



## **CTA-Wageningen UR ACP/EU Think Tank Pre-Conference Event**

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# WOMEN AND YOUTH: the untapped Agents for Sustainable Water Resource Management in the Green Economy

by

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# Presentation Outline

- Gives the African region and Malawi specific background on the vision for sustainable water Management and policy direction.
- Gives an overview of Gender Power Relations and how it plays out in Water Resource Management
- Argues for the need to tap women and youths knowledge for innovative sustainable water management.

*An Africa where there is an Equitable and Sustainable Use and Management of Water Resources for Poverty Alleviation, Socio-Economic Development, Regional Cooperation, and the Environment.*

*The Africa Water Vision for 2025*

# Malawi's Target for Access to Clean Water by 2025

- Malawi is working towards reducing by half, in the short term, the number of people without access to clean water and good sanitation, and providing good water and sanitation to every Malawian by 2025

# Current Status in Clean Water Provision

- Currently, only about 65 percent of the people have access to safe water.
- As the population grows, attainment of this objective entails nearly doubling the current efforts of supplying clean water in all areas of the country (urban, peri-urban, and rural).

# Agro-Processing is another priority area in the medium term

- Also earmarked for growth is industrial processing.
- Adoption of more intensive production and processing methods will lead to production of large quantities of solid and liquid waste and discharges that have the potential to pollute both surface and ground water resources.

# National Water Policy

- the Malawi National Water Policy calls for:
- integrated water resources management,
- Improved institutional framework,
- effective involvement of the private sector
- and protection of the environment;



# The Malawi National Water Development Program (NWDP)

- The NWDP is one of the largest water sector institutional capacity building program in Malawi mainly funded by World Bank and is currently in its second phase.
- NWDP (I) was a vehicle towards implementing the water policy with the main objective of supporting the implementation of the 1994 policy which aimed at ensuring adequate and safe water supply, provision of water infrastructure, and protection
- and management of water resources.

# National Water Development Programme II

- Is building on the experiences and achievements of the first phase,
- Consolidate the sector institutions, improve on water resources management and
- accelerate the provision of water and sanitation services to the communities in a sustainable manner.
- The objective of NWDP (II) is to improve water resources management and
- increase access to sustainable water supply and sanitation services for the people living in cities, towns and villages.

# Components of NWDPII

- Its main components are:
- Urban water supply and sanitation in Blantyre and Lilongwe Water Boards;
- Town water supply and sanitation in the three regional water boards;
- Rural water supply and sanitation in District Assemblies; and
- Water resources management
- The program covers all of Malawi and aims at 80% coverage of improved water supply and sanitation by 2015

# Poor inclusion of Women and Youth

- Although there is a growing awareness of the importance of a gender approach to water management (Francis, 2003).
- women's role in water resource management continues to be restricted to that of a beneficiary and does not extend to include tapping women's indigenous knowledge that has been passed on from one generation to the other.
- Knowledge of young women and young men is also rarely called for and yet they are the future who have to be involved in water management at all levels.

# Need for Women's Participation in Water Management decision Making

- On the whole, women's equal participation in decision-making is a prerequisite for more equitable access to both water and sanitation, and could lead to services that respond more effectively to men's and women's different demands and capacities.
- Women playing influential roles at all levels over the long term could also hasten the achievement of sustainability in the management of scarce water

# Persistent Gender Power relations dictate the need for inclusion of Women and Youth

- Gender roles (including responsibilities, expectations, norms, and the division of labour) shape all forms of human relationships with natural resources especially water.
- Masculinity and femininity denote differentiated entitlements and rights and
- ability to claim those rights for women and men and youth (young women and young men) in their day to day lives... in how they are socially positioned in the family, community and at national level.

# Gender Power relations (contd)

- These rights, entitlements and obligations are ascribed roles and responsibilities that tend to limit women's and youth's intellectual contribution to critical issues that affect our lives such as water resource management
- Lack of women and youth voice in water management could be detrimental to both women and men and the entire society and nation because women's knowledge and that of the youth remains for the most part untapped

# Women and Youth- the Untapped Agents

- Although women are major stakeholders of water and sanitation, most of the strategies at the national level and those of community engagement around water management and sanitation in Malawi are men-centric, and women have been reduced to mere end users.
- Gender-differentiated needs in project identification are subsumed within the general category of “community participation” where ‘consultation with communities’ signifies consultation with men as community leaders as was the case in the NWDP II development phase



# Gender Analysis of the conception of the NWDPII

- A gender analysis of the NWDP reveals that women are only featured as beneficiaries and not as intellectual contributors to designing water resource management and the youth are not featured at all.

# Inclusion of Women in NWDP II was based secondary data

- Issues related to women were identified from a previous World Bank funded project that looked at challenge of illiteracy and women economic empowerment not necessarily related to water management.
- Participation of women in the NWDP II therefore focusses on illiteracy classes and training them to manage funds realized from the water resource management as end users and committee members.

# Need for deliberate inclusion of women and youth at all levels

- Policies, governance and institutional structures encouraging women's and youth participation should reflect women's and youth ability to influence decision making at all levels and deliberate efforts should be made to achieve this.
- Women and youth should participate in needs assessment, planning, decision making, implementation, monitoring and social audit through the use of gender analytical participatory research methods and participatory project evaluation methods that are able to unearth the social gender dynamics that empower women and youth to be active agents of water resource management.

# Women and Youth inclusive Innovative approaches

- Will demand investing time to listen to women and youth using participatory gender analytical methods on water management
- There is need to acknowledge that women and youth posses indigenous knowledge passed on from one generation to the other.

# Conclusion

- Due to their gender role as major water collectors and users women and youth have specific observations and practices that could unlock the key to sustainable water management that is not being tapped.
- Women and youth could be the desired platform for the green economy that will result in improved well being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks in water management and ecological scarcity.

# It takes leadership to listen to the unheard!

- I argue that women and youth differentiated social positions and their gender roles best places them to contribute to the search for alternatives for sustainable water management and
- It takes leadership to listen to the unheard.