

Personal Stories of Change

Rhamses Simanjuntak: A perspective from a national/regional private sector representative

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Rhamses Simanjuntak works for AETRA, the regional private sector company responsible for Jakarta’s water supply (which replaced Thames Water in 2006). Rhamses attended the first Indonesian National Working Group meetings in 2004 without a particularly strong purpose, except to honour the invitation to attend and, to an extent, satisfy the local water company (as they were the first party to the cooperation agreement).

When the Indonesian Dialogues really began to take off and involve local stakeholders in 2006, Rhamses remembers feeling “targeted” and “attacked” in as much as PSP was the major source of criticism. At this time there was a general reluctance by members of the private sector to attend meetings. However, in 2007, the attendance of the International Secretariat at some meetings of the National Working Group helped to highlight the “beauty of the NWG objectives both nationally and internationally” and, over time to the present day, The Water Dialogues in Indonesia has grown in maturity and strength. Now Rhamses “never misses a meeting” and if he is unable to join a meeting for any reason he appoints his senior manager (his alternate representative), “to collect the messages of the meeting”.

Rhamses feels the programme and activities of The Water Dialogues are “sound” from a business perspective. The President/Director of AETRA representing AETRA’s Board and Stakeholders expects The Water Dialogues to formulate internationally applicable recommendations that can provide guidance for the NWGs to assist and advise their governments, the watsan system, and the formation of law and regulation. For Rhamses, it is crucial that all players (public & private sector, cooperatives, communities) should participate in dialogues.