 meter cubed per capita is below the global bench mark of 1,000 meter cubic per capita. This situation is expected to deteriorate further such that the projected water per capita in 2025 is expected to be 235 meter cubed.

Water Scarcity still remains the biggest challenge in Kenya, with the ASAL areas bearing the brunt of the impacts of below normal rains and subsequent droughts. Decline in water levels in Central Kenya (which has been the main sources of water from a bigger portion of Kenya) is currently one of the areas of concern. The Ndakiaini Dam which supplies water to Nairobi City has had significantly declined levels.

There have been rigorous efforts to address these declines in Flows. The main target areas have been to ensure that the catchment is protected and/or rehabilitated to guarantee the base flow, increase the storage capacity by harnessing the flood flows through on-course damming and off-course panning as well as increase in rainwater harvesting and thirdly find new sources of water and would therefore warrant to exploit the Nairobi deeper aquifer ranging from 600m to 1000m as the shallow and medium aquifers are threatened with over exploitation. Preliminary studies have been carried out and the results indicate good potential deep aquifers in Nairobi and its environs. It is important to note that the water sector is undergoing reforms as per the Water Act 2002, the water sector setup separates water resources management and development from water services delivery.

The ministry of water and irrigation deals with policy and strategy formulation, mobilization of funds, coordination and monitoring while the WASREB regulates water services provision. The Water Services Boards are in charge of assets and contracting Water Services Providers for water and sanitation services for the public, private, community and civil society sectors, while Water Resources Management Authority is in charge of Water Resources Management

The departments of the irrigation, drainage and water storage deals with irrigation policy and the development of the small holder irrigation schemes country wide while the National Irrigation Board is charged with the responsibility of developing and managing the large public irrigation schemes.

The land reclamation department under the Ministry is charge with the activities related to water harvesting and catchment rehabilitation in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) and the restoration of degraded lands.

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Media coverage of the water sector in Kenya – how can it be improved? By Mr. Macharia Gaitho, Chairman, Kenya Editor's Guild.

Water as a priority issue - Water is considered a relatively high national priority by consumers though there is a strong likelihood that people may not directly link adequate water and sanitation with health and economic development.
How can water managers play their role as "sources" for media coverage?

Low levels of awareness and misconceptions among stakeholders - Sector organizations, NGOs and consumer groups have a higher awareness than consumers, but also display several misconceptions and concerns. The overall mixed perceptions include water for development, water and climate change, trans-boundary water resources management, water related conflicts, increased cost of water, loss of revenue by local authorities, poor people lacking access to water and exploitation from the private sector. *Where are the facts and figures?*

Understanding of costs, consumption-related payments; price increase concerns - Who should pay for local or household level water supply and sewerage services (Government of Kenya, consumers, and cost share?) Who should finance capital investments in large water schemes (Government, consumers and other partners). The different ideas about who is responsible for meeting the costs of water and sanitation services is an indicator that there could be resistance to the concept of full-cost pricing.

Has this been articulated well by water resources managers?

Institutional roles and private sector participation - The majority of consumers believe that the government or local government has a role in the provision of water and sewerage services. Regulation, policy making, water services are the main areas. BUT, what is the private sector doing? *What are the roles of the communities, faith organisations and others? Are these roles, responsibilities and mandates clear to the stakeholders? How can the media help?*

Dissatisfaction with Water and Sanitation Services - There are relatively low levels of consumer satisfaction with the current performance of water and sewerage services. *How are the water resources managers prepared to counter this negative image?*

Multiple organizations active in the Water Sanitation Sector - There are many organizations with multiple roles in the water sector. Often times these have conflicting mandates; others accuse Government of Kenya of attempting to

abdicate its responsibility from providing an essential service. *The media is the only place that such irregularities can be sorted out.*

Consumers see water as a right, and also understand key responsibilities - There is a very strong consumer sense of entitlement to the right of regular water supply with easy access. Tap water for all households, the need for responsible use of water and sense of responsibility for payment for water consumption. *Can water resources managers enhance this thinking through the media?*

Mixed perceptions on water resource management issues - There is a serious lack of understanding about Kenya's water scarcity. The amount of water available per person per year in Kenya is about 640 m³ well below the universally accepted level of 1000 m³ per person. Wise use of water is therefore important; and the involvement of the communities in this responsibility is necessary to translate awareness into conservation practices – may be through local conservation programmes. *The media is ready to play its role in development – creating awareness for wise water use.*

Low level of media coverage - Media coverage of the water sector is relatively ad hoc, event driven and, in most cases, not analytical. Often times this is linked to catastrophes in this climate change error (floods, drought, conflicts between user communities). Partly, this is due to the fact that mainstream media organizations have a low level of knowledge on the holistic nature of the water sector reforms. Partly, this is due to the evasive nature of water resources managers that are not ready to "release" information in time. *Confidence building/mentoring between the media and the water resources managers is necessary*

Discussions

1. The media tracks oil prices from time to time; which is an indication of the importance of oil. We believe water is an important resource too, but why not track water prices?
2. Where is the political will for supporting water resources management in Kenya. At one time we talked about "Water for all by 2000, but by 2000 there was no water".
3. We are in moments of drought and have constantly blamed lack of food on lack of rain. YET, there are countries with out rain but have food.
4. It is important that water managers say what is new in the sector. Water resources managers keep running away from interviews and therefore there is need to cooperate to get media trips to cover stories in the rural areas. Water resources managers, too, need to note that even negative stories have positive aspects
5. Climate change is innocent and it is institutional failure, governance is the issue. We can not talk about agriculture for food security, water resources conservation, community policing when the enabling environment is wrong.
6. Africa has engaged itself in the climate change debate too much; without due consideration of its contribution and ability to manipulate climate science.
7. When Illegal connections get disconnected, the public gets agitated brewing resistance towards payment for water services.
8. Whether the rains come or not; there is going to be a perennial problem of water in Kenya and therefore water resources managers need to the media on a permanent basis for increased and improved coverage.
9. Water institutions are often enslaved by their mandate and fail to contextualise issues. They persistently hesitate to respond to issues alleging that it is not the responsibility of their department or directorate. It is important that water resources managers contextualise issues, which will facilitate sharing of knowledge and hence a chance to elaborate their mandate.
10. The Ministry of water resources management is often defensive – even when there is evidence against the position being defended. It is important that the truth is said at times with basic information. Some times they

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| | <p>give insincere answers violating the right to reply.</p> <p>11. Time management – water resources managers are not time conscious and yet media personalities are not willing to wait for so long during press briefings.</p> |
| <p>Recommendations and conclusion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the existing positive levels of understanding It is important to raise the status/profile of water as a national priority and the media can play a big role in providing the positive aspects to leverage what is already obvious. • Correct misperceptions and close knowledge gaps These include the low levels of knowledge about water scarcity in Kenya; reforms; cost structures and pricing issues; the role of the private sector; and the exact meaning of wise water resources and water supply for individual households, communities and other stakeholders. • Focus on key stakeholder concerns and fears Address the major stakeholder concerns and fears – availability, access, cost increases, conservation and regular supply. • Tailor communications to the specific needs of each group There are differences in the concerns of the various stakeholder groups and consumer types. They have different media usage and preference patterns, which need to be taken into account. • Focus on NGOs and the media as opinion drivers Since Government is the main source of WRM information, it has the opportunity of influencing coverage if they can adopt a more proactive and systematic approach to managing the media. • Service improvement communications required It is important to proactively manage consumer or customer expectations in this regard for the long-term sustainability of the sector. Payment for services means a commensurate quality of services. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build communication capacity within the sector <p>There appears to be a definite need to audit the communication capacity of water sector institutions against the requirements for communication for a better water sector in Kenya.</p> |
| <p>Outcomes of the meeting</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting made news items of Capital FM, a popular FM Radio Station in Nairobi 2. Water as a critical issue was covered by the Editorial of the Daily Nation newspaper on the 2nd Oct 2009 3. The Daily Nations produced a news item out of the meeting 4. Mr J.K Mugo (CEO) - Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company promised to organise a media trip to Ndaka_ini Dam. 5. There were proposals to hold a media relations mentoring training for senior officials of water resources management institutions. 6. Participants from water and media networked with several interviews and discussions taking place. 7. Finally there are ongoing discussions between media and water to see how to keep the discussions going. |
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