

**REPORT OF A ROUND TABLE ORGANISED BY THE NATIONAL NETWORK ON WATER AND SANITATION IN NIGERIA (NEWSAN) AT THE NIGERIA SOCIAL FORUM 2005, LAGOS.**

The National Network on Water and Sanitation in Nigeria (NEWSAN), a coalition of non governmental and community based organizations working in the water and sanitation sector in Nigeria organized a Roundtable on *"Water and Sanitation: Implications for sustainable development"*, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nigeria Social Forum. Wednesday November 16, 2005.

The Roundtable had as its Panelists Mr. Leo Atakpu, the National Coordinator of NEWSAN; Mrs. Priscilla M. Achakpa of the Women Environmental Programme (WEP)/ North Central Zonal Coordinator, NEWSAN; and Mr. Babatope Babalobi of The Bread of Life Development Foundation/Lagos State Coordinator NEWSAN.

The roundtable was organized with the support of the WATERAID, Nigerian office, represented by Mrs. Ifeoma Charles-Monwuba, who chaired the Panel.

About 70 participants representing various non-governmental organizations in Nigeria attended and made contributions. And at the end of the discussions, it was noted that:

1. *The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights in November 2002 adopted a General Comment 15, which states that 'The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physical accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use'.*
2. *Target 7 of the MDGs is to ensure environmental sustainability through several targets including halving by the year 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation.*
3. *The Nigeria Government through past programmes in the water and sanitation sector, and the on going 2<sup>nd</sup> National Urban Water Sector Reform Project (2<sup>nd</sup> NUWSRP) is vigorously pursuing water privatization programmes which had grievous implications on water access and affordability for most Nigerians.*
4. *Though the Citizens Forum on Constitutional Reform (CFCR) and other groups have done a beautiful job in preparing a model constitutional for the Federal Republic of Nigeria, all the models just like the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria do not contain a specific provision on the Human right to water.*
5. *There is no National Policy on Water and Sanitation in Nigeria, resulting in uncoordinated and disparate initiatives to address problems in the water and sanitation Sector.*

6. *The huge funds expended on developing the water and sanitation sector in the past six years of democratic governance have not resulted in increased access to water and sanitation services by Nigerians.*
7. *Women, and subsistence farmers are most affected by the lack of access to water resources to secure their livelihoods, and new projects to develop the water and sanitation sector are being formulated and implemented without cognizance to the needs and demands of women and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.*
8. *The state of sanitation facilities in Nigeria is appalling, resulting in preventable deaths, particularly among Children.*
9. *Democratic and development sustenance is being threatened by the calls for an a third term of office for the present Federal Administration under President Olusegun Obasanjo*

**Participants therefore:**

1. *Re affirm the human right to water, meaning each person has the right to water for securing his or her basic livelihood.*
2. *The Civil society and Nigeria government are called upon to strengthen the implementation of the right to water and make the right to water fully enforceable in our national laws, as in other countries like South Africa and Uruguay.*
3. *The Nigeria Federal Government with the support of all stakeholders should set up the process for the review and adoption of the draft national policy on water and sanitation, and ensure its enactment as a legal document, as a basic for integrated water resources management in Nigeria.*
4. *Water must remain a public trust rather than a commodity to be traded by the private sector, to guarantee its access and affordability to the poor who used it most. The on going 2<sup>nd</sup> National Urban Water Sector Reform Project in Nigeria should be reviewed to make it inclusive, people centered, transparent, and participatory.*
5. *That privatization cease to be used as a condition on international lending to finance the development of water and sewage resources in the Country*
6. *The Civil society are urged to commence Budget Monitoring and Tracking programmes in the Water and Sanitation Sector in order to monitor and ensure the prudent use of funds budgeted for the sector yearly.*
7. *NGOs, and CBOs are called upon to put in place 'Citizens Forum' on water and sanitation at national and grassroots levels to serve as a platform of holding governments accountable to its commitments in this sector.*



8. *The Federal and States Governments are also the International Organizations working in the water sector are called upon to address the requirements of vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, children, farmers and deprived people in rural areas facing difficulties with physical access to water.*
9. *As a corollary to the above, we advocate that the paradigm of development in the water sector should be shifted from building gigantic infrastructures and water networks, to implementing community managed projects using low cost water technologies.*
10. *All stakeholders are called upon to implement water policies that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender requirements.*
11. *The Nigeria Government is hereby called upon to adopt the principles of the global Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) campaign and set up a process for its national launch and implementation, particularly in Schools and rural communities.*
12. *The calls for the extension of the tenure of office of the present Federal administration is disturbing as much as it is embarrassing to democratic development which is based on the rule of law. We call on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nigeria Social Forum to make a categorical statement on this development and set up a proactive plan of Action to thwart this unconstitutional and in fact ungodly idea.*

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