

## CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup> UTAFITI SERA FORUM ON WATER GOVERNANCE IN KENYA ON 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2021

### Introduction

By the year 2030, the world is expected to have met the goals of the 2030 Agenda including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on access to Water and Sanitation for all. Lack of sustainability of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions is however one of the major obstacles to universal access to WASH services. Despite the increased investments in the WASH sector with more people having access to WASH services, access by all is still far from being a reality. Unless continuity in the delivery of WASH products and services is assured, it is difficult for interventions to solve the current WASH crisis<sup>1</sup>. About 30- 50% of WASH projects fail between 2-5 years<sup>2</sup>, with one of the main reasons being poor management and implementation with no focus on guaranteeing sustainability and avoiding retrogression.

The sustainability of water resources and people's livelihoods is highly determined by how societies govern their water resources and services. Therefore, to achieve sustainability of WASH services and interventions requires a focus on Water Governance<sup>3</sup>. The global WASH crisis is a crisis of governance, characterized by corruption, poor resources management, lack of appropriate institutions, insufficient capacity and bureaucratic inertia<sup>4</sup>.

Accountability is an effective entry point to improving water governance. In most countries, there are set institutional arrangements for water service delivery. These include policies, institutions and plans, yet poor performance persists. To make these institutional arrangements successfully operational, accountability is a key element, as it works on improving the quality of relationships between the different stakeholders in service delivery. This is because accountability involves fighting the institutional inertia and striving for change, through ensuring that all parties involved are held responsible for their actions. Accountability concerns the obligation of one actor to provide information and justify actions in response to another actor with the power to make demands and apply sanctions for non-compliance.

The Kenyan water sector continues to face ongoing challenges in drinking water supply, sanitation, hygiene, water resource management and climate resilience. Over 40% of Kenyans lack access to a basic water supply, over 70% lack basic sanitation and over 75% lack basic hygiene. According to data from UNEP (2018) comparing rates of IWRM implementation across the world, Kenya scores medium-high on enabling environment and participation. It scores medium-

1. UNDP Water Governance Facility/UNICEF (2015) "WASH and Accountability: Explaining the Concept" Accountability for Sustainability Partnership: UNDP Water Governance Facility at SIWI and UNICEF. Stockholm and New York. Available from <http://www.watergovernance.org/>
2. Rural Water Supply Network,. Myths of the Rural Water Supply Sector, Perspectives No 4, May 2010; and IRC. 2009. Providing Reliable Rural Water Services that Last, Triple-S Briefing, IRC. November 2009
3. UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility.2015.
4. Rogers, P. and A.W.Hall, (2003), Effective Water Governance, vol. 7, Global Water Partnership, Stockholm, Sweden

low on management instruments and financing. Kenya is cited as an example where sub-catchment structures are found under the basin level, for example through watershed committees, community or stakeholder structures, but reports low levels of public awareness about efficient water use.

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASRG) Utafiti Sera Water Governance House spearheaded by KEWASNET are convening a 2<sup>nd</sup> Utafiti Sera forum to enable multi-stakeholders to collaborate, co-create and co-share in the accountability for water programme. The Accountability for Water programme seeks to strengthen knowledge, policy and practice to improve service delivery and governance in the water sector. The convening will bring together the relevant stakeholders involved in WASH sector to focusing on the emerging programme evidence, policy conversation on the sex for water, and refining the water governance theme.

### **Objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Water Governance House Forum**

The goal of this forum is to discuss accountability as a tool to improve Water Governance. The specific objectives are:

- i. To allow Accountability for Water PRFs and PI to share emerging programme evidence with house members and obtain their inputs
- ii. To start policy conversations on the Sex for Water project findings
- iii. To refine the house focus with research evidence on water governance theme.

### **Expected outcome of the forum**

1. A clear understanding of the contribution of the Accountability for Water projects to the Water Governance House
2. A clear plan of engagement for each member of the house
3. Agreed Consensus on the house focus

### **Forum structure**

The convening will adopt PASGR's approach to research anchored by PASGR's innovative evidence-informed policymaking approach Utafiti Sera. Utafiti Sera is a Swahili phrase meaning research policy. Through Utafiti Sera, PASGR creates platforms (research policy communities) that seek to use research evidence to enhance policy processes and outcomes or what we call Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM). The research communities work to generate, synthesize and apply robust evidence from a variety of sources and use these to support stakeholder evidence needs. This approach ensures that links between existing policies and evidence are explored, gaps identified, new evidence supporting policy and programming is generated, and a negotiated settlement approach is used to bridge the gap between evidence and policy based on a multi-actor approach.

The convening will include in-person attendance, involving an estimated number of 25 members of the Water Governance House. These members include those identified from the stakeholder mapping exercise, National Advisory Group (NAG) members of the Accountability for Water Programme (AfW), Government officials, Professional research Fellows, The House Champion, PASGR staff and KEWASNET staff. This event will focus on Accountability as a tool for better Water Governance and the house will discuss in detail the AfW projects and how they contribute to this agenda. The house will also engage in policy conversations around the Sex for Water (SfW) work and the evidence recently collected.

participants. The sessions will be participatory, with discussions focusing on accountability for water. The workshop will run for two days, with a 4-hour session in the morning and a 3-hour session in the afternoon for each day. In addition, participants will work together in plenary and group sessions on major key components of stakeholder framework. To ensure safety of all participants, the workshop will be conducted in strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols laid out by the Ministry of Health, Kenya and WHO.

### Outputs of the forum

1. A synthesized forum report of 4 – 8 pages on house proceedings and deliberations
2. A draft blog of about 700 words

### Activities to ensure a successful 2<sup>nd</sup> forum

1. Timely communication with the members of the House
2. Share necessary documents with members of the house ahead of the forum
3. Make the forum interactive/encourage discussions

### About the partners

#### **PASGR**

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan Pan-African not-for-profit organization established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently engaged in more than 252 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organizations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy-relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes. Our vision is - a vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues. PASGR's Mission is advancing research excellence for governance and public policy in Africa. Website: [www.pasgr.org](http://www.pasgr.org); Contact Person: Sylvester Ochieng, [sochieng@pasgr.org](mailto:sochieng@pasgr.org)

## **KEWASNET**

The Kenya Water and Sanitation Civil Society Network is the National Network of Water Civil Society Organizations in Kenya. The Network was established in August 2007 and registered as a society in August 2010. KEWASNET envisions a society with sustainable universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. The Network's mission therefore is to work towards promoting good governance in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. In order for KEWASNET to achieve this, it has strongly embarked on the values of Partnership and Collaboration, Innovation, Integrity, Professionalism, Respect and Accountability. KEWASNET provides a linkage between Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Water Resources Management (WRM) utilities and users by facilitating partnerships between policymakers and stakeholders, and encouraging equitable participation by all parties in governance and decision-making mechanisms. Website: [www.kewasnet.co.ke](http://www.kewasnet.co.ke) :: Contact Person: Joan Kones +254 707 644 697 [j.kones@kewasnet.co.ke](mailto:j.kones@kewasnet.co.ke)