

Module 1: Water Governance

Definition of Governance

It is as old as human civilization. Simply put, "governance" means: **the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)**. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.

An analysis of governance focuses on the format and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the format and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision. (UNESCAP)

Governance is the "manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Governance means the way those with power use that power." (ADB)

Governance is "... the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes (i) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced; (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them." (World Bank)

Governance is the "exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. It is the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences." (UNDP)

Good Governance – a Subset of Governance

Good governance is, therefore, a subset of governance, wherein public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency.

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Good governance ensures that the participation of the poorest and the most vulnerable are ensured in decision-making over the allocation of development resources, and that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus among the three stakeholders the state, private sector and civil society. All three stakeholders are critical for sustaining human development: the state creates an enabling political and conducive legal environment; the private sector generates jobs and income; and civil society facilitates political and social interaction.

With the advent of globalization and the integration of economies, the state's task is also to find a balance between taking advantage of emerging market opportunities and providing a secure and stable social and economic environment domestically.

Good governance has eight (8) major characteristics/principles. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. (OECD, 2001).

Characteristics/Principles of Good Governance

- **Participation.** Both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.
- **Transparency.** Means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency.** Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at

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their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

- **Responsiveness.** Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Accountability.** Is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. 'Who is accountable to whom' varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.
- **Consensus oriented.** There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community.
- **Equity and inclusiveness.** A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being.
- **Rule of Law.** Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

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Definition of Water Governance

Water Governance is defined by the political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place, and which directly or indirectly affect the use, development and management of water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society. Importantly, the water sector is a part of broader social, political and economic developments and is thus also affected by decisions outside of the water sector.

Principles of Water Governance

Water governance addresses among other things:

- Principles such as equity and efficiency in water resource and services allocation and distribution, water administration based on catchments, the need for integrated water management approaches and the need to balance water use between socio-economic activities and ecosystems.
- The formulation, establishment and implementation of water policies, legislation and institutions.
- Clarification of the roles of government, civil society and the private sector and their responsibilities regarding ownership, management and administration of water resources and services, for example:
 - ✓ Inter-sectoral dialogue and co-ordination
 - ✓ Stakeholder participation and conflict resolution
 - ✓ Water rights and permits
 - ✓ The role of women in water management
 - ✓ Water quantity and quality standards
 - ✓ Bureaucratic obstacles and corruption
 - ✓ Price regulation and subsidies
 - ✓ Tax incentives and credits.

... *UNDP-Water Governance Facility*

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The Right to Water

In 2000, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations (in her General Comment No.14) accepted a supplement to this covenant which states that 'the right to health embraces a wide range of socio-economic factors that promote conditions in which people can lead a healthy life, and extends to the underlying determinants of health, such as food and nutrition, housing, access to safe and potable water and adequate sanitation, safe and healthy working conditions, and a healthy environment'.

In 2002, the same committee specified the right to water in her General Comment No.15: 'The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. An adequate amount of safe water is necessary to prevent death from dehydration, to reduce the risk of water-related disease and to provide for consumption, cooking, personal and domestic hygienic requirements.'

One of the concrete steps taken by the international community has been the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) during the UN Millennium Summit in New York in 2000. Definite targets are for instance to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and also to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water (both targets referring to the period 1990 - 2015).

... The Global Dimension of Water Governance: Nine Reasons for Global Arrangements in order to Cope with Local Water Problems, by A.Y. Hoekstra, July 2006, Value of Water Research Report Series NO. 20, UNESCO, Institute of Water Education

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Water as Integrating Service Factor

Provision of safe drinking water directly responds to the attainment of MDG 7 which calls for the reduction by 50 percent by 2015 of the population without access to safe drinking water.

Water supply provision contributes to the attainment of other MDGs:

- MDG 1: by reducing poverty and hunger;
- MDG 2: by improving the enabling school environment for school children;
- MDG 3: by enabling women to engage in productive and cultural activities;
- MDG 4: by reducing child mortality given the connection between unsafe water and water-borne diseases affected by polluted water;
- MDG 5: by reducing maternal mortality by ensuring that water is available in health centers;
- MDG 6: by reducing the impact of malaria and other vector-borne diseases affected by polluted waters;
- MDG 8: by promoting partnerships between the government, the private sector and the community in increasing access to safe drinking water, especially by the poor

The Most Vulnerable Groups to be Served

1. Women

Women and children do most of the water collecting if drinking water is not available in the premises. Collecting and carrying water takes time, and is a heavy burden on them. According to UNDP, this helps explain the very large gender gaps in school attendance in many countries. It is not rare for women

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to spend up to four hours a day walking, queuing and carrying water – time that could be put to productive activities, or homemaking or childcare. The water collected is often dirty and from unprotected sources. Women's health can be particularly affected by the heavy burden of carrying water, as well as water contact diseases, such as schistosomiasis.

Very often, women are excluded from decision-making concerning water and sanitation. As a result, their specific needs and circumstances are not taken into account in the development of water and sanitation programmes or in the extension of these services.

... *The Right to Water*, Fact Sheet No. 35/UNHuman Rights, UNHabitat, World Health Organization

Privacy needs of women are compromised when there are no sanitary toilet facilities within or around their houses. Poorly constructed facilities expose women and children to harassment and danger. The special circumstances of women (like the monthly menstrual periods and reproductive responsibilities) make them more vulnerable when there is lack of appropriate sanitation facilities.

... *Philippine Sustainable Sanitation Roadmap*, April 2010, Center of Advanced Policy Studies

2. Children

Children's health, educational advancement and overall well-being are greatly influenced by their access to water services, including safe drinking water and sanitation.

Safe drinking water and sanitation are fundamental for children's health. In countries with high child mortality, diarrhoea accounts for more deaths among children under five years of age than any other cause – more than pneumonia, malaria and HIV/AIDS combined. Over 90 percent of child mortality is related to contaminated water and inadequate sanitation.

Lack of safe drinking water makes children more vulnerable to disease. Their immune systems and detoxification

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mechanisms are not fully developed, so they often less able to respond to a water-related infection. Children also have less body mass than adults. This means that waterborne chemicals may be dangerous for a child at a concentration that is relatively harmless for an adult.

Girl's right to education also suffers. A major reason why parents do not send their daughters to school in many countries is that there are no separate sanitation facilities for girls. In Nigeria, for instance, parents withdrew their daughters from school because they had to defecate in the open. In Uganda, 94 percent of girls reported problems at school during menstruation and 61 percent reported staying away from school during that time.

... *The Right to Water*, Fact Sheet No. 35/ UNHuman Rights, UNHabitat, World Health Organization

3. Indigenous Peoples

Water plays an important role in indigenous peoples' day-to-day existence, as it is a central part of their traditions, culture and institutions. It is also a key element of their livelihood strategies. The right to water addresses only a small dimension of this relationship, namely access to safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses.

Access to safe drinking water by indigenous peoples, such as lakes or rivers, may no longer be accessible because of land expropriation or encroachment. Access may also be threatened by unlawful pollution or overextraction of natural resources. Furthermore, indigenous peoples' water resources might be diverted to provide safe drinking water to urban areas. Consequently, securing indigenous peoples' right to water might often require action to secure their right to ancestral lands, customary arrangements for managing water, as well as protection of their natural resources.

Indigenous peoples are often excluded from decision-making related to water and sanitation, which can act as an additional barrier undermining their access to supply of safe drinking water and sanitation.

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... *The Right to Water*, Fact Sheet No. 35/UNHuman Rights, UNHabitat, World Health Organization

4. Persons with Disabilities

The accessibility of water and sanitation is also a key issue for persons with disabilities, who have historically suffered from marginalization and discrimination as a result of the inaccessible design of buildings, services and infrastructure, among other things. Yet access to water and sanitation is crucial to ensure their living independently and respect for their dignity. Frequently minor design changes and low-cost adjustments are sufficient to render water and sanitation facilities and services accessible.

Especially those who are considered poor because of lack of access to basic services that will improve the quality of their life based on nutritional, shelter, education, water supply and sanitation standards.

... *The Right to Water*, Fact Sheet No. 35/UNHuman Rights, UNHabitat, World Health Organization

5. Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

In an emergency, displaced persons face particular challenges to access safe drinking water and sanitation, which can have life-threatening consequences. Displaced persons are also particularly vulnerable to discrimination, racism, xenophobia, which can further interfere with their ability to secure safe drinking water or sanitation.

Refugee and IDP camps around the world, particularly when displacement is protracted, are often characterized by dilapidated and overcrowded conditions, in which there is inadequate provision of basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation. Poor sanitation and lack of access to safe drinking water in these camps often lead to the spread of waterborne diseases, including cholera.

When women and children have to fetch water at some distance from the camps, they are at risk of harassment, threats

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and sexual violence. Women and children might also be asked to provide sexual favors in exchange for safe drinking water. Even when sanitation facilities are available in the camp, these often do not take into account the specific needs of women, children, old persons or persons with disabilities.

... *The Right to Water*, Fact Sheet No. 35/UNHuman Rights, UNHabitat, World Health Organization

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Basic Needs for WATSAN Services

- Water – for drinking and household use
- Health – care, preventive and curative, with emphasis on the preventive
- Nutrition – adequate amount daily for growth, work and play
- Environmental Sanitation – involves the presence and use of low-cost drainage, latrines/ toilets, and trash collection & disposal
- Education – pre-school and primary school children, as well as out-of-school youth and women requiring functional literacy assistance
- Shelter Improvement – for rest, privacy and security
- Recreation – involvement in hobbies, sports, cultural events and artistic activities

... UNICEF

Basic Needs Indicators on WatSan Services

Access to safe and sufficient water supply will directly impact on environmental sanitation, health, nutrition, education, shelter and recreation of families. Relevant data should, therefore, be gathered and analyzed for baseline and impact purposes.

- **Water.** # of households with (indicate level) and without access to adequate and safe supply; locations according to barangay.
- **Health.** # of children affected by water-borne diseases (male and female); locations according to barangay.
- **Nutrition.** # of children affected by malnutrition (1st, 2nd, 3rd degree); (male and female); locations according to barangay.

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- **Environmental Sanitation.** # of households with toilets and type of toilet, Number of households using functional drainage system, Number of households and type of practice in collection and disposal of trash
- **Education.** # of pre-school children enrolled; number of primary school children enrolled and number of drop-outs; number of out-of-school youths (male and female).
- **Shelter.** Type of latrine per household (in terms of health, security and privacy for women, children, old persons).
- **Recreation.** # of victims, especially women and children, by domestic violence.

Criteria for Selecting Priority Areas for WATSAN initiatives

- has no communal system that can provide for adequate and safe supply of water
- has high incidence (occurrence / numbers) of children affected by diseases brought about by deficient and contaminated water supply and by unsanitary conditions
- has insufficient numbers of sanitary toilets and functional drainage system in relation to households
- has no effective and safe system for collecting and disposing garbage
- has no safe and adequate supply of water in schoolhouse, barangay health clinic, and public/communal structures serving children and women
- has access to sustainable water source
- has enough number of households who could maintain water system and protect water source in a cost-effective manner