

Wednesday, 7th January, 2009

PRESS STATEMENT
For Immediate Release

**CHOLERA CAN BE PREVENTED THROUGH INCREASED ALLOCATIONS TO THE WATER
AND SANITATION SECTOR**

The reported increasing number of cholera cases is a source of concern for CSPR, especially when the country has limited resources and a lot of demands for development.

Cholera is a disease that can be avoided, if only more effort is put into implementation of the Water and Sanitation Sector as outlined in the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP). This will in turn increase access to clean drinking water as well as hygienic sanitary surroundings.

As a starting point, CSPR calls on the Government to seriously consider increasing the allocation to the sector in the 2009 National Budget. CSPR was saddened to note that allocations to this sector reduced from K2.3 billion in 2007 to K1.9 billion in 2008 Budgets. For civil society, this shows a lack of appreciation of the sector to ensure a healthy and thus productive population.

The situation of unhealthy drinking water and unhygienic surroundings is worse in the rural areas where such services are almost non-existent with official figures indicating that the proportion of households with access to safe water stands at 59 percent for the whole country, while only 43 percent of the rural population accesses clean water.

On sanitation, it is sad to note that 59 percent of households in Zambia had own pit latrine, while 7.3 percent use communal latrine, and another 4.6 percent used neighbours' pit latrines. This situation is unacceptable with more than 40 years of independence.

The media has also reported incidences where most residents in rural areas have to walk long distances in search of water, which in most cases is not fit for human consumption. For example, during the CSPR's Mid-Term Evaluation of the FNDP, it was revealed that community members' access to sanitation facilities was almost non-existent in Chipata District, where government occasionally dug pit latrines, mostly during special occasions such as traditional ceremonies.

In order to mitigate the effects of bad water and sanitation services, CSPR recommends that government should increase the 2009 budgetary allocation to the sector while paying particular attention to;

- Support investment programmes aimed at increasing access to safe, adequate water supply and acceptable sanitation to rural areas.
- Strengthen partnerships with private sector and cooperating partners in an effort to improve the situation in rural areas. Most of the programmes government has set to improve the provision of adequate, safe and cost effective water supply and sanitation services to people in urban, rural and peri-urban areas have only worked with the effective participation of the cooperating partners and to a small extent private sector.
- Government should spread the keep Zambia Clean Campaign to the rural areas.

Additionally, CSPR calls on the communities to complement government's efforts by taking up responsibility to clean their own surroundings. As the saying goes, charity begins at home and so our health as well as the health of our children should be primarily our own responsibility.

Finally, CSPR wishes to emphasised that water supply and sanitation is pertinent to meeting the social and economic requirements of a country as well as managing and sustaining the health and environment of a community, aspects which are crucial to human development and ultimately to poverty reduction.

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