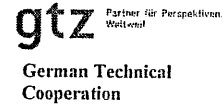




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Seminar on Water Governance: Role of Stakeholders  
Beirut, 14 - 15 November 2005

## Cultivating an Enabling Environment and Mobilizing Political Commitments to Promote Participatory Approaches for better Water Governance

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## *Enabling Environment and political Commitments for better Water Governance*

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*Seminar on Water Governance: Role of Stakeholders  
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## *Presentation Outline*

- Overview on major challenges and constraints
- The role of State: awareness raising among politicians and decision makers
- Harmonizing joint commitments of Governments and donors
- Strengthening accountability, transparency and disclosure of relevant information
- Conclusions and recommendations

## **Overview on major challenges and constraints**

- Highly centralized governments and limited authority to local organizations.
- Top-down political systems and lack of mechanisms for participation of communities and other stakeholders.
- Over-regulation, bureaucratic obstacles and lack of coordination and integration among public institutions.
- Resistance to institutional change and non-conventional and innovative modalities in governmental institutions.

## **Overview on major challenges and constraints (cont'd)**

- Lack of transparency and accountability in communication with, and providing information to, civil societies and pressure groups.
- Lack of awareness and active citizenship in society to participate in decision-making and to improve self-reliance in water management issues.
- Severe Shortage in capacities of local institutions (personnel, skills, legislation, finance, modern technologies, etc.) hinders decentralization process.

## **The role of State: awareness raising among politicians and decision makers**

- Raise political will to promote open, transparent and accountable policy-making.
- Provide targeted support and opportunities for information exchange through training, meetings and workshops, learning good practices from other countries, etc.
- Strengthen management systems and capacity by building strong leadership and promoting political commitments.
- Involve parliamentarians and political leaders in dialogues on water issues and establish communication networks to inform and activate politicians at high levels.

## **Harmonizing joint commitments of Governments and donors**

- Prepare national and regional strategies that ensure mutual interest and commitment by member countries and donor agencies and avoid conflict of interests.
- Improve consultation and coordination with sub-regional, regional and international donor institutions to facilitate complementarity of programs and to ensure high efficiency of resources.
- Better management of the supply of technical and financial assistance based on clear and prioritized national and regional agenda and needs assessment.

## **Strengthening Accountability and Transparency**

- Transparency and accountability are essential for building citizens trust in governments and strengthening relationships with the public.
- Therefore, governments need to ensure open and transparent policy making process.
- This can be achieved by involving the public in development and implementation of policies through consultation and active participation.
- The public should be informed about their roles and responsibilities in shaping national and local strategies using effective channels (e.g. brochures, public hearings, media, Internet sites, etc.)

## **Building public confidence**

- Strengthen the communities through initiating decentralization and promoting democracy at all levels.
- Encourage participatory approaches by building sustainable partnerships (e.g. joint projects, operation and maintenance services, etc.) and provide opportunities for dialogue and interaction with, and evaluation by, civil society.
- Carry out the required reforms of laws, regulations and procedures to attain legal status, acceptability and financial authority of community-based organizations.
- Raise awareness and improve capacities of local governments, private sector, NGO's, etc., by training in skills of participatory planning and management.

## **Disclosure of relevant information to the public**

- Governments should recognize the citizens rights to access information and provide feedback.
- Increase the availability of relevant information to the public within the framework of national Laws.
- Member States may determine the scope and type of information need to be widely distributed and disseminated.
- Promote effective Information communication methods to enable timely, easy, and inexpensive access to information related to public interests.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

- Recognize the importance of political will, support and long term commitment for building effective, responsive and democratic (local) governance.
- Strengthen decentralization (bottom-up approaches) through effective public-private partnerships and creating synergies for continuous improvement of governments at all levels.
- Enhance the legitimacy of governments by strengthening their relations with the citizens, strengthening their capacities and involving them in all phases of policy- and decision-making.

## Conclusions and recommendations (cont'd)

- Improve the supply of donor assistance by means of continuous dialogue and clarity of national and regional priorities for enhanced mutual trust and commitments.
- Strengthen and improve communication with civil society through dissemination of relevant information and the recognition of the public's 'right-to-know'.
- Raise awareness among politicians, decision makers and senior officials on their roles to build open, creative and participatory policy-making processes and sound management practices.



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*Thank you.....*

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