

## Hydrological Observation Data and Services for Good Governance

### Summary

The *Hydrological Observation Data and Services for Good Governance* session took place on Sunday 26 August 2018. The session was moderated by Claudio Caponi, Chief, Capacity Building, Hydrology and Water Resources Management Division, WMO and brought together speakers and panelists from various sectors with a wealth of experience in the aforementioned topic.

In his opening remarks, Harry Lins, President of the WMO Commission for Hydrology, highlighted that “We only can manage what we can measure”. The reasons for this are many, as the availability of hydrological data is crucial to plan, design and operate urban and industrial infrastructures as well as many economic risks such as flooding, storms and droughts. When it comes to measurements as such, Harry emphasized on the huge amount of data coming from various sources, countries, systems, and which contribute to the elaboration of different relevant products throughout the entire value chain (i.e. weather forecast).

This can only be done by promoting collaboration, data exchange, but also by leveraging the knowledge and the expertise, and finally by mobilizing private and public sectors. At the end of his remarks, Harry mentioned the failure so far in bridging the technical and policy communities and that efforts need to be done to address this weakness.

The panel discussion that followed comprised four speakers that highlighted the importance of hydrological observation data for good governance from their own perspective.

Noosha Tayebi, Water Resources Management Analyst, Water Global Practice, World Bank brought the financing view to the discussion, highlighting the importance of bridging the technical aspects with the policy makers. Noosha also highlighted how the World Bank systematically started programs based on Innovation – Policy – and Harmonization of Data Use.

Gete Zeleke, Director of the Water and Land Resource Centre, Addis Ababa University, brought the users’ perspective to the discussion, highlighting to what extent data fosters concrete actions in the field, in terms of land management and economic development. Gete provided participants with an example of an integrated water management and land use controlling system to cope with potential groundwater jeopardization in the north of Addis Ababa.

Sandra Brühlmann, Water Policy Advisor, Focal Point Water, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation brought in the donor perspective, highlighting the importance of innovation today in the context of Big Data due to systemic insufficient budget/maintenance, but also because of insufficient data sharing. Sandra mentioned the provision of simpler and inexpensive tools that need to be coordinated and shared on a transboundary dimension for the benefits of all.

Hassan Aboelnga, World Youth Parliament for Water, Arab Region Representative brought a youth voice to the discussion and mentioned that considering the overall “bad water management”, efforts should focus on the real Sustainable Development Goal targets, while

changing the mindset and engaging with stakeholders, especially at local level, without leaving anyone behind.

In the discussion that followed, participants shared their views on what the main challenges and opportunities are with regard to hydrological data sharing and how to increase communication with the end users.

In his closing remarks, Cédric Egger, Corporate Water Resources Manager, Nestlé Waters, provided participants with a brief summary of the main points that had been discussed and highlighted the two recommendations to improve the availability and use of hydrological data that received the highest votes by participants using Mentimeter.

### Recommendations

The two most innovative solutions that were identified by the Mentimeter voting to improve the availability and use of hydrological data are outlined below:

1. Develop strategic information that show the benefits of hydrological data  
Strategic information, briefings and incentives should specifically be developed for politicians and high-level government officials that demonstrate the social, economic and political benefits of implementing, maintaining and using hydrological data and services.
2. Form alliances incl. private sector, technical agencies, politicians, civil society  
Broad stakeholder alliances could undertake activities focused on bridging the gap between the work of country's technical agencies and their policymaking institutions. These alliances would help build sustainable monitoring capabilities and related hydrological services.

Initiatives, tools or networks that support the learning objectives or that have fostered the goals of your session

None