



UPDATE ON WASH FINANCING ADVOCACY

22nd June 2020 COVID-19 WASH Cluster Meeting

PREAMBLE

By way of introduction & as you may be aware, WaterAid Chairs WES Network's Policy & Advocacy Thematic Working Group

- We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic presents a huge opportunity & a responsibility to further the interests OF ALL OF US as WASH sector players.
- Consequently, under the umbrella of WESNET, we are taking this opportunity to advocate for prioritization of WASH in Malawi's COVID19 response specifically & in her development planning in general, including financing through the national budget

KEY ISSUES

- Inadequate prominence of WASH in the national COVID-19 response.
- Particular interest is on WASH HCFs
- Inadequate recognition of WASH as first line of defence against future pandemics • Particular interest is on adequate financing of WASH through the national budget so as to position the country to better respond to & mitigate impacts of pandemics such as COVID-19

ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES

Objective: We have been working & we continue to work to influence Malawi Government & other key stakeholders to prioritize WASH for Effective COVID-19 response & to recognize WASH as a first line of defense against future health crises

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED / ACTIONS TAKEN

- At both the national & global level, we advocated for mention of WASH in the draft WHA resolution on COVID-19
- At national level, we lobbied the MoH to support the call for the inclusion of WASH in the resolution
- At global level we actually proposed the text to go into the resolution

You may be aware that the initial draft resolution had NO mention of WASH

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED / ACTIONS TAKEN

In advocating for prioritization of WASH in HCF in COVID-19 response: we collaborated & directly engaged with both the preventive health directorate of MoH & the health cluster's resource mobilization task team to flag up the issue with the result that

- There has been improved inclusion of WASH in HCF related supplies in what is called the Health Cluster's product tracker. These are supplies to be procured under the health sector's COVID-19 response (subject to availability of funding).

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED / ACTIONS TAKEN

- In advocating for prioritization of WASH through the national budget: • We developed a national budget input document which we submitted to the MoFEPD during the budget consultation window & shared with stakeholders through social media. • A summarized version was published in two national daily newspapers.
- We have worked with the award-winning columnist, Mr Garry Chirwa, & published two articles in the Nation Newspaper of Wednesday, 3 June & 17 June entitled “If I Were Joseph Mwanamvekha (Finance Minister) / If I Were Kenneth Matupa“respectively. These articles advocate for increased investment in WASH from both immediate service delivery & systems strengthening angles.

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED / ACTIONS TAKEN

- Together with the Ministry of Health, we utilized Menstrual Hygiene Day commemoration to amplify voice on tax removal on menstrual hygiene absorbents. This was done through a radio panel discussion with panelists from Malawi Girl Guides Association, WaterAid, WESNET & Ministry of Health, & listeners participated through text messages during this live broadcast.
- An immediate result was that The Ministry of Health made a commitment to engage the MoFEPD on the request for tax removal
- We published a press statement in the newspapers & held a press briefing on COVID 19 particularly advocating to Government to do more on WASH in HCF; to develop & implement rescue & support packages for water utilities, including settling of bills owed to water utilities by Ministries, Departments & Agencies to enable the utilities to effectively respond to COVID-19 pandemic.
- The press briefing was covered by over 9 media houses; we have evidence of 5 actual broadcasts by media houses

ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED / ACTIONS TAKEN

In collaboration with Civil Society Education Coalition, & with an intention to put a spotlight on WASH in Education, we engaged the Parliamentary Cluster on Education on the findings of a rapid analysis of the State of the Nation Address (SONA) & the national budget statement & highlighted that:

- Both SONA & budget statement are silent on WASH in schools, including menstrual hygiene, thereby not responding to prevention & protection of students in the context of re-opening of schools & again, while the budget statement is silent on WASH in schools, it talks about constructing 500 new classroom blocks...so, we requested the MPs to pose the question that; if these new 500 classroom blocks are not complimented with additional WASH facilities, where will the students be relieving themselves?
- In response, the Parliamentary Cluster on Education pledged to:
- Include the issues we highlighted in their report to Parliament

- To particularly highlight the MHM issues during discussions in parliament

CALL TO ACTION

- Let us support the WESNET Secretariat to continue advocating for WASH prioritization. We need to embark on a continuous advocacy effort building to the formulation & enactment of the 2021-2022 national budget
- In this regard, you may wish to note that the Ministry of Finance acknowledged through the national budget statement that various requests for VAT exemptions which couldn't be implemented in the 2020-2021 national budget will be considered in subsequent national budgets
- We need to sustain our WASH prioritization advocacy if WASH is to indeed be prioritized in Malawi's development planning



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