

# URAdapt

Managing Water at the Urban-Rural Interface: The key to climate change resilient cities

## MINUTES

URAdapt Consultative Group Inception Meeting.

Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010



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**International Water Management Institute, Accra**

## **1. Background**

The URAdapt Consultative Group was formed following the inception meeting of the Research into Strategic Action Platform (Re-SAP) in Accra. The project team envisioned that group members would contribute strategic insights that would allow the project to respond to the issue of water, climate change and cities.

The inception meeting focused on characterising the institutional contexts in which action on climate change is expected to take place in the future. Consultative Group members sought to identify key evolutionary trends at the levels of problem-framings, policies and organisations in Ghana. These insights are expected to feed into the formulation of strategic recommendations for adaptation, and the design of research uptake activities for the project.

A background document setting out the rationale for, and composition of, the Consultative Group was circulated among members prior to the meeting (annex I). This also set the backdrop of discussions at the inception meeting. Annex II contains the list of participants and their contact details.

In brief, the Consultative Group tackled the following questions at the meeting:

- a. How would you characterise your sector today in terms of key organisations, policies and problem-framings?
- b. What is your sector likely to look like in 2020, 2050 and beyond?
- c. What synergies and gaps already exist and are likely to emerge between the sectors?
- d. What are the current and future mechanisms to manage the urban-rural interface?
- e. Who are the key actors that the project should influence in order to ensure the uptake and sustainability of its outputs, and what are the means of doing so?

## **2. Key insights**

In her opening, Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally described the Consultative Group as an experimental notion. The project team's wish was that it would evolve into a think tank, which would tackle strategic questions at a conceptual level. Having explained the objective of the discussion, Dr. Raschid-Sally opened the floor to questions and comments.

Dr. Delali Dovie from the Water Resources Commission noted that, in general, current sector policies are weak in terms of tackling the environment generally and climate change more specifically. He suggested that the Consultative Group focus on identifying opportunities for ***mainstreaming climate change and water management into existing frameworks***.

Mr. Ohene Sarfoh from the Institute for Local Government Studies added his perspective from the local government sector. Although the structures of local government at various levels have been laid out in various policies and pieces of legislation, these are subject to frequent changes. Local government does engage with the issue of environmental management; however, ***'environment' is interpreted as referring to 'sanitation'***. The notion must be recast to incorporate other environmental concerns, including climate change. The implications of this for URAdapt include

engaging in sensitisation and advocacy efforts beyond seminars and technical presentations. Within Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), it should target environmental standing committees (where present) and local EPA representatives. He also highlighted that calls have been made since 1992 for the establishment of environment, conservation and natural resources departments within MMDAs. However, such structures have yet to materialise.

Mr. Ohene Sarfoh noted that the EPA is not yet a fully decentralised entity; it has not been devolved to all MMDAs throughout the country. Moreover, EPA offices within MMDAs report to EPA headquarters, not to the assemblies. As such, their current roles are limited to advisory services. He also drew attention to the recently passed Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 1961, which seeks to operationalise the structures of the assemblies. This will decentralise national bodies, such as the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), into already existing MMDA structures.

Mr. Delali Nutsukpo from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture offered his views on the current institutional context of the agricultural sector in Ghana. Here, the central government is responsible for policy formulation. Otherwise, the sector has been decentralised, with districts servicing rural communities' agricultural needs. The current agricultural policy emphasises agricultural development broadly, beyond a focus on agricultural production alone. The policy looks to its counterparts in other sectors in efforts to promote joined-up development: the environment has become central pillar in the agricultural policy, which also builds on synergies with infrastructure development policies in efforts to ensure access to markets for agricultural produce. At present, the government is reintroducing subsidies for agricultural inputs, such as fertilisers, with the intention of creating a national surplus of agricultural produce. A further notable feature of the agricultural sector at present is the enhancement of extension services, which in the past were provided solely by the government, but which are now being offered by the private sector. Finally, the current agricultural policy encourages the formation of farmer-based organisations for collective action (such as the purchasing of farming machinery) in order to enhance their competitiveness.

Much of agriculture in Ghana is practiced by small-scale farmers and is non-commercial; according to Mr. Nutsukpo, this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future. What large-scale, commercial activity exists tends to be resourced by foreign entities. The government is encouraging the commercialisation of small-scale agriculture as well through, for instance, the establishment of farmer-based organisations and the provision of subsidies. While the agricultural policy attempts to create favourable conditions for both types of agricultural practice, government funds are directed only to small-scale agriculture.

Mr. Nutsukpo also stipulated that agricultural water use will increase in the future. The government is moving from large-scale irrigation projects to small-scale, privately-operated irrigation facilities. Irrigation development is currently focused on the northern sector, and it is expected to trickle down eventually to the southern parts of the country. As with extension services, the Ghana Irrigation Development Authority will no longer necessarily be the sole irrigation service provider: the sector is expected to open up to new actors.

Mr. Daniel Benefoh Tutu from the Environmental Protection Agency noted the multi-scaled nature of policies and other frameworks on the environment, and specifically on climate change. The existing ones in Ghana have been drafted at the national-scale; not the basin- or city-scales. There is, therefore, a gap between the policies on the one hand, and the processes that the project engages with on the other. The existing National Climate Change Strategy in Ghana has been informed by both global and regional (ECOWAS) policies. It outlines a ten-point plan of action. These points offer anchors around which eventual URAdapt recommendations could be drafted in order to encourage uptake.

Mr. Benefoh also noted that the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology is currently conducting a review of the national environment policy with the intention of capturing climate change within it. In addition, there are on-going efforts to 'climate proof' the medium-term development plan of Ghana. This would support the initiatives that the National Development Planning Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency and other have begun in ten pilot districts throughout the country. These intend to mainstream climate change considerations into the routine planning activities of individual districts. Mr. Benefoh also noted that two issues must be clarified in terms of the National Climate Change Policy Framework, which is currently under development: how it will be implemented and with what funding. Mr. Benefoh expressed his view that the necessary financial resources should not come in the form of a loan; they could, however, include contributions from the private sector. Nonetheless, he suggested that climate change adaptation is a government-led activity.

Dr. Delali Dovie explained that the main entity responsible for water resources management nationally – the Water Resources Commission – works on transboundary-, basin- and farmer-levels. At the basin-level within Ghana, the recently inaugurated Basin Boards bring together stakeholders from multiple sectors – in both rural and urban areas that share a common water source – to tackle basin-specific water management issues. Dr. Dovie speculated that the repercussions of climate change will be basin-specific, and as such, Basin Boards offer means of tackling them in a cross-cutting manner in relation to water resources. A similar institutional arrangement exists at the transboundary-level. This brings together national water resources management authorities from countries that share the Volta Basin waters. At the farmer-level, Water User Associations (WUAs) are the vehicles that bring together individual water-users for decision-making over common resources.

Mr. Christian Siawor from the Ghana Water Company Limited added that although the institutional set up of the water sector has been clearly set out, there is little preparedness to confront the challenges of the future. Current water supply services achieve a coverage rate of 59-60% in Accra. In other words, even in the absence of climate change, there are challenges to water provision in the city. The current vision for the sector is to achieve 85% coverage in urban areas by 2025. Climate change, however, may complicate the realisation of this vision; the quantity and/ or quality of water may be compromised.

Ms. Charlotte Engmann from the Community Water and Sanitation Agency provided the rural water supply perspective. The coverage rate in rural villages and small towns is also 59%, although Ms. Engmann noted that water use in these settings tends to be considerably lower than in their urban counterparts. She also stipulated that the impacts of climate change would be felt more critically on urban water provision. Mr. Farouk Braimah from the People's Dialogue added that there has been a clear ***lack of contributions from users to discussions on urban water provision***. There is an urgent need to ***raise awareness among user communities of the resource connections between urban and rural areas***.

Although national policies are in place for all of the major sectors, Dr. Dovie suggested that ***there is generally a lack of knowledge on the levels of investment that are required to implement action plans and strategies – particularly under climate change***. He referred to the recently published Economics of Climate Change Adaptation in Ghana (<http://beta.worldbank.org/content/ghana-economics-adaptation-climate-change-study>), noting the difficulty of gathering and analysing data for such an assessment. At present, there are no reliable estimates of the costs of responding to seasonal variability; nor are there evidence-based contingency plans, with predicted resource requirements, for responding to natural disasters. Dr. Delali suggested that ***among the bottlenecks is the insistence of seeing climate change as an environmental issue, not as a developmental issue***.

Mr. Nutsukpo interjected that a number of **assessments on the economic costs of climate change adaptation assume that the systems – including infrastructure – for basic service provision are in place and fully operational**. They do not account for existing limitations faced by the systems. Mr. Nutsukpo suggested that, as such, a realistic prediction of the investments required to prepare for climate change can only be achieved by mainstreaming climate change into national budgets.

Dr. Dovie suggested that climate change be recast as an opportunity – not simply a threat – in order to widen the scope of actors beyond government to the private sector and civil society. One area in which the private sector could contribute is the provision of insurance against climate change-incurred risks to water-based livelihoods. In terms of civil society, Action Aid has already done a comprehensive assessment of the costs of disaster management and risk reduction in Ghana. However, the contributions of organisations such as these currently go unrecognised by government authorities that are tasked with coordinating climate change preparedness.

Mr. Ohene Sarfoh added that while climate change is a global phenomenon, its manifestations will be unique to specific localities. Nonetheless, measures to prepare for and respond to climate change must have coherence across scales and sectors. He noted that there is no local capacity within MMDAs to carry out climate change projections; nor to link these to assessments and action plans elsewhere. As a result, Mr. Ohene Sarfoh identified **the regional level as a critical point of entry for the project**. Structures at this level – whether Regional Coordinating Councils, Basin Boards or others – will be in a position to **support local-level action, draw these together under a common framework, and to act as a communication link to the national level**. He agreed with Dr. Delali's suggestion of rearticulating climate change in terms of development; not the environment.

Mr. Nutsukpo noted that at present government orientation appears to be focused on planning for **mitigation**, as opposed to **adaptation**. He encouraged the project to seek opportunities within the mitigation framework for interjecting adaptation measures. Mr. Farouk Braimah, in turn, was sceptical of the apparent dichotomy between adaptation and mitigation; the two forms of action are complementary.

Ms. Charlotte Engmann added that **knowledge was the most critical issue**, and the **capacity to generate this should be addressed urgently**. Sound recommendations could only be made on the basis of robust knowledge; the recommendations themselves would have to be assessed in terms of their attendant costs. She voiced support for previous assertions that **no entity alone could be expected to provide the full complement of information. The contributions of civil society and the private sector would have to be integrated with those of government**.

Mr. Nutsukpo returned to the issue of managing the urban-rural interface. He agreed with Mr. Braimah's calls for improving awareness of resource connections between urban and rural areas. He added that the broader, societal ramifications of resource changes in one on the other should also be made clear. In the absence of explicit attempts to strengthen rural areas – in terms of fortifying livelihoods and seeking alternative forms of income – urban areas will continue to grow without bounds. He also called for caps on urban growth. Mr. Braimah responded by noting that it is a question of balance: without a critical population mass and level of production in cities, countries' economies will come to a halt. He stipulated that cities in Ghana have not yet stepped over the threshold.

Dr. Samuel Codjoe agreed that the consequences of climate change on cities would be exacerbated by their limitless expansion. He noted that **sub-Saharan Africa was the most rapidly urbanising region in the world. However, unlike other areas that have experienced a similar population**

***transition, urban growth in sub-Saharan Africa is not accompanied by concomitant economic growth.***

Mr. Ohene Sarfoh, who has been a member of the technical working group advising the formulation of the ***National Urban Development Policy***, noted that the draft policy recognises the primacy of Accra and Kumasi in Ghana's economy and politics. It likewise accounts for the possible future development of Takoradi. Among others, the draft policy proposes to make use of ***'growth pole' theory to stimulate the creation of a hierarchy of cities with specific functions***. This would see the deconcentration of public services from Accra to elsewhere. The draft policy also explicitly recognises the importance of small towns and secondary cities. The draft policy awaits a second round of validation, prior to being sent to Cabinet. Whether it will be approved, and whether the necessary legislative instruments will be put in place to operationalise the policy, remain to be seen.

Mr. Ohene Sarfoh also emphasised the need to ***target different vulnerability causing issues with specific measures***. He made note of homelessness in Accra, and the consequences of climate change to people who live without permanent shelter. He noted that in the city at present sections of pavements, along with the roofs of container shops, are rented for the night. A nested hierarchy of tenancies exists in peri-urban areas as well. Elsewhere, homeowners are drilling boreholes to access water, in the process polluting aquifers that are supposed to serve as common sources.

Dr. Raschid-Sally brought the discussion to a close by thanking all of the participants. She reiterated that the intention is for the meetings to evolve into a regular discussion series, and for the ideas expressed during each meeting being condensed into pamphlets. The discussions will play an important role in strengthening the strategic orientation of the project.

## ***Annex I – Background paper***

### **Consultative Group inception meeting**

#### **1. Rationale for the Consultative Group (CG)**

On the basis of the outcomes of the Accra Re-SAP inception meeting, the project team felt that URAdapt would benefit from a small 'Consultative Group' (CG) to provide additional guidance to the project. This group is envisioned to contribute strategic guidance for URAdapt.

The intention is to bring together a small group of platform members, representing key sectors<sup>1</sup>, to deliberate on a conceptual level the core elements of the project. This is in contrast to the Re-SAP platform, which is in a position to provide more technical details and 'on the ground' information.

#### **2. Membership of the Consultative Group**

The following individuals have been invited to serve on the CG:

- Delali B. Dovie from the Water Resources Commission (to capture the water resources management angle, particularly at the level of national policy)
- Delali Nutsukpo from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (to represent a major water use sector that spans rural and urban spaces)
- Charlotte Engmann from the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (to reflect water use and sanitation mainly in rural, but also partly in urban, areas)
- Farouk Braimah from the People's Dialogue (to contribute insights on social inclusion and vulnerable groups)
- K. Ohene Sarfoh from the Institute for Local Government Studies (to provide a critical analysis of local governance issues)
- Christian Siawor from the Ghana Water Company Limited (to reflect the urban water policy and management angle)
- Kyekyeku Oppong-Boadi from the Environmental Protection Agency (to provide a national-level climate change adaptation and risk mitigation perspective)
- J. Wellens-Mensah from the Hydrological Services Department (to provide insights into the design and construction of drainage and sewerage; coastal protection; and operational hydrology)
- Samuel Codjoe from the Regional Institute for Population Studies (to contribute expertise on climate change and health, particularly in urban settings)

The CG members were selected because of their sectoral expertise, roles within their organisations and constructive contributions at the Re-SAP meetings.

#### **3. First Consultative Group meeting – theme**

URAdapt downscales climate change to the city level, and assesses its consequences for urban watersheds and water allocation within an urban-rural interface. These consequences will not be felt in institutional vacuums, but rather within dynamic institutional settings. We can expect evolution in the paradigms or 'problem frames', policies and organisations that will shape action on climate

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<sup>1</sup> Water, sanitation, agriculture, environment, governance, human settlements and health

change in a range of sectors, both globally and in Ghana. ***The intention of the first Consultative Group meeting is to 'forecast' these developments collectively and in a cross-cutting manner; to 'downscale' them to the national and city levels; and to reflect upon their implications for URAdapt.***

#### **4. Objective**

The outcomes of the discussions are expected to serve as a heuristic or 'problem-solving aid', which will help the project to contextualise its eventual strategic recommendations. In the interim, they contribute towards the design of policy influence approaches.

#### **5. Structure of discussions**

Several strategies for developing resilience to climate change are based on the premise that adaptation to current and short-term climate events serve to reduce vulnerability to longer term climate change. Informed by such approaches, the starting point for the discussions will be 'the present'. The CG members will be asked to contribute insights from their sectors, and to collectively identify synergies and gaps between them, in terms of ***dominant 'problem-framings', policies and organisations***. The example below illustrates the kind of reflection that is hoped of the participants:

##### ***Example: paradigm shifts in water and sanitation in Ghana***

In Ghana, the organisational structure of the water and sanitation sectors has shifted from a highly centralised, unitary state utility model to a more dispersed configuration, whereby water and sanitation have become the responsibilities of distinct organisations (as reflected in the establishment of the GWCL and CWSA). The mandates of these organisations are further demarcated along urban and rural lines, and differentiated according to governance styles: the water sector remains largely centralised, while the sanitation sector has been decentralised. They also allow for the ceding of certain tasks to the private sector. Such efforts have been bolstered not only by renewed policy momentum on decentralisation, but also clear policy traction for the involvement of the private sector in the provision of basic services, such as water supply. These developments speak of wider paradigms or 'problem-framings' around the devolution of the state that have taken root across the globe. Central governments are now considered 'inefficient' and 'non-participatory', particularly in terms of basic service provision. The involvement of the private sector in previously public spheres of activity, and the strengthening of local government, are frequently prescribed solutions.

Source: adapted from Bohman, A. (2010) *Framing the Water and Sanitation Challenge: A history of urban water supply and sanitation in Ghana 1909-2005*. Doctoral dissertation in Economic History. Umeå University, Sweden.

The questions to be discussed are:

- I. How would you characterise your sector today in terms of key organisations, policies and problem-framings?***
- II. What is your sector likely to look like in 2020, 2050 and beyond?***
- III. What synergies and gaps already exist and are likely to emerge between the sectors?***
- IV. What are the current and future mechanisms to manage the urban-rural interface?***
- V. Who are the key actors that the project should influence in order to ensure the uptake and sustainability of its outputs, and what are the means of doing so?***



## **6. Outputs**

The project envisions the CG meetings to evolve into a 'discussion series' on key strategic questions facing the project. The discussions will be synthesised into pamphlets that will be made available on the URAdapt website.

## **Annex II – Participants**

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