

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Values and principles supporting the practice of The Water Dialogues-South Africa: from laboratory to natural practice in our water services delivery by Jean-Pierre Mas**

The Water Dialogues-South Africa embarked on its dialogue *not only* as an “academic” question (looking at the past through a systematic and structured research) but also as a “dynamic” question which aims at **finding solutions for the future**. Through the research, the Working Group learned that some institutional arrangements are more suitable than others in specific environments, and can produce tangible and sustainable results worth replicating in similar environments. But the Working Group also learned that sometimes the critical parameter is not the specific arrangement itself, but rather the environment in which it has been developed.

However, WD-SA has not simply reached “grey” conclusions that are far from clear-cut or “new”, having been discussed in other fora. It has moved past this focus on the outputs of our research and focused on the process of our dialogue, in particular the values and principles that have supported it and made it viable.

#### **Useful lessons from The Water Dialogues-South Africa**

It is important to highlight that the following **values and principles** were not identified upfront, but are **the result of our practice of a multi-stakeholder dialogue with often strong opposing views on specific subjects**.

**Coming out of the dialogues practice it was discovered that all the participants and parties shared an overarching value: Provision of universal coverage of affordable and sustainable water and sanitation services.** The debate was not about the value by itself, but how to best achieve the corresponding objective.

Beyond this first and overarching finding, which initially was far from obvious considering the mutual stereotyping that took place between various parties and participants, it was found that the various institutional arrangements discussed were obviously very important as such, but that **they would not produce any sustainable results on the medium and long term if the principles and values that had supported our dialogue were not “nourishing” these same institutional arrangements**.

**This clearly means that the values and principles that have been recognised as the prime conditions for the dialogues to simply exist, have now to become the governance values and principles which are going to make our present and future institutional arrangements adequate to our communities, as well as sustainable.** These principles and values have to be present at all the stages of the institutional arrangements: definition, feasibility, planning and implementation.

This also means that the four-year experience of “dialogue behaviour” and the practice of corresponding values and principles **has to become a natural governance practice** within the life of our institutional arrangements.

This could be termed “**cultural regulation**”, in the sense that the “genetic” tendencies of each sector to “over-push” into one specific direction, is counterbalanced by the other sectors, through the practice of the multi-stakeholder dialogue. Our experience of practising this type of dialogue has demonstrated that it allows us to see “the big picture” and be more responsive to the genuine expectations of our communities.

#### **Governance values and principles**

As indicated above, the Working Group is convinced that, without **a continuous practice of multi-stakeholder dialogue embedded as a generic value and principle**, any type of institutional arrangement is not going to be truly sustainable in the long term, whatever the merits of the particular institutional arrangement. This could be qualified as the **overarching governance value and principle**.

This practice of multi-stakeholder dialogue has to be guided by the following principles, as per the WD-SA experience:

- Transparency, openness and honesty;
- Shared purpose and commitment;
- Plurality of perspectives and inclusivity, valuing diversity and each other;
- Mutual respect;
- Commitment to problem-solving and mutual accountability; and
- Learning and sharing.

Beyond this continuous practice of multi-stakeholder dialogue being recognised as the overarching governance principle and value, we have also identified some core governance values and principles that should be present in our various institutional arrangements:

- The core values of equity and efficiency need to work hand-in-hand to produce sustainable, affordable and effective services;
- Governance arrangement and strategic planning in the water sector need to emphasise a developmental agenda that includes public education on water services and water resources; this will enable ordinary people to participate actively in governance and in supporting and maintaining effective delivery;
- CBO involvement in some aspects of service delivery is to be valued and encouraged; it can enhance effectiveness and support linked developmental processes and purposes;
- It is essential to do good pre-feasibility planning and research so that decisions are well-informed by an understanding of the context and of their *real* viability;  
In cases where the external option is selected for wholesale and retail water provision, there is a need for fair, transparent and competitive tendering processes to ensure quality, effectiveness and sustainability;
- Planning must include an understanding of the links between water services and water resources;
- Effective monitoring and evaluation is a critical element of service delivery, not an add-on; and
- Redress of past imbalances and inequities remains a critical driver informing the planning of water service delivery.