

INTERNATIONAL RAINWATER HARVESTING ALLIANCE

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

1. Current fragmentation of UN sustainable development programmes & governance structure for Water and Sanitation limit NGO mainstreaming innovative approaches at national and local levels.
2. Sustainable Development decentralised initiatives such as rainwater harvesting (RWH) and management, encounter serious obstacles in the UN system when positioning RWH within government's Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) framework. There is no clear interlocutor in the UN to discuss regional strategies and participatory planning involving specialised NGOs and regional organisations (most of them do not have a consultative status).
3. NGO office in New York and Geneva are highly inefficient regarding the consultative status requested from civil society organisations. These bodies need basic changes in their interaction and examination of NGO demand for UN consultative status. These NGO offices should become regional bodies working in a more decentralised way and in different languages (i.e. Spanish, Russian). They do not take into consideration the topics relevant to the NGO mission.
4. Donors are not aware of the tense relationship between UN agencies, global & regional NGOs whose mandates are in Sustainable Development or in Humanitarian Aid and Human Rights. There is a lack of coordination between development and the urgency. This has generated gaps in the medium and the long term cooperation. NGOs compete for the same funding with the UN agencies. Poor coordination between UN agencies concerning water & Sanitation (23 agencies deal with the topic)
5. NGO efforts should be recognised as being the main implementing actors building coherence at local and national policy levels taking CSD recommendations to the ground. There is a weak recognition of the NGO networks in this process. NGO networks lack of trust from the UN system. Should governments insist to the UN system to change their working policy with NGOs?
6. All these factors prevent to develop means of Implementation and a broad impact contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.

PROPOSALS FOR APPROACHES OR SOLUTIONS

7. **Sustainable Development issues where new and/or further attention is required by the UN system:**
 - a. UN specialised agencies need to establish a better working strategy with NGOs at HQ and country level;
 - b. Assign funding sources for thematic NGOs and for UN agencies to avoid competition of resources;
 - c. Consultation should not be an ad-hoc task but should be fully recognised for the time and effort it demands. This would improve the now-a-days weak relationships with civil society organisations. The worst case is the ILO with a mandate that prevents to cooperate with informal economy actors (not included in ILO tripartite mandate and never consulted);
 - d. UNEP, UNDP, UNHABITAT, among others, need to strengthen their regional basis to be more coherent with civil society organisations partnership building; and
 - e. New NGOs engaged at global level need to be recognised as valid interlocutors in their field of expertise.
8. **How to strengthen the management and coordination of UN operational activities in the field of sustainable development at national and regional level?**
 - a. Key sustainable development topics such as water and sanitation require a visible decentralised head in the UN system. This coordination body should be open to regional discussions and to the inclusion of innovative water supply options;

- b. The UN Water & Sanitation coordinating body should facilitate consultations with donors to define NGO thematic cooperation strategies;
- c. It should facilitate joint programme formulation, inform on ongoing programmes in the field and permit the access of new national and local partners with UN consultative status to collaborate with UN agencies;
- d. To improve the UN administrative slow procedures, the establishment of decentralised “thematic” dialogue platforms (to formulate work plans and rapid procedures) are needed; and
- e. To improve the accountability and the impact of joint UN agencies and NGOs collaboration in the field of Sustainable Development, (starting with the Gender & Water and Sanitation programmes), a transparent review of objectives and results need to be presented to NGOs, both in Development Cooperation and in Humanitarian Aid investments.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND/OR FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

- 9. A new UN decentralised body with a mandate to coordinate a variety of MDG initiatives such as water and sanitation- would include specialised NGO in its directive board and in the coordination of regional and national investments.
- 10. New York based UNDESA should be strengthened in the regions and Social Affairs should become a central core area of all development & humanitarian aid programmes. Otherwise, it has no raison d’être in HQ!
- 11. An evaluation of results of the micro-credit year should illustrate the real commitment of corporate social responsibility and private sector (Global compact is really useful for development investment?)
- 12. The ILO should renew its last century mandate to be inclusive of informal workers and NGOs. It has lost its credibility in the field and has no real impact in local economic development initiatives.
- 13. UNEP HQ in Nairobi and Regional offices should rotate their staff to other regions as long-term staff acquires the vices of inefficient bureaucracy with no real impact and credibility. Project implementation and relations with NGO are poor.
- 14. WTO in Geneva needs structural changes to open wider to NGO interaction and consultations.
- 15. Nairobi UN HQ seems to inspire the same administrative slow routine as UN New York HQ. This is preventing the UN system to show a fresh & dynamic intention for sustainable Development, Human Rights and humanitarian interventions. A growing gap between civil society and the privileged UN system is evident and fundamental changes deserve political attention.