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Meeting the MDG of Water Supply and Sanitation Target in Nigeria: Can Local Governments achieve it?

Introduction

Access to the combination of safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities is a precondition for health and for success in the fight against poverty, hunger, child deaths and gender inequality, and is also central to the human rights and personal dignity of every human-being (Jong-Wook and Bellamy 2004). The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their 18 targets represent a commitment, by the international community, to address



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poverty and human development. Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability), Target 10, attempts to halve, by 2005, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. In the water supply and sanitation sector, monitoring progress

towards achieving the MDG targets is essential for maintaining and putting into practice the political commitment both of national governments and the international community (Shordt et al 2004).

The World Health Organization (WHO)

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and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported in August (2006) that even though the world was roughly on track to meet the MDG target for drinking water, the trend seems to be deteriorating because reaching the target now requires the provision of services to an additional 300 thousand people a day over the next few years. This means that current efforts be stepped up by almost one third. On the other hand, the global sanitation target will be missed by half a billion people, most of them in rural Africa and Asia. According to the UN Millennium Task Force on Water and Sanitation (2005) report, in 2001, 1.175 Billion people survived on the equivalent of less than \$1/day, 23.4% of the world's population. Globally, 1.1 billion people lack access to improved water supply and 2.6 billion (half the developing world) are without improved sanitation (UNDP 2006). Most live in rural areas (84% for water supply and 83% for sanitation). However, the number of

urban residents without adequate services is increasing rapidly. The report also suggested that water production and management are key factors in the global battle to remove the scourge of extreme poverty since around 1.7 billion people live in countries that are water-stressed. According to the report, this number will rise to 5 billion unless major changes are made to global water management.

The policy thrust of Nigeria's poverty reduction strategy, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), commits to eradication of water-borne diseases and to improving water supply and management for other productive economic activities (NPC 2004). NEEDS particularly recognised the importance of managing water resources in an integrated and sustainable manner. The policy thrust of the government therefore is building on the National Water Resources

Management Strategy, which involves all stakeholders to ensure integrated management and development of water resources in the country. The thrust is more on sustainable water resources management to meet the nation's present



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Conclusion

It is important to reiterate that increased use of improved water and sanitation has many benefits including a significant reduction in disease, especially diarrhoea, averted health-related costs, and saved time associated with having water and sanitation facilities located closer to home. The saved time can translate into higher productivity and school attendance, more leisure time and other less tangible benefits such as convenience and well-being, all of which can have social and economic impact.

A simple gap and growth analysis from available data from the three sampled local governments in Enugu State

indicate that, on the average, water and sanitation coverage should increase annually by 12.5% for the

Next eight years (2008-2015) for the areas to be able to halve the population without access to water and sanitation by 2015. This will require heavy investments from the Local Governments. Given the funding limitations of local governments in Nigeria, the MDG targets for water and sanitation may be a dream for most local governments in Nigeria.

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East, Igbo-Etiti and Udenu), only 37,587 persons (7%) have access to safe water out of a combined population of 536,488 persons as reported in the 2006 provisional census figures. Access to water in Enugu state and its local governments is defined as proximity of water sources to the users within 250 meters serving

A ratio of 10 persons per latrine. The 2006 provisional census figures indicate that the percentage of the population with access to sanitation in the three selected local governments is also very low (Fig. 4). The majority of

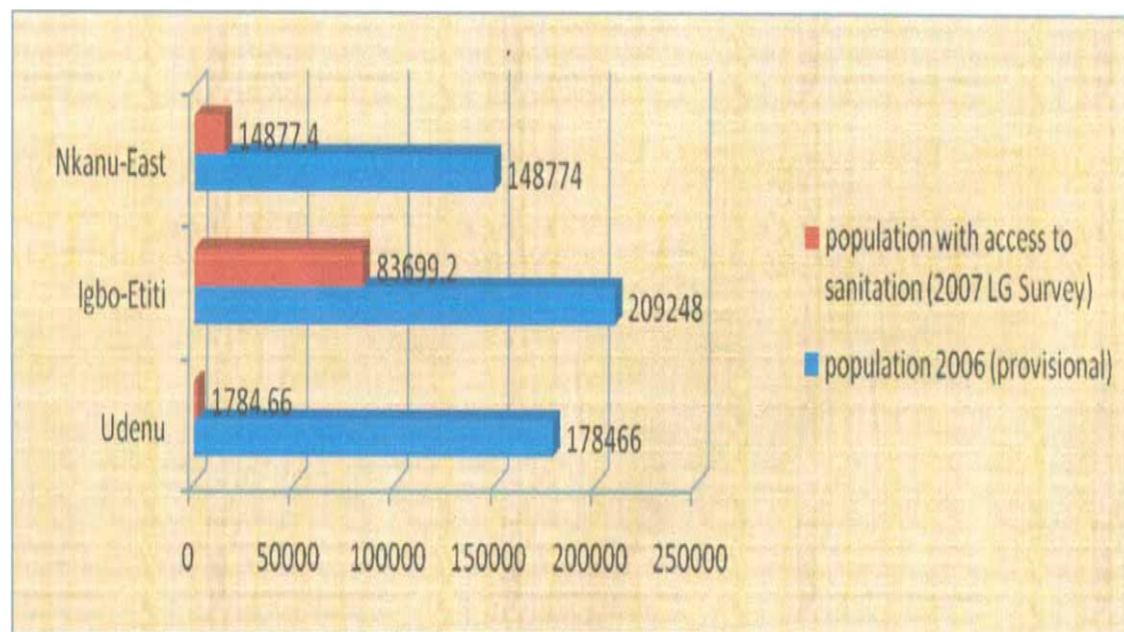


Fig. 3: Population with access to water (2007)

Between 250 500 person per water point. Also, access to sanitation in the same area is defined as population using improved sanitation facility such as traditional pit or simple latrines with

The population (81%) of the three local governments (Nkanu-East, Igbo-Etiti and Udenu) lack access to basic sanitation (Amakom 2007).

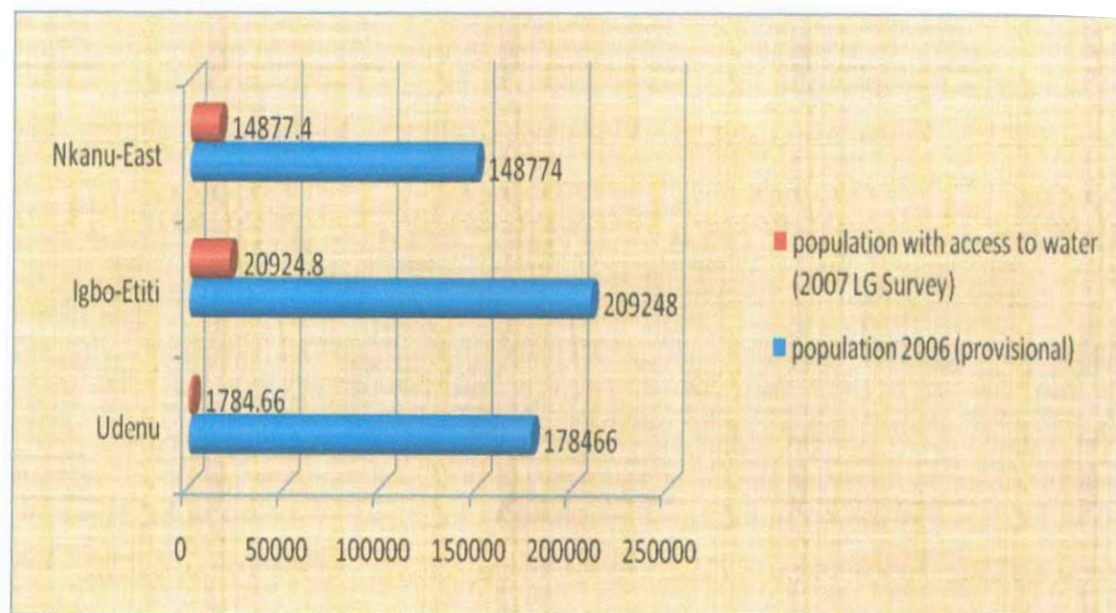


Fig. 4: Population with access to sanitation

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and future water resources needs in all demand sectors-including human consumption, agriculture, hydropower, environmental protection and industry. The key objectives of the water resources policy include:

- Ensuring the development and management of water resources in an integrated manner and as a national strategic resource
- Protecting water resources and the environment for balanced social and economic development
- Involving all stakeholders particularly the private sector in the sustainable development of water sector through coordinated management and holistic utilization
- Optimizing the use of water resources at all times for present generations to survive on without compromising water supplies for future generations.

Why Water and Sanitation?

Water and sanitation sit at the heart of development because proper sanitation and water provision vastly reduces disease and brings children, especially girls, into school; women are reduced from a wretchedly daily burden of fetching water; and the supply of food increases with irrigation (IDC 2007). Relieving women and girls of their water-fetching burden would help to promote gender equality

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(MDG3) and boost school enrolment rates (MDG2). In turn, girls who have been educated have improved maternal health (MDG5) and are twice as likely to stay safe from AIDS (MDG6). Improved access to clean water reduces diarrhoea incidence and water-borne diseases, and the transition from unimproved to improved sanitation is accompanied by a 30%-plus reduction in child mortality (MDG4). Irrigation accounts for 70-90% of water use in the developing world, and links closely with the MDG1 target seeking to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. The sanitation and water targets' positioning within MDG7 makes explicit the link with environmental sustainability. Given these interdependencies with the other MDGs, water and sanitation are the MDG-enabling services that can provide a strong focus for cross-sector and cross-boundary partnerships for development (MDG8).

Nigeria's Water and Sanitation Situation

In 2004 (the last year for which comprehensive data are available), only about 48% of the population was estimated to be served by improved water sources (WHO and UNICEF 2006), leaving a gap of about 52% of the population without safe water. Between 1990 and 2004, access to safe water supply actually dropped by

one percentage point. Clearly Nigeria is not on track towards reaching the MDG target for water.

Sanitation coverage data indicate that only about 44% of the population in Nigeria was using improved sanitation in 2004 (WHO and UNICEF 2006). Although, progress reports on sanitation between 1990 (39% coverage) and 2004 (44% coverage) show an improvement, the nation needs to address the yearning gap of 56% of the population who are not covered. This shows that Nigeria is not making rapid progress towards the MDG target for sanitation.

questionable sources (Fig. 1). Surveys of 25 rural local government areas conducted by WaterAid in 2006 indicate that only 25% of the rural population have access to safe water and only 5% to improved sanitation suggesting that NBS and UN surveys may be overly optimistic.

The 2015 Water and Sanitation Challenge for Local Governments in Nigeria

It is difficult to estimate the amount of water needed to maintain an acceptable or minimum living standard and so different sources use different figures for total water consumption and for water use by sector of the economy. This has led to

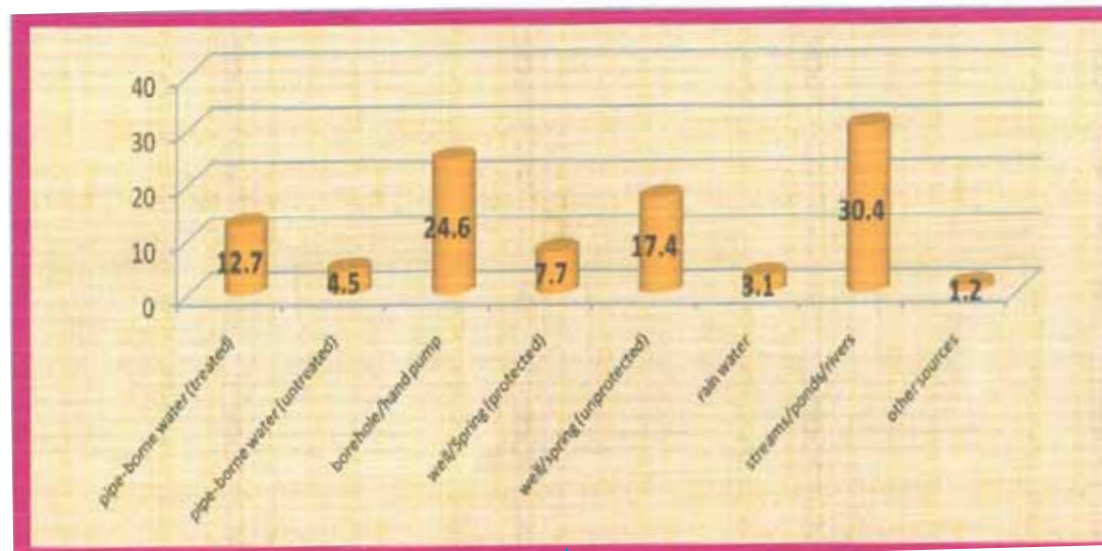


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of households by major source of water for drinking and cooking (%)

the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2006 indicated that 56% of the over 28 million households sampled from all the states, collect their water from

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emphasis is on health and hygiene, rather than technology despite the lack of agreement on key definitions of "what safe water is and what access to sanitation is."

Generally, a range of 20 to 40 litres of water per person per day is considered to be a necessary minimum to meet the needs for drinking and sanitation alone (Gleick 1999). If water for bathing and cooking is included as well, this figure varies between 27 and 200 litres per capita per day. Gleick proposes the adoption of an overall basic water requirement of 50 liters per capita per day as a minimum standard to meet four basic needs of drinking, sanitation, bathing and cooking. Nigeria's National Water and Sanitation Policy (2000) sets a standard of 30 litres, 60litres and 120 litres per day for rural, small town and urban citizens, respectively.

To meet the MDG target requires that between 1990 and 2015 the world reduces by half the proportion of the population not using improved drinking water sources and sanitation by half. Sanitation coverage in sub-Saharan Africa has so far improved by only 5%, while it improved by 21% and 18% in

Eastern Asia and Southern Asia

Respectively from 1990 to 2004 (WHO and UNICEF 2006). In Nigeria, the Local Governments hold the responsibility for improving the access to safe drinking water and sanitation. They also have responsibility of establishing, equipping and funding the Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) Departments within their locality.

It is, then, necessary at this point to ask "can Local Governments in Nigeria meet the MDG targets for water and sanitation?" Three selected Local Governments (including Nkanu-East, Igbo-Etiti and Udeni) from Enugu State can highlight the possibility or otherwise of this dream. As can be seen from Fig. 2 below, the majority of the population in the three local governments live in abject poverty (NPopC 2006). Poverty reduces the ability to of people to access adequate quality and quantity of water and sanitation as is evidenced in Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 below shows that very insignificant population within the three sampled local governments of Enugu State has access to safe water. In the three local governments (Nkanu-

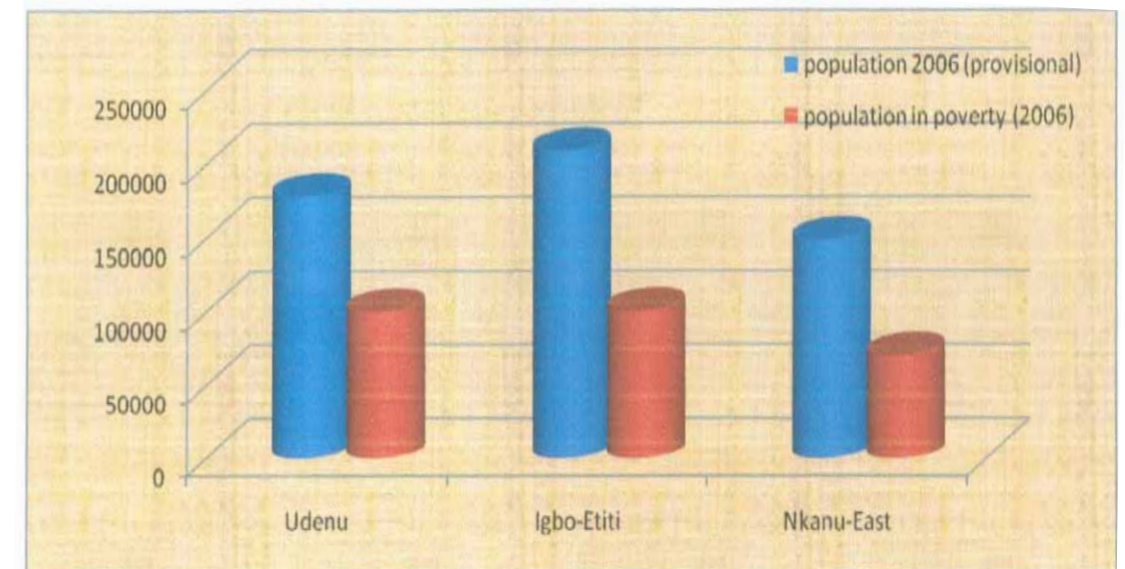


Fig. 2: Population (2006) and population in poverty (2006)

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