

## News in brief

### **ZIMBABWE: rural sanitation NGOs may be de-registered**

The Zimbabwe government may de-register at least 30 NGOs involved in rural sanitation and infrastructure revival programmes. Paul Mangwana, Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, said that a government appeal raised more than US \$210 million (EUR 157 million), but donors chose to channel this directly to the NGOs. Mangwana says the state has reasonable grounds to believe that funds for rural sanitation and infrastructure development had been used to support "anti-government activities". Jonah Mudehwe, spokesman for the National Association of NGOs said that NGOs have to account to donors for their use of funds but do give regular updates of activities to government.

*Source: IRIN, 2 Mar 2005*

### **SYRIA, DAMASCUS: search for new wells**

The Syrian General Company for Potable Water and Sewage is working with the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation to look for new sources of drinking water for the city of Damascus. The project will dig 13 wells in the western region of the city and look at ways to monitor underground water reserves in times of drought.

*Source: Sanaa Yaacoub, Tishreen / SAHRA, 28 Feb 2004*

### **WaterAid and partners win Bangladesh sanitation award**

Women working with the NGO VERC in Askarpara Uttar, Bangladesh, worked out that there were 53 tonnes of human faeces on their streets every year, and that they were spending BDT 36,000 (EUR 439) a year on medicine. There are now 63 hygienic latrines paid for by villagers, the streets are spotless and the air is clean. A sign in the village reads "Nobody is allowed to defecate in the open here."

WaterAid and local partners, DSK, VERC and PSTC, have been presented with National Sanitation Awards in Dhaka, in recognition of their role in promoting the 'total sanitation campaign' that teaches communities about the link between bad hygiene and disease.

*Source: WaterAid 4 March 2005*

*News in brief continued on page 7*



## News from IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

### Resource Centres help African NGOs to bid for EU money

Grass-roots NGOs have been able to bid for EU project money to help poor communities in sub-Saharan Africa, thanks to support from the Dutch Government, IRC and Resource Centres in Africa.

Bids closed in March for the EUR 500 million ACP-EU water facility designed to support countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. But despite the need, there was a danger that NGOs would be unable to access the money. Jo Smet, senior programme officer for IRC, said NGOs had been put off by the complexity of the paperwork and a feeling that they stood little chance of success. "The risk exists that these target groups of the Water Facility may not even make an attempt to formulate a proposal."

The smallest application that could be made was under the Civil Society initiative but even here local groups and their partners would have to raise a minimum of EUR 50,000, and submit a convincing case in a way that would satisfy the EU.

The Dutch Government put up money to support NGOs to do this, and asked IRC to help. IRC contacted Resource Centres in sub-Saharan Africa.

CREPA held workshops for NGOs in Burkina Faso and offered support for NGOs in Mali, Niger, Togo and Senegal. NETWAS held a workshop for 12 organisations in Kenya, while IWSD held a workshop in Zimbabwe.

The Ghana experience has been instructive. TREND resource centre held a half day briefing for members of its coalition. They found that CONIWAS, a coalition of NGOs in the Water and Sanitation Sector, had not been able to fill in application forms because it lacked information. TREND convened a five day workshop in Kumasi for 16 organisations with input from the Water Directorate in the Ministry of Works and Housing and from the PRACTICA Foundation.

Seven NGOs were identified as being capable of leading a proposal. By the end of the workshop they had all finished a first draft for the following bids in Ghana:

- TREND to support communities to develop household sanitation in rural areas and small towns,
- The Professional Network Association (ProNet) to combine water, sanitation, hygiene promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention,
- Rural Aid to provide boreholes, wells, latrines and training for organisations and communities in north east Ghana,
- New Energy: to support low cost technologies such as water pasteurisation, rain water harvesting, and low cost sanitation in poor communities,
- Community Partnership for Health and Development to develop governance systems, broaden participation in water and sanitation decision-making and develop tools to target subsidies to poor households,
- ProNet North to strengthen the ability of communities affected by trachoma in Upper West and Brong Ahafo, to manage water and sanitation systems,
- Association of Water and Sanitation Development Boards to expand small town water supplies in Northern Ghana and promote hygiene and sanitation.

Each resource centre process cost a maximum of EUR 4,650 – a small price to pay for enabling NGOs with a real grass roots presence to access this EU fund. Jo Smet was in no doubt that Netherlands Government funding and the process that followed made all the difference. "In my view 90% of these proposals by NGOs would definitely not have been produced if this initiative had not been there." Decisions on who will get the money will be made by the end of April.