



Technical Discussions



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TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS: STRATEGIES FOR EXTENDING AND IMPROVING POTABLE WATER SUPPLY AND EXCRETAL DISPOSAL SERVICES DURING THE DECADE OF THE 80's

Suggested Guide for the Discussions

The commitment to extend and improve water supply and sanitation services for as many people as possible by 1990, particularly to those in rural and underserved areas, will require intensified governmental action. There must be support at the highest level of government if proper choices and decisions are to be made with regard to planning and the economic, technical, institutional and educational issues.

The material that follows is intended as a suggested guide in discussing some of these issues in relation to the strategy considerations for the decade.

Policies

Past experience indicates that among the constraints which may make it difficult to reach the goals for the decade are the complex choices to be made by governments in the use of their limited financial resources; a lack of knowledge about the benefits to health and increased productivity to be derived from providing water and sanitation services; and institutional weaknesses at all levels.

- What actions can be taken to bring about a greater awareness among decision makers that providing water and sanitation services should be one of the high priority programs in the national plans for economic growth and development?

- What mechanism should be adopted to better coordinate the extension of water and sanitation services, particularly in rural and urban fringe areas, with other components of development, primary health care and the efforts to attain the goal of health for all by the year 2000? How can intersectoral coordination be improved?
- How can there be better community participation?

Management

The maximum benefits from the investment for the extension of water and sanitation services will not be realized without adequate institutional arrangements.

- What changes should be made in the structure of the water and sanitation sector and other related sectors?
- What measures could be applied to insure that the water and sanitation services once installed operate under optimum conditions.
- Are the present statistical information systems adequate for planning, management and evaluation?

Human Resources

Success in the effort to meet the goals for the decade will depend largely on whether adequately trained manpower in sufficient numbers will be available to plan, develop and manage water supply and sanitation systems.

- What training and manpower development policies and institutional arrangements need to be adopted to foster the preparation of staff and its optimum utilization and retention in the sector?
- How can the financial resources be committed to insure that training and manpower development activities are carried out on a continuing basis consistent with countries needs?
- What changes are required in the training delivery systems or the preparation of the proper mix of skills (professional, technological and community level workers) in sufficient quantity to meet present and future needs. How can present training programs be expanded and upgraded?

- What are the changes required in the delivery of international technical cooperation?
- What changes are required in the policies and criteria of international lending agencies?

Technology

To the extent possible the technology to be utilized to build and maintain water and sanitation systems should be chosen because it is appropriate to local conditions, is cost-effective and can be operated and maintained by the level of trained personnel available.

- How can the institutions and mechanisms at the national level be strengthened in order to identify, develop and evaluate technologies and to exchange and disseminate information among and within countries? Is there merit to developing a mechanism for international collaboration among national institutions in order to maximize the use of available resources?
- How can the public and private sector be encouraged to develop the local capacity to manufacture items of supplies and equipment needed in water and sanitation projects?

Financing

The problems of financing are varied and complex. Most frequent reference is made to investments for construction of facilities and the sound management of a utility, i.e., rates, taxes, subsidies, loans, etc. However, if the efforts of the decade are to succeed, special attention must also be given to the availability of funds for the development of the infrastructure and manpower training in order to improve the national absorptive capacity to utilize the funds to be invested. Funds are also needed for project identification and development.

- Since many donor and lending agencies do not have funds for project development and institution building including training, prior to project implementation, how will these essential components be financed? How about financing for community participation activities, and possible local manufacture of equipment?
- What are the changes required in national and international lending agency policies for the allocation of priorities and resources to accomplish the objectives of the decade?

- Is there need for a special water and sanitation fund to which governments, donors and lending institutions can contribute which can be used for very specific needs related to institution development, training, the development of appropriate technology and the exchange of information?

- What mechanisms can be utilized to generate additional national resources? International resources?

International Cooperation

- How can international agencies assist in the strengthening of national institutions having an input into the decade activities as part of the overall technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) effort?