

Valorization of the Negotiated Approach (NA) as a key tool towards Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)

Abstract

This paper reviews civil society efforts to bridge the gap between stakeholders, using the negotiated approach around the implementation of the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). Climate change realities in Africa and its impacts have been reflected in the current trends of water resources. National legislation derived from the Africa Water Vision 2025, lead to the setting up of the River Basin Organizations and Authorities to oversee the management of the River Basins. Such required cooperation between governments, the private sector and communities allowing for negotiations and the protection of vital ecosystems. However, negotiations have in the recent past not been systematic and the contributions of the communities inadequately included in development processes of these Basins. There has been a gap in the meaningful participation and inclusion of all stakeholders in planning and implementation of the IWRM plans.

Management plans have been met with goodwill making early attempts to implementation with governments officially launching frameworks taking into account a humans rights based approaches that put stakeholder participation central. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, focus has been drawn on sustainable use and development of water resources, improved governance and management systems. This has however been met with challenges including limited finances, the conventional top-down decisional approach which has in turn limited stakeholder involvement especially the engagement with civil society and communities.

The paper reviews how the NA has been used to create a platform of exchange examining the processes adapted for the Mono Basin (Benin/Togo) anchored on accommodating values and interests of stakeholders alike; improving information flows, delegation of tasks and responsibilities, developing knowledge and capacity, consultations and shared decision making. It identifies enabling conditions that underlie the effectiveness of the NA in improving understanding, providing effective resolutions for problems linked to transboundary water resources, and establishment of institutional means to tackle emergent issues political, social and jurisdictional as well as physical, ecological and biogeochemical.