

## **Accessibility of Clean and Safe Water in Selected Sub-cities of Addis Ababa**

### ***Assessment from Human Right Perspective***

#### **1. Why Clean and Safe Water?**

In view of Human Rights, access to water and sanitation are recognized by the United Nations as human rights, reflecting the fundamental nature of these basics in every person's life. This is mainly because lack of access to safe, sufficient and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has a devastating effect on the health, dignity and prosperity of billions of people, and has significant consequences for the realization of other human rights. People are rights-holders and States are duty-bearers of providing water and sanitation services. Rights-holders can claim their rights and duty-bearers must guarantee the rights to water and sanitation equally and without discrimination (<https://www.unwater.org/>). The human right to safe drinking water was first recognized by the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council as part of binding international law in 2010 (UN 2010). The human right to sanitation was explicitly recognized as a distinct right by the UN General Assembly in 2015 (UN 2015).

Of the 120 million people of Ethiopia, about 33 million lack access to an improved water source and 89 million lack access to improved sanitation. Of those who lack access to improved sanitation, a staggering 23 million practice open defecation. In rural Ethiopia, many women and children walk more than three hours to collect water, often from shallow wells or unprotected ponds they share with animals. Recurring droughts as well as rapid urban and industrial expansion result in water-related diseases, as people are forced to rely heavily on contaminated or stagnant water sources (<https://water.org/>). The accelerated expansion of Addis Ababa for over a century, owing to huge number of populations coming to the cities and the establishment of industries in the city, has resulted the scarcity and pollution of water in the city. Such long-established city corners (such as Kaliti, Kirkos (Cherkos) and Ledeta) and Condominium residential sites are places where water scarcity is severer challenge in Addis Ababa.

It was with this understanding that this research was carried out to investigate accessibility of clean and safe water in selected sub-cities of Addis Ababa from Human Right Perspective. The overriding objective of the assignment is to assess the current status of access to water in selected slum and condo areas of Addis Ababa specially from the human rights perspective and how they are supported by the water sector policies. The findings were presented on a Policy Roundtable Discussion (PRT) among CCRDA Water and Sanitation Forum members and concerned partners.

More specifically, this study is planned to:

- ✓ identify the different ways of accessing water for low-income areas of Addis Ababa;

- ✓ assess the level of access to water for the residents of slum and condo houses of Addis Ababa;
- ✓ describe the water consumption practice of the households in the low-income areas of Addis Ababa;
- ✓ identify the existing water policies in Ethiopia and how they affect the accessibility of water for the low-income households in Addis Ababa;
- ✓ draw up recommendations for improving water service provision of the low-income areas specially those focusing on policy issues.

## **2. Causes and Analysis**

### **2.1. Status of Clean and Safe Water in Addis Ababa**

The average water consumption in Addis Ababa city (liter/day/person) ranges between 10.1 liters and 20.2 litres. In the same way, the reported daily water use is a bit lower than WHO's standard. The AAWSA Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Development Division (an interviewee) confirms that 'there are two types of sources of clean water in Addis Ababa. The first one is surface water (Gefersa and Legedadi dams) and ground water (boreholes) in which the ground water contributes 60% of the clean water supply to the city. The daily water production and consumption of Addis Ababa is 570,000 million cubic square' which is only 47.5% of the required amount.

In view of human rights, lack of access to adequate clean water is against the principles of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 21 *'Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country'* and Article 25 *'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...'* (United Nations 1948). The FDRE Constitution (1995) Article 41 (3), states that *'Every Ethiopian national has the right to equal access to publicly funded social services.'* In the same way, Article 90 (1) of the Constitution emphasizes *'To the extent the country's resources permit, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security.'*

## **3. Results and Implications**

### **3.1. Water access of the surveyed households**

The average water consumption (liter/day/person) ranges between 10.1 liters and 20.2 litres. The amount of daily water use in slum areas is 5 to 10 litres smaller than the case in condominium residences. In the same way, the reported daily water use is a bit lower than WHO's standard.

The organization recommends between 50 and 100 litres of water per person per day to ensure that most basic needs and few health concerns are met.

### **3.2. The resulted impact**

The study, “Accessibility of Clean and Safe Water in Selected Sub-cities of Addis Ababa Assessment from Human Right Perspective” is about the accessibility of adequate and safe water in selected sub-cities of Addis Ababa in view of human rights perspective. The study targeted 3 condominium housing sites and 3 slum areas in Addis Ababa. Both descriptive and qualitative research approaches were employed in the research. About 330 households were randomly selected for the descriptive design while several other key informants and group discussants were contacted for their views and opinions for triangulation purposes.

The survey in residents in condos and slum areas access water through various means, such as own tap, shared tap, boreholes, spring, purchase of water from private taps and water trucking. The vast majority of the respondents (i.e., 277 or 83.9%) access water supply through their own tap though the water is infrequent. The second major means of water supply is through purchase from private taps (33.6%) followed by use of bottled/packed water (26.3%), shared tap (23.3%) and purchase from water truckers. As compared to those in slum areas, Condo residents were found to have been using own water taps, 69.7% and 98.1%, respectively. The research also found that accessibility of adequate and safe water in the investigated areas isn't to the required standard. The average daily per capita water supply for domestic purposes (such as drinking, food preparation, sanitation and washing) was found to be between 10.1 liters and 20.2 litres which is inadequate by the World Health Organization (WHO) standard. The organization recommends between 50 and 100 liters of water per person per day to ensure that most basic needs and few health concerns are met.

### **3.3. Implications**

In context of human rights, the observed lack of access to adequate clean water is against the principles of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 21 which states ‘Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country’ and Article 25 ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...’. Lack of access to adequate and clean water is also against the Resolution 64/292 which recognized the human right to water and sanitation and acknowledged that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realization of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States and international organizations to provide financial resources, help capacity-building and technology transfer to help countries, in particular developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

It is quite clear that all the households in the city use water for domiciliary purposes (such as cooking, drinking, washing, cleaning and sanitation). But only small number of the surveyed households reported to have used water for small-scale urban agriculture (5.76%), washing their own car (9.39%) and greening/gardening (9.70%). Only about 2.73% responded to have used the water for unspecified purposes. This is contrary to the general assessment of FAO ([www.fao/fcit/upa/](http://www.fao/fcit/upa/)) *'water use has been growing at more than twice the rate of the population increases during the last century. In rapid growing urban centres, water has become a fragile and scarce resource in a competing environment.* The use of water for urban agriculture and/or urban greening is low may be because of the scarcity of the municipal water supply and/or because of views of most Ethiopians *'considering urban centres only for construction areas.'*

### **3.4. Water sector policies and practices in Addis Ababa: Impacts on water accessibility for low-income households**

Ethiopia has both Water Resources Management Policy (1999) and Water Sector Strategy (2001). The overall goal of the national water resources management policy is 'to enhance and promote all national efforts towards the efficient, equitable, and optimum utilisation of the available water resources of Ethiopia for significant socio-economic development on sustainable basis.'. The Strategy was designed to translate this national water resources management policy into action.

The FDRE Water Sector Policy (2001) urges the self-financed and total cost recovery programmes in urban water supplies. It also recommends acceptable minimum sanitation facilities differentiated in urban and rural scenarios. Promotion of the formulation of a housing construction and urban development policy that incorporates sanitation services is another key issue in the water sector policy. In case of Water Pricing, the policy urges to ensure that pricing for urban water supplies. According to the Policy, tariff settings are based on the objective of recovering operation and maintenance costs while urban tariff structures are based on the basis of full cost recovery. It targets to ensure that tariff structures in water supply systems are based on equitable and practical guidelines and criteria. The Policy also recommends an establishment of a 'Social Tariff' that enables poor communities to cover operation and maintenance costs; progressive tariff rates, in urban water supplies, tied to consumption rates. The flat rate tariffs for communal services like hand pumps and public stand posts are recommended in the policy for urban areas.

## **4. The synthesis**

This study reflects accessibility of clean and safe water in selected sub-cities of Addis Ababa in view of human rights to safe water. The overall analysis of the research shows that water supply in the investigated slum and condominium areas isn't adequate and the residents aren't happy

about the supply of water. The amount is far less than the standards recommend relevant international organizations such as WHO. In most cases, water unavailable continuously over some days, if not weeks. Some previous research findings also indicated quality water in some sample areas is poor.

Sufficient and safe drinking water is a precondition for the realization of all human rights. It has become one segment of human rights violations in the stud areas as safe drinking water is a basic need for human development, health and well-being (United Nations 2002; United Nations 2010)). The growing problem of water shortage, the non-functionality of water supply sources like some of the ground water sources along with high water use, urbanization, geographical setup of the city and the imbalanced high number of populations in the city are major challenges to water supply sector in the city.

## **References**

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