



# WATER & STABILITY NEWS



A periodical newsletter issued by "Water & Stability" project

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## Editorial

I'm pleased to present in this issue good news on the project; but I'll start first by welcoming the new First Secretary to the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Mr. Hans Peter Van Hoeff who will follow up the Project activities in succession of Dr. Tarek Morad who had been not only representing the Embassy as the donor agency; but was enriching the project with his prudent expertise. We have completed the in-depth studies of conflict around irrigation water in 12 local communities in Aswan, Sohag, Fayoum and Kafr El-Sheikh governorates. The project is currently working on presenting and validating the results of these studies with different key stakeholders on the local and governorate levels. Proposals are being drafted for the pilot mechanisms, giving necessary details such as objectives, activities, work plans, ..etc.

We are also planning a validation workshop on the national level to be held on Nov. 15th to present the findings of the in-depth studies, and the conflict management mechanisms to be piloted, review and discuss these with a big number of key stakeholders from MWRI, concerned communities, governmental and non governmental entities. These proposed mechanisms will seek to adopt collaborative governance as a best man-



Project management meeting Embassy representatives

agement mechanism.

Project management were very pleased that the Project's Advisory Committee headed by the chairperson of NWRC, Prof. Shaden Abdel Gawad held its first meeting in Sept. The meeting was very fruitful, as it facilitated stronger cooperation and coordination between the project and a number of key stakeholders .... Let's to details.

## Invoking Community Participation

One of the early boasts of the project is its success in increasing the level of community participation in the activities while involving and utilizing local potentials. Project teams in the governorates have formed and worked with 12 local community research teams (LCRT) to participate in preparing the in-depth studies. Each of these LCRTs

had 10-12 members representing variety of local community stakeholders. Gender was carefully mainstreamed into these (LCRTs).

In addition to achieving community participation through these teams; Project has achieved other impor-

tant objectives. It secured the assistance of local communities in collecting, validating and analyzing data which not only ensured accuracy but also speeded up the process at reduced costs. The formation and capacity building of these

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## Arbitration and Local Communities

We occasionally hear about traditional arbitration councils held by Bedouin tribes; or about arbitration in int'l contracts. But what the Project found is that traditional arbitration is deeply rooted in the culture of many local communities in the Nile Delta and Valley.

Traditional arbitration councils are widely spread in Kafr El-Sheikh, Fayoum, and Aswan. The structure, organization and even efficacy of such councils differ from one community to another. But overall, these councils have great capacity in addressing conflicts in a way that ensures erasing hard feelings as much as possible. This is why security departments in a number of governorates very prudently employs the services of such councils to make sure that conflicting parties have reached satisfactory solutions that would restore peace and security. In fact, local communities resort to these councils because they are responsive in procedures and more importantly



Key Fayoum arbitrators informing Project studies

because these councils try to reach justice from a restorative justice perspective. The focus is to redress the injustice incurred rather than penalize the wrong doer.

***“..these councils try to reach justice from a restorative justice perspective ”***

Such councils derive influence and authority from the status the community gives to such and to individual arbitrators. The decisions made may at times be registered in a 1<sup>st</sup> degree court of law or be registered at the notary public to be legally sound. These councils always consider the capabilities of the conflicting parties to make affordable rulings.

Local arbitrators are well renowned community figures whose fame may transcend their local communities into neighboring communities and may even expand to reach other governorates. They are known for their good names, integrity, prudence, expertise and their being just.

An arbitration council is formed from an odd number, most commonly three, five, or seven members. Arbitrators mostly disdain from accepting any charges for participating in such councils –in spite of the time and effort exerted. They regard their participation as good deeds to be rewarded by Allah only. They also find great satisfaction in the social return: when conflict is resolved, peace is regained among the conflicting parties; and also in people’s love, and community appreciation.

In spite of the many strengths, observers comment that arbitrators lack the organization necessary to produce new young cadres of arbitrators. Arbitrators don’t have a syndicate nor an officially recognized organization to work through. An umbrella organization should help document and disseminate the achievements of arbitrators in a way that would guarantee sharing and passing experiences from one generation to another; which is the dream of many arbitrators.

## Invoking Community Participation

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Community members analyzing causes of conflict

teams capacitate local cadres to analyze community problems, identify its root causes and consider alternative solutions. These LCRTs should ideally be the nucleus for local community research panels interested in studying local community problems and effectively managing these problems. LCRTs received training on different topics like teamwork, data collection and analysis, problem analysis including identification of key stakeholders, and devising alternative solutions. These teams have come up with a number of recommendations and ideas to respond to conflict causes in their communities. These are included in the in-depth reports which they collected and participated in preparing on water conflict and potential solutions in these local communities.

## Finalizing the In-depth Studies

The Project has finalized the in-depth studies of 12 local communities across four governorates. The focus of these studies was causes of conflict around irrigation water and mechanisms used to resolve such conflicts. Traditional arbitration councils emerged as one of the most accepted mechanism for solving serious conflicts among water users.

The project has selected 4 of these communities to work with each on designing and implementing a conflict management mechanism through a one year pilot project. The selected communities are: Aswan's Abu Simble village of Nasr El-Noba district; Sohag's Awlad Yahya of Dar El-Salam district; Fayoum's Beni Saleh village of Fayoum district; and Kafr El-Sheikh's Al-Qon village of Sheikh Salem district.

It was generally noted that water users often try to focus on technical dimensions as the causes of conflict (hardware causes) rather than on human related interactions and mechanisms (software causes). However, the project helped water users to analyze causes of conflict and reveal the piv-

otal role of the human dimension in managing conflict.

The Project will focus in the coming period on investing in the development of the human dimension: developing irrigation water users capacities to manage water conflicts, through a total of 4 pilot conflict management mechanisms. The project has collaborated with the local stakeholders in each of the four governorates of operation to outline these pilots with the remaining details being worked on.

***“ The Project will focus in the coming period on investing in .. the human dimension ”***

As for the characteristics sought after in the selected conflict management mechanisms; these were: (a) locality: as these mechanisms had to be identified and chosen by the local community concerned; (b) community acceptance: as it should

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## Finalizing the In-depth Studies

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ensure sustainability; especially that the project is giving primary role to the local communities to manage such; (c) efficacy: it must have proved successful in managing some types of conflicts; and (d) to have proactive and retroactive capacity to prevent and manage water conflicts.

The proposed mechanisms should build on what the MWRI, especially the IAS, has achieved in a number of governorates; e.g. Kafr El-Sheikh, Fayoum, and Aswan. Through the pilots the Project will work with the water user associations established in those governorates and link them with entities more specialized in conflict management; e.g. traditional arbitration councils and reconciliation committees; while developing the capaci-



Human factor is the focus and key to solution

ties of these entities. As for Sohag; where there are no water user associations established, the mechanism proposed is forming a council for water conflict management: an entity that would coordinate between the different stakeholders to reduce conflict potential, and manage conflicts as they occur. Throughout, the project will seek to promote good as well as collaborative governance in the pilots.

## New Development Terms: Collaborative Governance

In development there are new terms emerging anew every now and then. Some of these terms though regarded as modern might be a resurrection of long ignored administrative, organizational, or developmental concepts that had flourished at one time then dwindled; then emerged anew while seen as a breakthrough. In this issue, we'll take a snap shot into the term: Collaborative Governance.

**Collaborative governance:** is about engaging stakeholders in making decisions in more inclusive ways: leaders engaging with all sectors—public, private, non-profit, citizens, and others—to develop effective, lasting solutions to public problems that go beyond what any sector could achieve on its own.

It combines two concepts. **Collaborative** which is to co-labor, to cooperate to achieve common goals working across boundaries in multi-sector relationships. Cooperation is based on the value of reciprocity. The second is **Governance** which is to steer the process that influences decisions and actions within the private, public, and civic sectors.

How is governance different from government? Governance is the process by which public ends and means are identified, agreed upon, and pursued. This is different from “government” which relates to the specific jurisdiction in which authority is exercised. “Governance” is a broader term and encompasses both formal and informal systems of relationships and networks for decision-making and problem solving.

## Towards Increased Coordination

The project has been keen since its early inception on cooperating with as many stakeholders whether on the national level or on the governorate and local levels. Within this context, H.E. Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation; Prof. Mahmoud Abu Zaid; issued decree # 263 of 2007 with the formation of project Advisory Committee. The Committee is chaired by NWRC Chairperson; with SRU director, as rapporteur and membership of Director of Minister's Office for Research; Executive Director of APP; Director of IAS; Director of WCU; RNE representative; CNL representative; and Project Manager. The decree gave the Committee the right to invite whoever they would like to consult.

The Committee held its first meeting at a crucial time while the Project is approaching the end of the research stage in preparation for the design and implementation of mechanisms. There were intense discussions about the project activities and results to date. Committee recommended that the Project disseminates information on activities and findings to much wider audience. Members

also agreed on a mechanism to ensure Committee support to Project activities.

The first meeting was also attended by CARE PD, Dr. Hazem Fahmy; SRU Deputy Director, Dr. Alaa Abdin and Conflict Management Advisor, Prof. Sultan Barakat. The second meeting is scheduled for end of November to discuss conflict management mechanisms which would be piloted across the four governorates.



Advisory Committee members in their first meeting

## Urgent Calls

One of the hot issues buzzing in the different governorates -and especially in Fayoum – is the off-code reclamation lands. These are desert lands which individuals or associations start reclaiming and claiming outside the jurisdiction of local municipalities –though only 2 kilometers beyond their borders.

Reclamation of these desert lands is a very noble cause that serves the national interest. However, most of these newly reclaimed lands –estimated at 50,000 (fifty thousand) feddans in Fayoum governorate alone – are not yet allocated any irrigation quota. Reclaimers therefore transgress on quotas allocated for old lands. Such transgression has serious toll on old lands: some areas of lands become fallow, and other affected areas suffer reduced productivity. Conflict and tension is increasing between owners of old lands and

reclaimed ones. Old land owners are sensing bitterness and injustice; especially that fines imposed on owners of reclaimed lands are ineffective especially that the affected farmers never restore their lost shares.

Two recommendations were suggested to address this problem. One is to activate the decree enforcing the use of modern irrigation techniques in reclaimed lands; flood irrigation should be immediately stopped in reclaimed lands. The second is to establish a committee of concerned stakeholders in each affected governorate to draft a future plan with realistic implementation plans during the coming two years at the utmost. All forms of random, unplanned attempts at expansion in reclamation should be stopped during the interim.

## Local Ideas



Two different locations. On the left weeks after setting the improved system. On the right similar system about 2 years into operation

In Aswan, while the local community research team of Wadi Abbadi village was collaborating with the Project to conduct the in-depth study; the team considered solutions to the direct causes leading to conflict around irrigation water. One of these causes was the increasing number of damages and malfunctions in the improved irrigation systems; e.g. damages to valves, gates, ..etc. The problem is aggravated with thefts. Therefore, the team came up with the idea of building a workshop to maintain such tools and equipment. Although very vital for the area, farmers claim there is no maintenance center for hundreds of kilometers.

The Wadi Abbadis foster their claim by suggesting that such maintenance workshop would serve the vast Edfu area especially Wadi Al-Radisya area where the Irrigation Improvement Project is currently expanding. The obstacle hindering the local community from building such workshop is lack of necessary financial and technical capacity. They look forward to collaborative efforts and support from such entities like MWRI, donors, SDF, local Executive authorities and popular community leaders to implement this idea.

In Kafr El-Sheikh there is a similar idea. El-Sheikh Ibrahim canal is one of the renovated (improved) canals; and there are a lot of improvement equipment and tools (e.g. gates, valves, JC blocks, pumps spare parts, ..etc.) that are being used and in need for maintenance. There are no maintenance workshops in Kafr El-Sheikh for these tools and equipment. Therefore, the board of the Sheikh Ibrahim Canal Water User Association (WUA) has prepared a feasibility study for building a maintenance workshop. The study showed they need one hundred thousand Egyptian pounds in cash to implement the project in addition to in-kind contributions (i.e. building area and labor).

Such workshop will serve multiple objectives. It will respond to malfunctions and simple technical problems –related to improved irrigation- which otherwise could take days and weeks to solve. It would also provide a needed source of income for the WUA, provide work and also training opportunities for local youth. These objectives translate into direct economic benefits. Multiple social benefits are also expected especially an improved status for the WUA within the community which should strengthen the role of the Association and facilitate its role. Such workshop would as such contribute to the reduction of conflict and guarantee better service to irrigation water users.



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