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KENYA: Human resource development in the water sector

- International Office for Water - Cooperation - International actions - Vocational training and engineering -

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The French-Kenyan co-operation programme related to the development of human resources in the water sector started in July 1995 when an expatriate expert from the International Office for Water was seconded to the Kenyan Ministry of Water Resources.

His work was to assess the situation in the Kenyan water sector and supervise a Task Force to prepare an **Action Plan for Human Resource Development (HRD)** with two objectives:

- **The creation and development of a Human Resource Development Unit (HRDU) in the Ministry,**
- **The organisation of training courses aiming to develop abilities in a pilot district.**

1996 was devoted to the preparation of job descriptions, the assessment of training needs in the water sector, the drafting of a training plan, then of the action plan which involved the District Water Offices, the Municipalities, the headquarters of the Ministry of Water, the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation, and the Nairobi City Council. It was approved by the Task Force in May 1997.

This action plan is now a reference document, prepared by the Kenyan partners, which makes it possible to work within different organisations in the sector and to improve their Human Resource Development actions.

The cost of the reforms and actions (above all training) recommended by this plan is shared between the Kenyan institutions and the different donors. For its part, French Co-operation (the French Embassy) is in charge of some training initiatives and has secured technical assistance from the International Office for Water.

The work complete in 1997 and 1998 with the support of a French national on Voluntary Service Overseas seconded to the Kenyan Ministry, was devoted to the setting-up of the HRD unit and the organisation of the first training courses, identified in the training plan, after selecting Machakos as a pilot district, a town 70 kilometres south of Nairobi.

The objective of these technical training courses is to prove that, thanks to a suited training policy, it is possible to noticeably improve the efficiency of a service, not only through the acquisition of technical abilities, but also through staff motivation.

The project furthered the development of capabilities of the **Kenyan Water Institute (KEWI)**, as far as short and tailor-made training courses are concerned, since it had been directly involved in the preparation and implementation of training courses.

With the support of French companies of the water sector, a seminar was held in September 1998, on the **participation of the private sector in the management of water supply and sanitation utilities**, which is entirely on-line with the new policy approved by the Kenyan Parliament. Representatives from Uganda and Tanzania participated in this seminar, thus ensuring regional representation and fruitful discussions.

After a seminar held in February 1999, gathering all the top-level engineers from the District Water Offices, the next

stage of the co-operation programme allowed the sharing of Machakos' experience with other districts and the furthering of the planned reforms, above all the transfer of responsibilities as far as water management and supply are concerned, from districts to local authorities and communities. In this context, training is of utmost importance as regards the following topics :

- **human resource management and development**
- **community mobilisation and service management**
- **the training of trainers**

The HRDU has now to develop its advisory role towards the District Water Offices, to favour the implementation of short training courses and the co-ordination of the donors' actions in terms of training.

This entire approach could then be extended to other organisations involved in the sector: the Ministry of Local Governments, the Nairobi City Council, NWCP, etc.

The French Ministry for Foreign Affairs supported the project in full from the start, to a total amount of 4.500 MFF for the period 1995-1999.