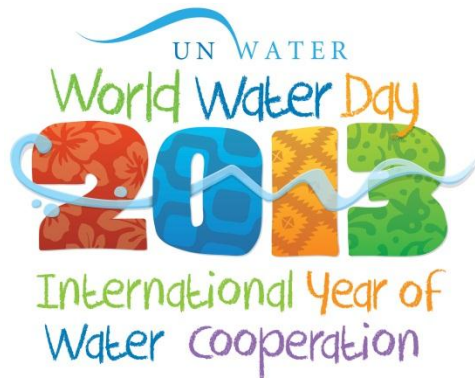


## United Nations Human Settlements Programme celebrates the World Water Day



### World Water Day - 22 March

World Water Day is held annually on 22 March as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

An international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations General Assembly responded by designating 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day.

Each year, World Water Day highlights a specific aspect of freshwater. In 2013, in reflection of the **International Year of Water Cooperation**, World Water Day is also dedicated to the theme of cooperation around water and is coordinated by UNESCO in collaboration with UNECE and UNDESA on behalf of UN-Water. “ <http://www.unwater.org/water-cooperation-2013/events/world-water-day/en/>

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) will be celebrating the World Water Day by sharing some of the success stories that have emerged from the water and sanitation projects implemented or being implemented by UN-Habitat.

### Success stories

#### Improved schools' water supply, sanitation and hygiene education

UN-Habitat Water and Sanitation interventions carried out in schools has so far increased the enrollment of new students, decreased the high dropout rates especially among girls, and has resulted in an improved general performance in schools. Over 30,000 pupils are already benefiting from access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation as a step towards the fulfillment of their human rights.



Bondo Township primary in Kenya is one of the beneficiaries of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene projects by UN-Habitat.

**“Since the UN-Habitat interventions in the school we have seen construction of toilet blocks for both girls and boys, hand washing facilities and rain water harvesting tanks. We have experienced a high level of enrollment in the school, a decrease in the rate of school dropouts among girls and there is a great improvement in the academic performance of students”**

**- George Akun, Headmaster Bondo**

### **Township Primary School.**

*Bondo Township Primary pupils queue to wash their hands. Photo ©UN-Habitat/ A. Musotsi*

The East Africa Island of Zanzibar annually receives 1600mm of rainfall but the main water supply in the area is from ground water. This underground water sources face a high rate of depletion. UN-Habitat through Water for African Cities in partnership with the Zanzibar water authority took advantage of seeking ways of harnessing the rain they explored Water Demand Management method that has worked for the community.

**“We have two heavy rainy seasons, yet we didn’t have technicalities on how to harvest rain water. Underground water costed us a lot now that UN-Habitat is here training our experts on how to harvest rain water so we shall have the opportunity to depend on other water sources than underground water”**

**– Mtumwa Khatib Ameir, Chairperson Zanzibar Water Authority**



UN-Habitat has installed infrastructure to harvest rain water in a number of schools in Zanzibar including Mgambo Primary School.

**“The problem we had before was that we had to leave school to go and fetch water from the well and it took a lot of time, secondly we had problems when we wanted to use the toilets looking for water every time, but now these problems have reduced because there is water from the taps and in the toilets”**

**– Asha Omar Abdalla, a pupil at Mgambo Primary School.**

*Pupils at a water point in Mgambo Primary School. Photo© UN-Habitat*

Tandale Chakula Bora Secondary School campus in Tanzania has been without water and neither were there decent sanitary facilities to make the learning and even teaching environment conducive. Ms. Asha Ally, a form three student has the following story to share on her experience of the situation before and after the project.



**“Lack of water and proper sanitation facilities in school affected me in two ways. First it affected my learning ability because I had to spend some of my time looking for water in the community for various uses particularly when I wanted to visit the toilet. Secondly due to the use and consumption of unclean water and bad hygiene practices I was frequently attacked by water borne diseases especially diarrhea. Imagine a lady of my age visiting a toilet without water? I think that was terrible not only to me but to my colleagues and of course the teachers as well because they also used to face the same situation. Now that water is available at school I can devote all my time to studies and I am able to use the school toilets comfortably. Hygienically I feel transformed and as a young lady feel my dignity has been restored”**

*Asha Ally – Student at Tandale*

*Chakula Bora Secondary School. Photo© UN-Habitat*

## **Water a source of economic empowerment**

UN-Habitat, in association with the Governments of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda launched a major initiative to address the water and sanitation needs of the population, particularly the poor, in the secondary urban centers around Lake Victoria. The project targeted 10 towns within the three East Africa countries. UN-Habitat **Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative (LVWATSAN)** in collaboration with a consortium of four international partners, Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), UNESCO-IHE, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) International designed a tailor made Training and Capacity Building (TCB) program consisting of training interventions that would respond to specific town, community, institutional and individual needs based on the reality on the ground. The initiative focused on capacity building; project design, planning and implementation; and follow-up investments. With a growing awareness of the benefits of a regional approach among East African Community

countries, regional networking, and cooperation in protecting and managing a shared resource – Lake Victoria. The project that ended in 2012 has seen a total of 450,000 people benefit; 230,000 people have access to safe drinking water and 220,000 people have access to decent sanitation facilities. The successful implementation of Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative has led to an upscale of the same initiative - Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Phase II now covering five countries- Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. Some of the beneficiaries give their stories:



*Rakai women drying charcoal briquettes. Photo© UN-Habitat*

Members of Rakai Women Group, a community-based organization in Kyotera Town, Uganda, operate a down-town workshop to serve the growing market for solid briquette charcoal, used by households for cooking. The women are part of a growing population of waste recyclers in Kyotera, who through the UN-Habitat Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation initiative have turned to solid waste recycling for revenue while improving the environment.

The group is made up of widows, many of them in their 60s. **“We thought it fit to have enterprises that can utilize solid waste from the town, so we decided to go into charcoal bricade production because of the problems we face with accessing clean energy at home as women”** says Khadija Sserwanga, chairperson of Rakai women’s group.

Through the capacity building component of the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative, women in Rakai have been trained in solid waste recycling and provided with business management skills.

**“It’s a timely gesture from UN-Habitat for the training we attended on the local economic development opportunities in solid waste management. The training exposed us to several technologies on how we can benefit by using solid waste, organizing collective marketing,**

lobbying and how to design a waste management system, among others. We now receive many orders from around the country to supply bags of charcoal brickade; we earn a living from the project and at the same time enjoy clean cooking energy,” says the chairperson of the group.

Glady’s Nyandawula, 68 years old, is the oldest member of the Rakai Women Group . She tells her story:

**“I am now an old woman and through this project I have access to clean water with minimum trouble.”**

## Water and Sanitation Improves livelihoods



In Harar Ethiopia, UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Ethiopia Rain Harvesting Association has put up rain water harvesting systems within schools and communities.

The Galole community is also a beneficiary of this initiative. The community had more than 80 families who were living in dilapidated buildings that once served as a military camp. Access to basic services was almost impossible but through the Water for African Cities initiative the Galole Community has a story to

tell.

*Students from Harar Ethiopia enjoy access to safe water.*

*Photo© UN-Habitat*

**“Sanitation conditions of the community before UN-Habitat’s intervention was awful, most of the people were beggars, but now five members of the community are employed as guards, shower room and water point attendants. We have also built a small shop using the money generated from the intervention facilities.” – Suraya Abdella Community Educator, Gara Ule**

In Burkina Faso UN-Habitat Water for African Cities funded a study on water demand management that resulted in the construction of a series of water ponds that harvest rainfall. The water is then distributed to the Dori pastoral community providing clean water for the residents and their valued livestock.

**“We asked UN-Habitat to help us in mapping the requirements of the city of Dori, not only in terms of what to do with the rain water but also to find ways in which rain water would be transferred as quickly as possible into the main pond and how to conserve part of that water to at least part of the time for domestic usage” – Arba Hama Diallo, Mayor of Dori**