

ADDRESS
by
DR. ANNA KAJUMULO TIBAIJUKA
Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director
UN-HABITAT

at the launch of
"THE NAIROBI DAM TRUST INITIATIVE"

Nairobi, Kenya
4th March 2004.

Mr. Chairman

Your Excellency the Honourable Moody Awori, Vice President of Kenya;
Honourable Raila Odinga, Minister for Housing and Public Works (?) and Patron of the Friends of Nairobi Dam;
Honourable Martha Karua, Minister for Water Resources;
Honourable Newton Kulundu, Minister for Environment;
Your Lordship, Councillor Joe Aketch, Mayor of Nairobi;
Your Excellency, Doctor Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme; and
Your Excellency, Doctor Paul Andre de la Porte, UNDP Resident Representative to Kenya,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to join you this evening at the launching of "The Nairobi Dam Trust Initiative." I congratulate the Kenya Government and our sister agency UNEP on this important occasion and express appreciation for the invitation extended to us.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The state of Nairobi Dam represents on a small scale the enormous environmental problems which the City of Nairobi is now facing. Originally built to provide water for a very small city, it has become an environmental problem instead of being a solution as source for the water supply.

In recent years the run-off of waste water and solid waste, especially from the Kibera informal settlement, as well as industrial waste water discharged in the catchment, has created heavy contamination of the Dam water and resulted in uncontrolled growth of aquatic weeds.

At UN-Habitat we are no strangers to the problems at Nairobi Dam. The first Phase of the Water for African Cities Programme focused, in particular, on the problems of the Kibera informal settlement, setting up demonstration projects for community-based water supply and sanitation. Several awareness raising campaigns were held, working closely together

with the local communities. Apart from that, in the Nairobi River Basin Project we participated in the environmental studies of the whole river basin carried out jointly with UNEP under the Sustainable Cities Programme.

The Water Sector Reform taking place in Kenya resulted in a National Policy on Water Resources Management, which separates responsibilities for policy development, service provision and water resources management. The Water Sector Reform Steering Committee supported by a Secretariat has been established at the Ministry. UN-Habitat is actively participating in this steering committee.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What are we planning to do in Nairobi under Phase II of the Water for African Cities? During recent discussions between the Ministry of Water Resources Management and Development and UN-Habitat, it was agreed there are several areas where collaboration under the Water for African Cities Phase Two initiative provides good opportunities for productive interventions in the water and sanitation sector, while especially focussing on the urban poor. The main areas for collaboration were identified to be the following:

Water Demand Management:

Most of the urban water supplies in Kenya have high unaccounted-for-water losses. UN-Habitat's experience gained from other cities in Africa could be applied in Kenya, initially on a small demonstration scale. Experience acquired in, for instance, Dakar and Addis Ababa show that the results can yield enormous benefits for relative small investments in training and capacity building.

Public Awareness Raising, Communication and Water Education:

Communicative skills and tools have to be developed for the water sector in Kenya and UN-Habitat's experience elsewhere could be very fruitful, including improved water governance structures. Earlier we already undertook a consumer attitude survey in Nairobi, which provided very interesting results.

Pro-poor Water Governance:

This is an area where UN-HABITAT has gained substantial expertise. We are currently working with the World Bank and would like to field test our approaches in Kenya.

Urban River Basin and Catchment Management:

UN-HABITAT has participated in developing a catchment management strategy in a number of countries. There are good opportunities for sharing global lessons learnt with partners in Kenya.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

One such obvious opportunity is in the Nairobi River Basin Project, which is a multi-partner initiative spearheaded by UNEP in a joint undertaking by UN-HABITAT. Its noble vision is to restore, rehabilitate and maintain good water quality of the river system passing through Nairobi, thereby reducing environmental health risks for the urban population. The project is carried out in collaboration with the Nairobi City Council and the Ministry of Water Resources Management and Development, with support from the Governments of Belgium and France.

It is directed at addressing problems such as pollution, waste management, urban greening, community participation, public awareness and legislation as they relate to the rivers comprising the Nairobi River Basin system. Capacity building and increasing access to relevant information and methodologies were identified from the outset as corner stones for achieving this vision.

The joint UNEP/UN-HABITAT Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) is supporting the digital mapping component, and in establishing an Environmental Management Information System (EMIS) to help pollution monitoring, which combine information on environmental and urban activities. Other project activities thus far undertaken have resulted in extensive awareness and clean-up campaigns, publication of a CD-ROM and creation of a database on the Nairobi river basin, including thematic maps on the status of pollution of the Ngong/Motoine rivers, including the Nairobi Dam. It's upcoming phase three should increasingly include demonstration projects on improved sanitation, appropriate natural measures to improve the quality of water, and related income generating activities.

Under phase two of the Water for African Cities programme, UN-HABITAT interventions will take particular aim at influencing consumer behaviour, and certainly not least, major interventions to provide the low-income areas with adequate water and sanitation. The latter should be approached in such a manner that simultaneous solutions for solid waste disposal and appropriate drainage are put into place. Helping to solve the huge problems of inadequate sanitation, drainage and solid waste collection in Kibera settlement will directly affect the water quality of Nairobi Dam.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

UN-HABITAT very much welcomes the 'Nairobi Dam Trust Initiative' and pledge to support it with concrete actions on the ground in the catchment, and especially its neighbouring human settlements.

Tonight I wish the Patron of "Friends of Nairobi Dam" (FoNDa), Honourable Raila Odinga, and you all a very successful launch.

Thank you.