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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia  
Ministry of Water Resources

## Meeting Report of the first Forum for Learning on Water Supply & Sanitation (FLoWS)



### FLoWS Organizing committee



WaterAid



May 27, 2008  
Addis Ababa

The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MoWR

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# **FLoWS: The Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation**

FLoWS was born out of an initiative at the second WASH Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF2), which was held in Adama in December 2007. Led by the Ministry of Water Resources, FLoWS will provide a series of learning sessions throughout the year to bring together sector actors at national level and bridge gaps between annual MSF meetings, bi-annual Joint Technical Reviews and other sector events and processes. FLoWS will contribute to research and innovation on priority sector issues to support the achievement of the Ministry's Universal Access Plan for water and sanitation. The launch of FLoWS is a major step forward for the WASH sector and the Ministry's public commitment to learning, demonstrated by leading this forum, will open the door to new levels of collaboration and sharing from the ground to the highest levels of policymaking.

## **Part I: Opening Address**

Following a welcome address by Yohannese G/Medhin, introducing the history of FLoWS as described above, the first meeting of FLoWS – the Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation – was opened by Ato Tefera of the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), representing the State Minister Ato Adugna Jabessa. Ato Tefera emphasised the Ministry's commitment to leading and supporting FLoWS, to ensure that this forum will engender new levels of coordination and learning in the sector. This, he hoped, will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and Ethiopia's own Universal Access Plan for water and sanitation.



**Ato Tefera opens FLoWS**

## Part II: Presentations

### Highlights on Activities of Research & Development Coordination Department, MoWR Etafa Emama, R&D Coordinator

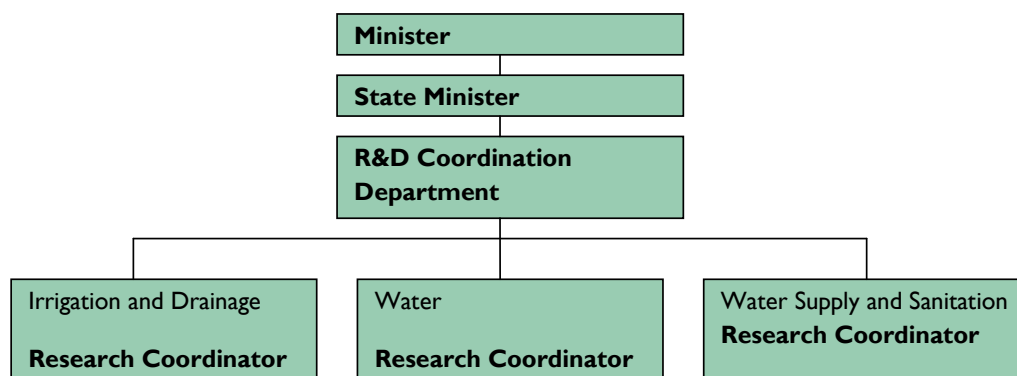
(Hydro-meteorology, Water Resources, & Watershed Management)

In the first presentation of the morning, Ato Etafa Emama introduced participants to the MoWR's Research and Development (R&D) Coordination Department, highlighting the department's history, activities and future directions.

The R&D department came into being in 2003 after studies indicated the need for a dedicated institution to conduct and coordinate research in water resources management. In comparison with other sectors such as health and agriculture, research in the water sector in Ethiopia has been highly fragmented, uncoordinated and lacking in concerted vision. Integrating and coordinating research at national level was felt to be critical for progress in the sector, and was inspired by achievements made in other sectors. It is envisaged that in future years the R&D department may be replaced by a fully independent Ethiopian Water Research Institute.

The department works under the direction of the country's comprehensive water resources management policy and water sector strategy, and has identified five thematic priorities for research: water resources and watershed management; water supply and sanitation; irrigation and drainage; hydraulic structures and hydro-power; and institutions and policy. Three Research Coordinators manage research in the department (see Fig 1 below). It also has a responsibility to support capacity building for water-related research in Ethiopia. The R&D department is supported by the Ethiopian Water Research Advisory Council (EWRAC).

**Fig 1 R&D Department Organisation**



The R&D department has a mission of providing leadership for research and development through support for both generation of knowledge and for transfer an use of this knowledge. The department supports the effective application of knowledge by engaging stakeholders and partners in solving water related problems, and encouraging technology transfer, and works to promote cooperation and communication between water sector institutions. This includes collaboration with international organisations and governments.

The main achievements of the R&D department to date are the provision of a number of research grants, identification of national water research priority areas, capacity assessment of existing research institutions, preparation of various guidelines and formats, and the establishment of MoUs with a variety of organisations as a basis for long-term institutional collaboration. The department is now conducting a detailed strategy study on “Institutional Strengthening of R&D in the Water Sector in Ethiopia”.

## **The FLoWS concept**

### **Tamene Chaka, RiPPLE National Coordinator**

Tamene Chaka of the RiPPLE office then presented the concept behind FLoWS. FLoWS is a major step forward in bringing together core water-related organisations to increase learning in the water sector following MSF2. These include the WASH movement, WaterAid Ethiopia, UNICEF, Care Ethiopia, CRDA as well as the MoWR. FLoWS has the potential to be a very important forum because, while there is a great deal of learning taking place in the WASH sector, it is occurring in a fragmented, uncoordinated way which limits its potential to inform policy. A number of networks and coordinating bodies already exist in the sector, but they are not comprehensive and there is little learning between them.



**A participant offering his comments**

FLoWS therefore aims to facilitate learning and sharing between these forums and networks, and to create links for more effective communication between them. It will also be closely linked with the annual MSF, feeding into each MSF and supporting its undertakings. As FLoWS is hosted by the MoWR, it will foster close links between research, learning and policy processes. FLoWS will provide a series of national learning events for a year, to be documented and shared widely.

Participants were supportive of the learning approach, but highlighted that engaging a wide range of participants including universities and NGOs could be a challenge. These actors are crucial for learning in the sector, and FLoWS must make efforts to attract them to take part. On a similar note, it was emphasised that FLoWS should consider not only links between learning and policy, but links between learning and practice, by involving sectors practitioners. Finally, a suggestion was made to create links with the WEDC conference.

## **WASH Regional Chapters**

### **Michael Negash, National WASH Movement Coordinator**

Michael Negash introduced the WASH Ethiopia Movement: established in 2004 by concerned organisations as part of a global WASH movement under the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, it is a coalition uniting more than 70 government and non-governmental organisations, UN Agencies, private sector organisations and the media. The movement's goal is to reduce the high levels of morbidity and mortality caused by lack of access to adequate safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices. Members meet each month to share experiences and updates. He emphasised that the WASH Movement supports the FLoWS initiative and will facilitate information-sharing between the two.



**Meeting participants**

At national level, the movement has produced educational materials, held media workshops and field trips for journalists, conducted experience-sharing events, and co-organised national events like the World Water Day and World Toilet Day. WASH Chapters have been established at regional level, where the challenges of coordination may be high: for example, chapter launches have in some cases been hindered by weak coordination between sector bureaus. The challenges faced highlight the need to focus on linking national-level learning initiatives such as FLoWS with policy and practice actors at regional level. The regional chapters carry out political advocacy and awareness-raising activities, support government sector strategies, identify issues for learning, support innovation (for example testing new technologies and approaches), and seek to build new partnerships and mobilise key actors around WASH.

Membership of the WASH movement and global WASH campaign is open to all at [www.wsscc.org](http://www.wsscc.org).

Participants suggested that FLoWS would benefit from web-based communication, and the WASH or RiPPLE websites could act as forums.

## The WASH Inventory: Potential, Scope and Application

### Paul Deverill – UNICEF WASH

Paul Deverill presented two cases – a hand pump in Tigray and a school toilet in Oromia – to illustrate the gap between nominal access figures and observed users of schemes.



**Case 1. Hand pump**



**Case 2. School toilet**

500 people were said to have access to the hand pump water supply (the nominal use figure), but only 25 were observed to use it (5% of the nominal). In the case of the school toilet, nominal access was 850 people but no one was observed to use it (0% of the nominal). The failure of these schemes to reach a larger number of users was due to factors including lack of water and poor scheme management. These discrepancies between nominal and actual use were detected by the WASH inventory, and highlight the value of such an inventory to understand how schemes are used in practice. WASH inventories can provide information to support local sector activities, inform planning and budgeting, and promote greater local-level accountability.

To be most useful locally, inventories should be undertaken at the local level. Inventories may be carried out from a community, household or institutional perspective, and the factors to be measured vary between the three. At community level, key elements of the inventory are the type of supply, the history of the scheme (when it was implemented and by who), flow rate, functionality, number of users, and water quality. At household level, key questions are the type of sanitation facilities, evidence of their use, hand washing and use of soap. In institutions such as schools, key details are the condition and use of toilets, the seat/user ratio, the availability of water for cleaning and hygiene, physical separation of sanitation facilities for men and women, and access for the disabled.

Inventories may be carried out by various actors including WASHCOs, health extension workers, School Committees, Woreda Administration, woreda support groups, and NGOs.

Pilot Inventory Baselines are now planned in 20 woredas, and UNICEF plans to inventory all the investments it has supported and report the findings to MSF and FLoWS to encourage learning from experience. Challenges to managing the inventory process include coordination of monitoring and evaluation among organisations to prevent overlap, and the need to balance demands for detailed information with the need for a simple, easily replicable approach.



## **Application of GIS for Water Supply Coverage Analysis Wondwosen Belayneh, International Rescue Committee (IRC)**

Wondwosen Belayneh started by highlighting the value of GIS as a tool to visualise, manipulate and analyse spatial data, and to link datasets with maps. GIS is important to support IRC activities at global and national level. IRC was founded in 1933 and is operational in 25 countries. It provides emergency relief, relocates refugees, undertakes advocacy for those affected by violent conflict and oppression and works to rebuild lives in the wake of disaster. IRC started its operation in Ethiopia in 2000 in Somali Region Relief operation and has since expanded to operate in most of the country's refugee camps.

IRC uses GIS as an instrument for different planning purposes such as selecting sites for water points and estimating pipe lengths from borehole to reservoir. IRC Ethiopia has used GIS to work with various types of data varying from socio-economic to geographical data, and in an inventory of water facilities conducted in SNNPR. Such an approach may help to reach an agreed coverage figure at national level. It was noted that GIS is best used at local level (woreda or kebele), but is difficult to use effectively at macro level.

### **Sustainability Challenges of Water Supply Schemes in Dugda Woreda, Central Rift Valley, Ethiopia Netsanet Kassa, Michew University**

The last presentation focused on a local study of sustainability challenges in one woreda (Dugda), which examined the problem of failing water supply points from the perspectives of quality, skill and institutions/management. 26.6% of water points in the woreda are non-functional, the main reasons for failure being pump defects, looting, burial due to flooding, and abandonment due to high fluoride content in the water. Over 2000 dug wells have been unofficially constructed by communities in the woreda, which may also result in depletion of the resource.

The study found that various factors contribute to poor sustainability including water quality problems, lack of community participation during scheme development, particularly of women, weaknesses in organisational management of schemes, a shortage of skilled manpower, the absence of monitoring and evaluation systems and the lack of training for technical staff, water committees and households. The main recommendations of the study were therefore to address these challenges through awareness-raising activities, water defluoridation, efforts to staff, equip and train water offices, development of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and moves to increase the involvement of local communities, especially women, in water supply development and management.

## Part III: FLoWS Next Steps

### Participant Reflections

Ato Abiti from the MoWR, chairing the session, once more emphasised the main objective of FLoWS: to bring together different stakeholders working in the WASH sector. As well as giving an opportunity to share experiences and information, this forum has the potential to generate new ideas to strengthen the WASH sector and help increase access to water, sanitation and hygiene in Ethiopia.



**Sharing reflections**

Participants were then invited to share their reflections on the progress and future directions of FLoWS. These were highly encouraging. Participants commented that they had learned from the presentations and discussions already shared. Some who were already members of regional RiPPLE Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs) or similar initiatives in other sectors spoke positively of their experiences and their belief that this forum – bringing together high government officials, academic experts and practitioners – would be very valuable. In particular participants applauded the leadership MoWR has shown in hosting the forum and demonstrating their commitment to learning in the sector. This is a very important step forward.

### Planning Ahead

The next session, chaired by Mark Harvey (MoWR adviser), focused on planning future FLoWS meetings. It was agreed that these should be planned to reflect broader events in the WASH sector. FLoWS meetings would be a valuable opportunity to link and bridge the high level ministry-donor discussions at the annual MSF and the more implementation-oriented 6-monthly Joint Technical Review (JTR), to maximise learning between the two, support the MSF and JTR undertakings and pursue any research questions which arise. The undertakings of the last MSF suggest a number of areas where research and learning are needed, for example in the development of models of sustainable service delivery. The undertakings are listed in Box 1 below.

Further, FLoWS should respond to and inform the quarterly meetings between Ministries and Bureaus of Water, Health and Education, and should make links with other events e.g. joint monitoring and evaluation

workshops, conferences such as EthioSan (2008) and WEDC (2009), and research forums such as Plan International and WaterAid.

**Box 1**

**Undertakings of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum, December 2007**

1. Establish the WASH sector Monitoring and Evaluation framework
2. Enhance capacity building in the WASH sector through investment programmes and the WASH CB POOL
3. Further establish the WASH sector coordination structures *in particular* in the regions
4. Establish models of sustainable service delivery, including the role of private sector, legal WASH committees and effective supply chains

Ownership of the forum was briefly discussed. While hosting of the MoWR is very welcome, it is also important to include the health and education sectors as WASH includes not only water but sanitation and hygiene. It was agreed that efforts should be made to widen participation in FLoWS in future.

Following some debate, it was agreed that meetings will take place every 3 months and will be timetabled to last one day. RiPPLE has committed to supporting the MoWR in coordination, logistics and reporting



**Many people came together**

The style of meetings were then discussed. Some favoured a focus on research presentations, while others felt that there were already ample opportunities to listen to research papers and that learning would really derive from more open debate and discussion among participants. It was agreed that a flexible approach should be taken, mixing formal presentations with group discussions. Formal outputs should be produced as these will be useful to the MoWR and MSF, and will help to systematise learning in the sector.

Finally, a range of topics were put forward for content of future meetings. The enthusiasm of participants in proposing ideas was evident and is a very positive sign for future learning in the sector. Preparatory sessions

for this meeting had taken place focusing on community-led total sanitation and capacity building, which were not presented today, and these could be included in future.

The Universal Access Plan (UAP) is the policy driving force behind WASH in Ethiopia, and could be a focus for sector learning. Critical issues such as how to assess progress, the necessary institutional arrangements to meet targets, and the implications of federal-regional relationships for the UAP, would be valuable and policy-relevant areas for learning and debate. In relation to the UAP, some specific research questions were suggested, including: to what extent does the woreda support group approach of the World Bank (which is now in the UAP strategy) lead to a more sustainable service? What difference is the UAP making for service delivery standards? Is the stepped approach leading to a better management structure? Is the UAP simple technology approach working? How can we compare donor-supported programmes (with complicated rules and safeguards) with others?

Other ideas put forward were to examine efficiency at project or scheme level, including the resource valuation approaches of both implementers and users, and to assess the roles of communities and indigenous knowledge in the success of WASH programmes. Finally, it was suggested that links between WASH and other sectors should be brought in: not just links with health and education but with agriculture, environment, water resources management, trade and investment. At local level, these links have been developed by some multiple use water projects which aim to support both domestic and productive uses of water. This approach contrasts with the primacy given to domestic water in the UAP, and could be an interesting area for future research.

## **Final Remarks**

The first FLoWS was then concluded, and the organising committee agreed to consider all the suggested topics and decide the focus of the next meeting. Ato Abiti formally closed the first FLoWS meeting and expressed thanks to the organising committee and all participants for their roles in successfully launching FLoWS. The organisers hope to welcome all participants, and more, to the second FLoWS meeting in three months time.

# Forum for Learning on Water Supply and Sanitation (FLoWS)

## Launch Meeting Programme

May 27, 2008, MoWR, Addis Ababa

Time	Activity	Responsible	Chair Person
<b>Session 1: Opening</b>			
8:30-9:00 am	Registration of Participants	Organizing Committee	Yohannse G/Medhin(MoWR)
9:00-9:10 am	Welcome and introductory remarks	Abiti Getaneh	
9:10-9:20 am	Opening Address	His Excellency Ato Aduugna Jebessa, State Minister for Water Resources	
9:20-9:40 am	Highlights of activities of R&D Department of MoWR	Etefa Emama	
10:00-10:20am	Tea Break	Organizing Committee	
<b>Session 2: WASH Inventory &amp; Sanitation</b>			
10:20-10:40 am	WASH Regional Chapter and the Millennium Sanitation Movement	Belinda Abraham (UNICEF) / Michael Negash (WASH)	Alan Nicol(RiPPLE)
10:40-11:00 am	Institutionalization of the WASH Inventory	Paul Deverill (UNICEF)	
11:00-11:20 am	The Application of GIS to Water Scheme Mapping	Wondosen Belayneh (IRC)	
11:20-11:40 am	Sustainability Challenges of Water Supply Schemes in Dugda Woreda	Netsanet Kassa (Michew University)	
11:40-12:20pm	Presentation discussion	Presenters	
<b>Session 3: FLoWS Next Steps</b>			
12:20-1:00pm	Selection of topics and venue for the FLoWS 2 meeting	Mark Harvey	Abiti Getaneh(MoWR)
13:00-14:00pm	Wrap-up session, meeting close and lunch invitation	Mark Harvey	

# DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

## Forum for Learning on Water and Sanitation (FLoWS)

Ethiopia has a huge wealth of learning in the Water and Sanitation Sector (WSS) being delivered by both researchers and practitioners. A host of institutions across the country are now deeply involved in providing teaching, research and practical inputs to learning processes in the sector.

In addition, a number of active networks and fora are improving sector coordination and enhancing overall understanding of the challenges facing implementation of sustainable water and sanitation services. All these networks and fora provide critical inputs into the sector.

The purpose of FLoWS is to enhance and support these contributions through providing an umbrella under which learning across networks and fora can be shared more effectively and, specifically, support sector undertakings agreed each year at the Multi-Stakeholder Forum. This will strengthen the capacity for Ethiopia's WSS sector to link learning and research to key policy processes across the year and support delivery of the MSF undertakings.

In order to achieve this, FLoWS will:

- Provide a series of national learning events across the year, bridging the MSFs, and bringing to the sector undertakings enhanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in their implementation;
- Document learning from these events in a series of reports and briefing notes that allows the fullest possible sharing of knowledge and information across the sector;
- Consult widely during this process on future learning priorities in the sector and help to consolidate national priorities in sector learning into a document presented each year at the MSF.

FLoWS will be led by the MoWR in close collaboration with other key sector institutions and with technical and logistical support provided by the RiPPLE programme hosted by WaterAid Ethiopia.

It is anticipated that some six national-level learning events will be timetabled. Each event will allow the presentation and discussion of findings relevant to the key undertakings as well as support debate on other critical sector issues during that year.

Timetabling and content for these meetings will be agreed by the end of January 2008 in consultation with major sector stakeholders.

It is hoped that the inaugural event will take place in advance of World Water Day in March 2008. Funding to support FLoWS will be sought from the Capacity Building Pooled Fund.

December 2007

## Participant list for the 1st FLoWS Meeting MoWR May 27, 2008

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