

The Water Voice

Nwasco
NATIONAL WATER SUPPLY SANITATION COUNCIL



Newsletter

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RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION - ENSURING ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION FOR ALL

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ABOUT NWASCO

The National Water Supply And Sanitation Council (NWASCO) was established under the water supply and sanitation act number 28 of 1997 of the laws of Zambia to regulate the provision of water supply and sanitation services throughout the country for efficiency and sustainability.

VISION

Safe, affordable and sustainable water supply and sanitation services for all.

MISSION

To regulate WSS services focusing on:

- Sustainable service delivery balancing commercial orientation and social consideration;
- Increased access to affordable safe water and acceptable sanitation; and
- Increased public awareness


CORE FUNCTIONS


To regulate the provision of water supply and sanitation services for efficiency and sustainability. The core functions are to:


- Licence providers;
- Advise the government on water Supply and sanitation matters;
- Establish and enforce sector standards and guidelines;
- Advise providers on procedures for handling complaints from consumers; and
- Disseminate information to consumers on water supply and sanitation issues.


CORE VALUES


- Accountability - to all stakeholders on our mandate
- Legitimacy - in operating within the confines of the law
- Transparency - work shall be executed in an objective and transparent manner in all regulatory functions while maintaining predictability, fairness and confidentiality.
- Integrity and professionalism-in discharging responsibilities. We shall not allow bias, conflict of interest or the influence of others to override our professional judgment.

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ENSURING BETTER SERVICES AND FAIR VALUE

Editorial



A warm welcome to the 4th quarter 2020 edition of the Water Voice publication.

I am happy to be back on the Water Voice team after taking a 1-year study break to further my academic studies in the United Kingdom.

As we close the year and reflect on what has been described as one of the most difficult times in history, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are cognizant of the impact of Covid-19 on the Water Supply and Sanitation sector. However, we are determined and resolved about accomplishing our organisational objectives in the new normal.

As we pick up from our last edition, we focus on one of the two regulatory frameworks that we are rolling out in 2021. This is the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation regulation which will mandate all

Water Utilities to extend water supply to all the rural parts of Zambia.

The extension of our mandate is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal Number 6 which focuses on increasing access to clean and safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for all as expounded in the 7th National Development Plan and the Zambian Vision 2030.

In June 2020, we commemorated a huge milestone- our 20 years of existence as a Regulator of the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector in Zambia. In this edition we share with you some of our key milestones for the past 20 years.

We are proud that NwascO continues to break frontiers in water supply and sanitation regulation and has come to be recognised internationally as evidenced by the increased number of learning visits from within and beyond the region, by countries such as Nigeria.

Strategic direction is very important for an organisation such as ours and in this edition we also share some highlights from our newly launched 2020-2021 Strategic Plan.

Enjoy the read!

Mpunga Chipepo-Simukwai

EDITORIAL TEAM



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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD



that were undertaken during the quarter.

In terms of challenges, one needs not look further than the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in the first quarter of 2020 and continued for the rest of the year. A number of planned activities had to be rescheduled to later dates with some over spilling into the fourth quarter, making it busier time than usual. As expected, the impact of the outbreak was not only on NWASCO, but also on the sector as a whole particularly in the area of financial resources.

the country in its quest to leaving no one behind, NWASCO has been complementing these efforts on the water supply and sanitation front by providing effective and efficient regulation of these services. The population in rural areas has for a long time lagged behind in terms of access to water supply and sanitation service provision.

The need for reforms has therefore become apparent to ensure better collaboration among the stakeholders in these areas. Calls for NWASCO to extend its regulatory function to rural areas has resulted in the formulation of a framework for regulation and provision of WSS. This and other strategies by NWASCO are elaborated in this edition. I am more than hopeful that once fully implemented, these strategies will result in major strides being made towards universal access to WSS services.

For NWASCO, the fourth quarter of 2020 was an important time of reflection on the closing of year, reminiscing on the challenges, successes and the tasks that lay ahead. In terms of successes, this Water Voice edition reflects on NWASCO's Anniversary which fell in June 2020, focusing on the achievements during the 20 years of operation as a regulator for water supply and sanitation service provision and the activities

As on-site sanitation and faecal sludge management and rural water supply and sanitation continue to take centre stage in the sector, a number of advances have been recorded already. This edition focuses on rural water supply and sanitation and the works that NWASCO has been doing in collaboration with stakeholders.

As the government endeavors to take development to all corners of

Kelvin Chitumbo



Kiosks have played a pivotal role in bridging the water supply gap in peri-urban and rural areas

INSPECTION HIGHLIGHTS



NWASCO Inspectors (second from left and far right) on inspection duties

The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) is mandated by the Water Supply and Sanitation Act No. 28 of 1997 of the laws of Zambia, to regulate the provision of water supply and sanitation services throughout the country for efficiency and sustainability.

NWASCO carries out annual, in depth inspections of all the 11 commercial utilities and 5 private schemes around the country in order to assess their compliance to the provisions of the Act.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, NWASCO undertook annual inspections on Eastern and North Western Water and Sanitation Companies, in addition to the inspection of all the five Private Schemes. Below are the highlights of these inspections:

Eastern WSC

The inspection of Eastern Water and Sanitation Company was undertaken from the 26th - 31st October 2020. All the eight districts under the jurisdiction of the Commercial Utility (CU) namely Nyimba, Petauke, Katete, Chadiza, Chipata, Lundazi, Mambwe and Chama were inspected. Hours of supply were fairly good

with most districts maintaining an average of 24 save for Petauke -8 hours and Chama - 16 hours. Chipata city maintained 24 hours in most townships, save for a few areas such as Moth - 19 hours and Magwero - 17 hours. Other areas such as Industrial lying on high elevation were receiving 6 hours while low lying areas were receiving 24 hours. Load management by ZESCO affected pumping hours that subsequently ended up affecting hours of supply. Water quality monitoring in all districts was generally good. Water quality testing equipment was in fair condition with updated calibration records. The CU procured comparators following the challenges it had with Calorimeters which in the previous inspection were found to be giving high false residual chlorine readings. However, the comparator found at the water plant in Mambwe District was old with a compromised colour cartridge that affected residual chlorine reading.

At the time of inspection, the CU had a backlog of 314 fully paid overdue pending new connection applications, contrary to the Service Level Guarantees (SLGs). The backlog was attributed to most

districts not having connection materials and domestic meters to effect the new connections.

The CU's billing money was below budget by 20% while average collection efficiency was 105% with the lowest efficiency reported in the month of August 2020 when it was 70%. The high average collection efficiency was mainly due to Government institutions paying outstanding arrears.

There were no documented Non Revenue Water (NRW) reduction strategies or plans in the districts despite Head Office releasing K7, 000. 00 on a quarterly basis to address the problem. Chipata and Petauke had the highest NRW in the first part of the year at 52% and 58% respectively.

Arising from the above, the CU was directed to submit a time-bound report stating the measures taken or to be taken on the issues of non-compliance and of concern as revealed from the inspection.

North Western WSC

The routine inspection of North Western Water and Sanitation Company was conducted from 9th to 13th November 2020, covering six (6) of the seven operational

districts under the company's jurisdiction namely; Solwezi, Mufumbwe, Kabompo, Chavuma, Zambezi and Mwinilunga.

The CU was implementing three major projects namely the Mufumbwe Water Supply Project, the Solwezi Water Supply and Sanitation Works (Dutch Project) and the Solwezi Water Treatment Upgrade Project.

The Mufumbwe Water Supply Project was completed save for the installation of power supply by ZESCO. The CU had since June 2019 been engaging the power utility company to date.

The Solwezi Water Supply and Sanitation Works is aimed at completing overhaul of water and sewerage facilities in Solwezi District. Over 90% progress on Phase 1 (feasibility study) was achieved.

Solwezi Water Treatment Upgrade Project was also yet to be completed as some component still remained pending. Major works that remained included installation of raising main and inter-connecting the new plant to the system. Concern was raised over the workmanship of some of the works done at the plant.

The hours of supply in most districts were relatively high at above 20 hours, although below the Service Level Guarantees (SLGs) of 24 hours. However, problematic areas were found in Solwezi District namely Weighbridge, Zambia and Kazomba Compounds which experienced very erratic water supply with periods of up to three days of no water supply.

There was generally poor management of Kiosks as all the vendors in the inspected districts did not sign vendor contracts, majority of kiosk accounts had unremitted sales from vendors and all districts inspected owed its vendors unpaid commissions save for Zambezi

which was up-to-date as at the time of inspection.

The CU was facing the challenge of delays in making new connections for paid up clients with delays of more than eight months noted based on sampled transactions from each district's new connections registers. This is contrary to the CU's SLG which stipulates that new connections must be made within 10 days after payment is made. The CU has continued to apply the policy of only making a new connection upon the availability of meters.

Arising from the above, the CU was directed to submit a time-bound report stating the measures taken or to be taken on the issues of non-compliance and of concern as revealed from the inspection.

Private Schemes

Private Schemes generally continued to provide water at fairly good hours of supply with pockets of isolated low supply hours, low pressure and no water situations particularly in ZESCO's Namalundu Camp 3 and Kaleya Smallholders Mulundu B, Kaleya East and Barracks. However KCM Nampundwe's Site and Service area and part of the 90 houses continued to experience 3 – 4 days without any water supply. No form of emergency supply was being provided to residents of Nampundwe to ease the water supply challenges. As such, they opted to source water from individuals with private boreholes at a fee.

ZESCO continued to invest in water and sanitation infrastructure to improve service provision. This was evidenced by the various types of water quality testing equipment procured for the Namalundu station at Kafue Gorge. Further, two well secured parallel sets of waste stabilization ponds with concrete bases were commissioned two weeks prior to the Nwasco

inspection. Plans were also on hand to improve supply hours in Namalundu's Camp 3 area through the replacement of supply lines in the area.

Water quality monitoring for private schemes had a number of lapses such as non-compliant tests and not conducting all the required tests and subsequent reporting to the regulator. Save for ZESCO, other schemes were not publicizing their water quality results as per Water Quality Monitoring Guidelines. Further, staff found on duty operating water treatment plants at ZESCO's Itezhi-tezhi (ITT) station, Zambia Sugar and Kaleya Smallholders Limited exhibited low technical competences of conducting water quality testing particularly for residual chlorine using Lovibond Comparators.

Private Schemes such as Kafue Sugar, Kaleya Smallholders Limited and Zambia Sugar continued to experience physical water losses through overflowing reservoirs, broken garden and pillar taps. This problem was worse for Kaleya Smallholders Limited, despite the scheme having a Water Committee that overlooked water matters in the community. All the four households sampled during the inspection of Kaleya Smallholders Limited had broken garden taps with gushing high pressure water going to waste at the time of inspection. On the other hand, Kafue Sugar was experiencing treated water losses through the reservoir that was continuously overflowing because the tank did not have a mechanism to close once the tank was full. Further, numerous physical losses were noticed at the Blue houses which had broken plumbing fittings and fitments.



Hand pumps are a common mode of service provision in rural areas

RURAL WSS: ENSURING ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION FOR ALL

If water is life, then access to clean and safe water is a must for all, without any undue discrimination based on factors such as gender, economic status or area of residence. Unfortunately, the rural population often lags behind when it comes to social amenities and social-economic services such as electricity and water. This is because of a number of reasons but more often than not, taking such services to rural areas is deemed unsustainable because of the perceived low ability to pay for the services and that the prices for the services were not commercially viable. Other reasons for the low coverage in rural areas include the technical challenge of coming up with appropriate technology to ensure ease of operation and maintenance. In addition, most rural areas are sparsely populated making it difficult to reach everyone in providing them with the service.

Zambia, like all other countries, aspires to attain the Sustainable Development Goals for water supply and sanitation coverage. If these targets are to be achieved, efforts must be put in for all areas but more especially in rural areas that have lagged behind. The water and sanitation service providers have been largely operating in urban set-ups and service delivery has over time improved.

The realisation of this fact has resulted in the need for concerted efforts from all stakeholders but for the regulator NWASCO, this was also an opportunity to ensure service provision in the rural areas was also regulated.

The rationale for more effort in rural water supply and sanitation stems from the Water Supply and Sanitation Act No. 28 of 1997 that clearly does not limit the Commercial Utilities and consequently NWASCO to operate in urban and peri-urban areas only.

After the commercialisation of the water supply and sanitation service provision to the urban and peri-areas, provision of these services to the rural areas of Zambia remained a responsibility of local authorities. This was to ensure effective operation and maintenance of the facilities such as hand pumps and water schemes.

Similar to the strategy that was employed in urban areas, the government developed the National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (NRWSSP) as a roadmap to increase and improve access to water supply and sanitation in Zambia's rural areas, to achieve targets as set in the Millennium Development Goals (SDGs) and Zambia Vision 2030. The first NRWSSP covered the period 2006 to 2015 which coincided with the end year for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The programme consisted of a coherent set of investment, institutional and sector support activities aimed at providing and sustaining water supply and sanitation services to the rural population in Zambia. To this effect, the NRWSSP I was put in place to address the key issues which hindered provision of improved access to water and sanitation in rural areas. These

issues were identified as:

- Low access to safe drinking water supply and to adequate sanitation facilities.
- Leadership of the RWSS sector was diffused at national level.
- Inadequate policy and institutional framework to facilitate sustainable provision of water supply and sanitation. Aspects of community ownership of assets, community contributions, definition of basic service levels, and regulation of service provision are not clear.
- Lack of sector investment plans. Service provision is not demand-driven, and investment planning is done without effective participation of stakeholders.
- Lack of systematic collection and management of RWSS sector information.
- Lack of an effective maintenance system for community water supply facilities.
- Low financial sustainability of RWSS at local level.
- Low Government funding of the sector, and
- Inadequate technical, financial, and institutional capacities at district council level to support planning, implementation and maintenance of rural water supply facilities.

Under this programme, a number of strategies and supporting initiatives were put in place such as the Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Project (SOMAP) for operations and maintenance of water points and the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) for onsite sanitation services.

The subsequent programme, NRWSSP II for the period 2016 to 2030, was developed to ride on the successes and lessons of the previous programme and align with the Zambia Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development

Goals that require universal access to water supply and sanitation.

Although positive progress has been recorded in access to clean water and acceptable sanitation in rural areas, the pace at which access to acceptable services were extended still remained a concern and attaining universal coverage for service provision became more far-fetched as the population also grew. The need for continued reforms in this area was apparent and calls for the NwascO to extend its regulatory mandate to rural areas were echoed by various stakeholders and more importantly, by the government through the Ministry responsible for water.

To achieve this, NwascO in 2018 developed a framework for regulation and provision of rural water supply and sanitation services. The objective of the framework was to assist in the creation of a regulatory framework for rural water supply and sanitation service provision that supported sustainability of services in rural

areas. Regulation of rural water supply and sanitation will cover five main aspects namely water quality monitoring, general monitoring and reporting, operation and maintenance, adherence to standards and sustainability of service provision. This will ensure that adequate and affordable water supply of good quality, as well as safe sanitation, are accessible to all.

So far, significant progress has been recorded in implementing the framework and the main ones are discussed below:

- Amendment of CU operating licences – the operating areas of CUs was amended to include the entire boundaries of districts 2019.
- Development of guidelines, systems and tools for rural water supply and sanitation – Minimum Service Levels and Water quality Monitoring Guidelines, Reporting Mechanism and Permitting requirements by CUs were developed in 2020.
- Monitoring of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation and Urban Onsite Sanitation – Three Joint implementation teams

(JITs) were established in 2019 for 3 CUs namely; Lusaka WSC, Lukanga WSC and Luapula WSC with the main objective of spearheading implementation of the provision and regulatory frameworks for Rural WSS and Urban Onsite Sanitation (OSS). Four more JITs are planned to be established in four other provinces. It is planned that the experiences and lessons that will be drawn from these JITs would then be replicated in the remaining provinces without establishing any further JITs.

The role of other stakeholders such as Non-governmental Organisations and Cooperating Partners has to be recognised as considerable strides have been made as a result of their efforts. Extending services for provision of safe water and adequate sanitation is a challenge for service providers and will require well-coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. NwascO remains committed to this challenge and resolute to supporting the government's ambition of universal access to services.

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SERVICE PROVISION AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Personal hygiene key to the fight against COVID-19

Zambia's water sector, just like other government departments and stakeholders have risen and come alive to the numerous challenges that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the

sector institutions are doing their best to ensure that potable water is made available to members of the public. In as much as water plays a vital role in the maintenance of hygienic conditions, it also plays a pivotal role in the fight against

the transmission of the COVID-19 disease through consistent hand washing with soap. Considering the nature, gravity and scale of transmission of the disease, it is no doubt that it has definitely changed the way we interact at both social and informal settings. This article is an attempt to provide an overview of possible impacts that the COVID-19 disease has had on water utilities in Zambia and potential ways that the water sector has responded to mitigate challenges brought about by the COVID – 19 disease.

Historically, Zambia has experienced devastating effects of diseases before. However, not comparing the COVID – 19 disease to any, the latter stands out because of its high morbidity and mortality rates. The disease

has affected business operations, social interactions across all age groups, education calendars and general service provision. These changes are becoming even more prominent every passing day. Thus, the COVID – 19 disease will for sure be the most talked about disease for the next coming decades.

As part of the responses to manage the disease and enforce COVID – 19 disease health guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, government passed Statutory Instruments (SI) No. 21 and No. 22 on 14th March 2020. The SI also designated the COVID-19 disease as a Notifiable disease. These guidelines call for people to observe social distancing, practice hand washing with soap, hand sanitizing and mandatory wearing of face masks in public places. Other strategies introduced by

government to minimise the spread of the disease include introduction of rotational work schedules, self-quarantining and voluntary testing of “exposed” persons. The government’s stance on the strict adherence to the COVID – 19 disease health guidelines, called for what the republican president referred to as the “new normal”. Adherence to the public health guidelines on hand washing required that water is readily available and accessible in both public and private spaces. In this regard, the Minister in charge of water directed all water utility companies not to withdraw service from customers defaulting customers so as to reinforce the fight against the disease. This directive, however decreased customers’ willingness to pay for their water and sanitation bills, and in turn adversely affected liquidity of the water utilities. For example,

an analysis undertaken by NWASCO to determine the impact of the disease on the subsector revealed a drastic decrease of revenue collections from April 2020, following the directive of non – withdrawal of service. Further, the slowing down of economic activities at the hype of the COVID – 19 disease affected peoples willingness to pay for water bills. According to the analysis, collections across some water utilities overwhelmingly dwindled by 25% on average, with some going as low as 50%. This situation put water utilities in unchartered waters and threatened operational sustainability.

End of part 1.

NWASCO 20 YEARS OF REGULATING



The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) has clocked 20 years of regulating the provision of water and sanitation services. NWASCO was established by the Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) Act No. 28 of 1997 and started its operations in June 2000. The main mandate of NWASCO as outlined in the WSS Act of 1997 Part II Section 4 is to ensure efficiency and sustainability of water supply and sanitation service provision.

When NWASCO started its operations, the water supply and sanitation service delivery in Zambia was either static or worsening. Customers were not assured of a daily time average of water supply at connections as well as operating hours of public service points and customer service centers. Operation and Maintenance (O and M) Cost

Coverage by Collection was less than 50% then as compared to the current O and M cost coverage by collection which now is at above 100% benchmark. Maintenance and expansion of Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) infrastructure was almost non-existent resulting in deterioration of the infrastructure that was readily available. The sector principle in the 1994 National Water Policy was achieving total cost recovery through user charges such as water and sanitation bills and connection fees yet total cost coverage was farfetched.

Further, the two Commercial Utilities (CUs) established before NWASCO started providing WSS services without operating licences and the rules of the game were not established. There were no standards and guidelines on how services needed to be provided. Tools and systems for regulation including information

management were not in place. For example, at that time water quality was not regulated which meant that water supply and sanitation service providers did not have adequate water testing programmes which could have ensured that a certain number of tests were carried out for specific parameters such as bacteria and chlorine residual and confirm to national drinking water standards.

In order to ensure compliance with the provision of the WSS Act No. 28 of 1997 section 11, NWASCO licenced all the Commercial Utilities and other service providers that were operating at the time and continued to licence the new ones. NWASCO also was fully involved in the process of commercialization which was completed in 2009, with eleven CUs incorporated as Private Companies under the Companies Act and the Local Authorities currently being sole shareholders. These CUs are spread in all 10 provinces of Zambia and Luapula WSC was the last to be established in 2009. All the CUs are at provincial level

except Copperbelt which has three CUs and Muchinga and Northern Provinces that have one CU.

One of the functions of NWASCO has provided for in section 4 of the WSS Act No. 28 of 1997 is to establish and enforce standards and guidelines for the provision of WSS services. Therefore, to ensure effective regulation of WSS services, in 2002 NWASCO developed 11 guidelines in different areas of operations for CUs which included Minimum Service Levels, Water Quality Monitoring, Corporate Governance and Tariff Setting. A Pro Poor Basket Fund was established in 2003 which saw all commercial utilities access funds from the Devolution Trust Fund (DTF) for water and sanitation projects primarily for the poor urban benefiting over one million people by December 2018.

During the 20 years of its operations, NWASCO has achieved several other milestones which have contributed to the performance of the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector that include the following:

1. Benchmarking and Comparative Publication was introduced in 2003, CUs are benchmarked and their performance is disseminated to the general public via the annual sector report. 19 reports have since been produced and the best performing CUs are awarded. This milestone creates an enabling setting for competition among service providers who hold a natural monopoly. The Urban and Peri Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Report elaborates the performance of the water supply and sanitation sector through the analysis of performance of the service providers.
2. NWASCO introduced a Transparent Tariff Model in 2004, the model enables consumers to get involved in Tariff Setting Process and consumers are enlightened on the process. Commercial Utilities submit applications for consideration and approval to NWASCO before the tariff is adjusted. Being the main player in the process, the consumers are consulted by service providers to get their feedback before the proposed tariff is submitted to the Regulator.
3. NWASCO's Information System (NIS) was established in 2004, electronic annual reports are submitted to NWASCO by service providers through this system. The system has become the major source of information for urban water supply and sanitation. Information in the NIS is used for benchmarking and comparative publication as stated in (1).
4. Part-time Inspectors (PTIs) were introduced in 2005, 23 Inspectors have been engaged around the country, strengthening the monitoring of the CUs.
5. Regulation by incentives program was introduced in 2008, the incentives have been incorporated in the day to day operations of commercial utilities. This is an advanced regulation from the old-fashioned of using only command and control. Regulation by Incentives is a mechanism to use incentives to attain productivity by the regulated.
6. Commercialisation process was completed in 2009 with 11 CUs formed servicing all the 10 provinces in the country with Luapula Water and Sanitation Company being the last. Commercialization is the bringing of private sector principles in the running of public companies and this has seen improved service delivery.
7. The Resource and Knowledge Centre was launched in 2011, a non-stop reference point for information and knowledge sharing on water and sanitation open to the public.
8. MyWatSan Quickfix was launched in 2017, this is a complaints platform for the resolution of water supply and sanitation complaints to the providers. Customers can access MyWatSan Complaints resolution platform in the comfort of their homes on phones, computers and other devices. Unresolved complaints on the platform are automatically escalated to NWASCO.
9. NWASCO launched the frameworks for the provision and regulation of urban onsite Sanitation and Rural Supply Regulatory in Zambia in 2018. The launch resulted into amendment of operating licences to include rural areas and urban onsite sanitation. Commercial Utilities (CUs) have since changed their names from water and sewerage to water and sanitation companies as per section 9 (1) of Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) of No. 28 of 1997. With the foregoing the Water Supply and Sanitation Companies were required to develop plans for the provision of Water Supply and Sanitation services in rural areas and urban onsite sanitation service delivery. Since NWASCO started operations in 2000, Urban Onsite sanitation and Rural WSS have remained unregulated despite being part of NWASCO mandate. With the frameworks in place, NWASCO has commenced regulatory processes and tools for these two areas.

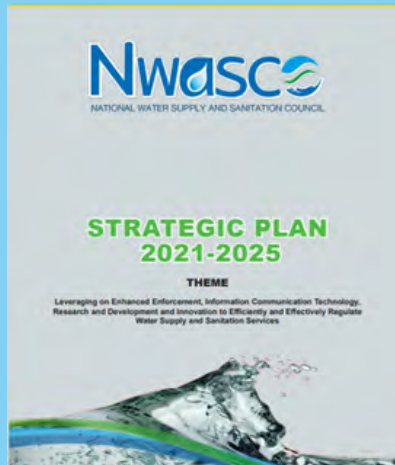
With the regulatory systems and tools put in place and CUs established, improvements in service delivery have been achieved as detailed in the 2019 NWASCO Urban and Peri-urban Sector Report.

NWASCO continues to be a pioneer in the water and sanitation sector and has continued to develop an elaborate regulatory regime that is internationally recognized evidenced by the number of countries that have come to Zambia for learning visits from within the region and as far as Nigeria in West Africa.

NWASCO LOOKING AHEAD 2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

While it has become universal in the past 25 years, strategic planning continues to play a more critical role for institutions to anticipate and manage change competently and effectively address new issues that are likely to emerge with increasing rapidity. The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) has been implementing its 4th Strategic Plan the past four years. The final year of this Plan fell in 2020, coinciding with the 20th Anniversary of the institution's mandate of regulating water supply and sanitation service provision in Zambia. Therefore, the development of the 2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan necessitated the review of the performance of the 4th Strategic Plan. It was commendable to observe after the review of the Plan that the overall cumulative performance of the 2016 - 2020 Strategic Plan across all the four Strategic Objectives was at a score of 81.45%, which was a 'Very Good' rating. Due consideration was made regarding some respective activities that needed to be carried over and incorporated in the new Strategic Plan. The review of the 4th Strategic Plan and development of the new Strategic Plan provided NWASCO an opportunity to draw a roadmap to guide the institution into its new horizon of regulating water supply and sanitation service provision in Zambia, thereby complementing efforts being undertaken by other stakeholders in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (6) and Vision 2030 on water supply and sanitation.

The 2021- 2025 Strategic Plan was developed with the participation of various key stakeholders under the theme, "Leveraging on enhanced enforcement, Information Communication Technology, Research and Development and Innovation to efficiently and effectively Regulate Water Supply and Sanitation Services". The plan took into consideration NWASCO's strengths, operating environment, and gains in the last two decades of regulating the Water Supply and Sanitation sector.



The milestones attained in the last two decades included the development and implementation of vigorous regulatory systems with effective guidelines and benchmarking systems, interactive consumer engagement platforms, robust information system and Regulatory Frameworks for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation, Onsite Sanitation and Faecal Sludge Management that have seen NWASCO to be a renewed and renowned Regulator within and outside the region. These achievements were made possible through the implementation of four past Strategic Plans. Therefore, the 2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan builds on the experiences and lessons learnt as the institution strives to take regulation beyond 20 years.

Going forward to meeting the diverse needs of the Water Supply and Sanitation sector, the following six Strategic Objectives were developed for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:

- To strengthen the capacity of NWASCO in order to implement regulation for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation and Urban Onsite Sanitation service delivery;
- To effectively regulate water supply and sanitation service delivery in order to ensure improved and inclusive service provision;
- To mobilise financial and other resources in order to facilitate for effective operations of NWASCO and ensure financial sustainability of the commercial utilities;
- To promote good corporate governance in order to ensure that NWASCO and commercial utilities are accountable, transparent and efficient in their operations;
- To enhance information management systems in order to ensure availability of up to date

information for effective decision making;

- To coordinate and undertake Research and Development in order to generate innovation and information for evidence based Sector Policy formulation and implementation.

The focus for this plan will be to effectively regulate Water Supply and Sanitation Services through enhanced enforcement, Research and Development, innovation and facilitation of evidence based policy formulation to ensure adequate, clean and safe water supply and sanitation services to all. The new Strategic Plan is ambitious and yet we believe that it is achievable. It defines how we will be successful within a challenging and changing water supply and sanitation environment. This is amid our extended mandate of regulating Rural Water Supply and Sanitation, Onsite Sanitation services and Faecal Sludge Management. The plan has been devised to build on the lessons learnt from previous four Strategic Plans and the experience acquired from our 20 years of regulating, to foster the frontiers of regulation. The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan covers a very critical period as the country progresses towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030 on water supply and sanitation. It captures six key priorities that will not only enhance our reputation and position as an institution on a global platform, but will also see tremendous progress in sector performance in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2030 on water supply and sanitation. Our aims and objectives are structured to integrate strategies in Innovation, Research and Development (R&D), Information Communication Technology (ICT) and continuous learning in advancing the frontiers of regulation, which will result in an efficient and effective Water Supply and Sanitation sector. NWASCO therefore has no doubt that the strategies outlined in this Plan will meet the objectives of its stakeholders through the unwavering support of the Government and Cooperating Partners, competent staff and a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

The National Water Supply and Sanitation 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan is accessible on website at www.nwasco.org.zm

COVID 19 – GENERAL PERSPECTIVE



Dr. Andrew Silumesii

When cases of a new corona virus infection were first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan Province, China, no one imagined that the world would undergo one of the most dramatic changes that history has ever witnessed. It was inconceivable that covering our faces with masks would become the norm, that security guards would be taking our temperatures before we enter banks, that our favourite soccer leagues would be suspended, that bars and churches alike would be closed, that the global aviation industry would ground to a halt or that the United States would suffer the loss of over 1,800 people from a viral infection in a single day.

This is a stark reminder of something we already know – the fact that the only constant in life is change! Often, change is gradual, like developing wrinkles on our faces as we grow older or our little baby boy growing into a man, but change can also be rapid, like we have seen the spread of COVID-19 across the globe. But whatever the case may be, we must manage change, we must adapt to it and learn to live with it.

In adapting to the challenges that COVID-19 has brought, Zambia has been implementing a scalable multi-sectoral response plan, premised on the principle that measures are escalated or eased as informed by a close monitoring and analysis of the evolution of the pandemic in the country, region and globally.

We are sailing uncharted waters and facing an uncertain future, but we must remain optimistic about tomorrow. We must keep hoping for the best while preparing for the worst, bearing in mind that many epidemiologists predict that we may not have reached the peak of the pandemic yet.

Another reality that COVID-19 has brought to the fore is that learning ought to be our life-long preoccupation, as individuals, as communities and as nations. Aside from the need to address the severe dearth of scientific evidence that currently characterizes the body of knowledge on COVID-19, there are a myriad of other attendant lessons to learn in the fields of human behaviour, business, economics, international relations, among others. Our learning must be continuous and coupled with a willingness and humility to adjust our actions accordingly as we learn new lessons. We have learnt many lessons by observing how other countries have responded to the pandemic, ranging from pronouncements by their leaders, implementation of lockdown measures and caring for COVID-19 patients. We have also learnt from the measures which we ourselves have implemented as a country and how they have affected our lives. We have learnt what to do. We have also learnt what not to do. In addition, we must be willing to learn from anyone, sometimes even from the most unlikely sources. We have noted that as the south continues to learn from the north, the north is also beginning to learn from the south. We have also seen the promotion of south-to-south learning exchanges.

COVID-19 has brought about a new way of doing things. The wisdom in the old adage 'necessity is the mother of invention' is being proven true again. What was not deemed most appropriate in the

past is now proving to be useful. Take virtual meetings, for instance. Many organizations now agree that while the cost of conducting virtual meetings is minimal, they can be just as effective as face-to-face meetings and achieve just as good outcomes as the latter. Similarly, many organizations have implemented the 'working from home' arrangement and are seeing that their staff are still able to deliver on their assignments and meet their targets. In a similar vein, we have seen the increase in the use of electronic as opposed to cash-based transactions, a trend that is being encouraged. Many things are changing, some perhaps for good.

There is a clarion call to conform to a "new normal" in the context of COVID-19. It is premised on the fact that experts are warning that COVID-19 could become an endemic disease - meaning a disease that is present in a community continuously or seasonally, with transmission maintained at some steady rate. At a recent press conference, the Executive Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies, Dr Michael Ryan, suggested that the virus may be here to stay. If this is a fact to go by, we need to find ways of beginning or continuing to do things differently. As we comply with the public health guidelines of washing or sanitizing hands, wearing face masks in public places and maintaining physical distancing, in order to control the spread of the virus, we also need to think more broadly about how we ensure that the wheels of the economy continue to turn and livelihoods are sustained in the long term.

The Guest Author is the Director Public Health in the Ministry of Health.

EXPLORING THE CONTOURS OF WELLNESS

While the term 'wellness' is one that has evolved over time, this concept has become highly pronounced in the modern days as the complexity of human endeavours and lifestyle has and keeps to tremendously expand.

Very often, one hears of corporate bodies making pronouncements that they have put in place 'wellness policies' in their workplace to ensure that their employees obtain optimum health and productivity therefrom. The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council (NWASCO) is one such institution that has embraced wellness in its operations and is keen to ensure that all its employees and sector stakeholders obtain benefits from this endeavour.

So, what is wellness? Or what makes a wellness journey as others may put it? The answers to these questions can be as varying as one may research in the sense that the concept is one that is assessed from various parameters depending on the objective that the authors are trying to arrive at. Researchers and experts have therefore attributed this polysemy on the basis that the concept remains as contextual as possible in its understanding. The following expressions or definitions clearly attests to this:

-The World Health Organisation-
"Wellness is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

-The National Wellness Institute-
"Wellness is a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving a full potential"

-Merriam-Webster Dictionary
"Wellness is the quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal"

What do we take from the definitions?

From the writer's own assessment, two things are worth eliciting from the statements above:

- Wellness presents one

with pursuit of a holistic understanding of what makes a person to be intrinsically effective and agile; and

- The pursuit for wellness calls for or demands a very proactive stance from the person or persons pursuing it.

The most often and nagging question could be, where does this wellness journey begin and end? And that why should this wellness concept matter?

Like the expressions highlighted in this article indicate, wellness journey is very fluid and the reasons that compel one to pursue it may differ from person to person. For instance, some people start pursuing wellness for aesthetic purposes while others pursue it because it is a fundamental requirement for their daily employment tasks. For others, it is because they may have suffered from a life-threatening disease or underlying health concerns such as obesity and are hence pursuing various measures to mitigate such health challenges. So, the list is endless and so is the journey. While one can decipher where this journey begins from, it is difficult to state the end of a wellness journey as those who opt out of it only makes a decision to disembark off while the train still continues with other passengers if the author can figuratively put it that way.

Pursuit of wellness matters so much in any calling, be it corporate or personal, in the sense that it avails those pursuing it with attainment of a higher quality of life. This helps most of the individuals to develop the much-needed resilience and response to the challenges they might be facing in their daily endeavours. As the famous 17th Century French Philosopher *Voltaire* aptly puts it, *"life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to sing in the lifeboats"*.

DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

It has been documented by the experts that wellness falls into eight dimensions. The experts express

that these dimensions are very inter-related and rank in *pari-materia*. The following are the dimensions:

- Emotional wellness - relates to one's ability to understand and pay attention to both positive and negative feelings and devise the most proactive ways to handle such;
- Financial Wellness - refers to learning the art of managing finances and mitigating the challenges that may arise therefrom.
- Environmental Wellness - is anchored on the need for us to live in mutual harmony with the environment thereby preserving our co-existence;
- Intellectual Wellness - refers to one's ability to continue learning and opening up their faculties to new ideas, principles and best practices;
- Occupational Wellness - refers to one's ability to achieve a balance between work and leisure;
- Spiritual Wellness - in the words of Emily Smith (2014), 'Journey to a Healthier You: Spiritual Wellness: What is Your Meaning and Purpose?' in the Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America, Vol. 13, Number 4, this has been expressed as -
"...being connected with something greater than yourself and having a set of values, principles, morals and beliefs that provide a sense of purpose and meaning to life".
- Social Wellness - refers to one's ability to forge meaningful and productively strong relationships with peers.
- Physical Wellness - refers to one's ability to strive for optimum health through exercise, good diet, personal care and good sleep. Having run through all these dimensions, it is worth to reiterate that wellness is indeed a journey endowed with multiple contours that one needs to navigate through. In the next articles, we shall explore some dimensions such as physical wellness in depth. The reader is therefore invited to more to come in this exciting journey!

SECTOR UPDATES

THE MWDSEP LAUNCHED THE WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION POLICY 2020

Minister of Water Development Sanitation and Environmental Protection Dr Jonas Chanda launched the Water Supply and Sanitation Policy 2020 in the presence of other stakeholders at Sarovar Premiere Hotel in Lusaka. The New Water Policy is intended to provide policy direction on WSS in the Country and builds on the 1994 and 2010 National Water Policies. It has emphasized aspects of coordination in the sector, research and development, strengthening legal and institution frameworks.

NWASCO LAUNCHES ITS 5 YEARS STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

Beginning January 2021, NWASCO will be implementing its 5th Strategic Plan which was launched during the 2020 Sector Report Launch in June. The SP was officially launched by the then Minister of Water Development Sanitation and Environmental Protection Hon Dr Dennis Wanchinga at the Mulungushi Conference Centre in Lusaka. The 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan has Six Strategic Objectives:

1. To Strengthen the capacity of NWASCO in order to Implement regulation of rural water supply and sanitation and urban onsite sanitation delivery
2. To effectively regulate water supply and sanitation service delivery in order to ensure improved and inclusive service

3. To mobilize financial and other resources in order to facilitate for effective operation of NWASCO and ensure Financial sustainability of the commercial utilities
4. To promote good cooperate Governance in order to ensure NWASCO and the Commercial Utilities are, accountable, transparent and efficient in their operations
5. To enhance information Management
6. To Coordinate and undertake research and Development in order to generate innovation and information for evidence based sector policy.

NWASCO PLACES TWO WATER AND SANITATION UTILITIES UNDER SPECIAL REGULATORY SUPERVISION SRS

NWASCO placed two Water and Sanitation Utilities specifically, Western and North Western Water and Sanitation Companies under Special Regulatory Supervision (SRS). A company is placed under SRS due to none compliance to procedures or guidelines provided for the operation of the utilities. During SRS, the company is closely monitored by NWASCO to ensure there is corrective measures or turn around to areas of non-compliance.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR WSS UTILITIES

In order to enhance its regulatory

work, NWASCO developed three (3) new guidelines namely the Asset Management guideline, Minimum Service Levels for Rural WSS and Energy Efficiency guideline. Despite the challenges of COVID 19 NWASCO further concluded the revision of four guidelines, the Water Quality and monitoring guideline to include rural areas and water safety planning, Minimum Service Levels for Urban WSS to include OSS, Accounting to include new practices and Tariff Setting guidelines to include changes in the new tariff model. One of NWASCO strategic objective in the 2016- 2020 strategic plan was to ensure continuous regulatory enhancement. Therefore, these new guideline were an outcome of the Strategic Objective in the 2016 -2020 SP.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTES 15TH – 22ND MARCH AS ZAMBIA WATER WEEK

Cabinet approved the commemoration of the Zambia Water Week to held between 15th and 22nd March every year during which the Zambia Water Forum and Exhibition (ZAWAFE) is expected to be the flagship event of the week. The approval of the Zambia Water Week come about after the request by the ZAWAFE Steering Committee to the Minister of Water Supply Sanitation and Environmental Protection to consider having the 2nd Week of June gazetted for the Zambia Water Week, the period during which the ZAWAFE is held annually.

EVENTS

The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council took part in a several events in the 4th quarter 2020 despite the Covid-19 Challenges. The participation in the events is meant to create visibility for the brand, showcase NWASCO's relevance in the sector as well as create an opportunity for consumers to interact with the regulator.

GLOBAL HAND WASHING DAY

The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council joined the rest of the world in commemorating the Global Hand Washing Day under

the theme "Hand Hygiene for All" on 15th October, 2020. NWASCO was part of the organizing committee spearheaded by the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection.

The commemoration was held at the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection Mukuba grounds. During the event, NWASCO showcased the MyWatSan Quickfix application.

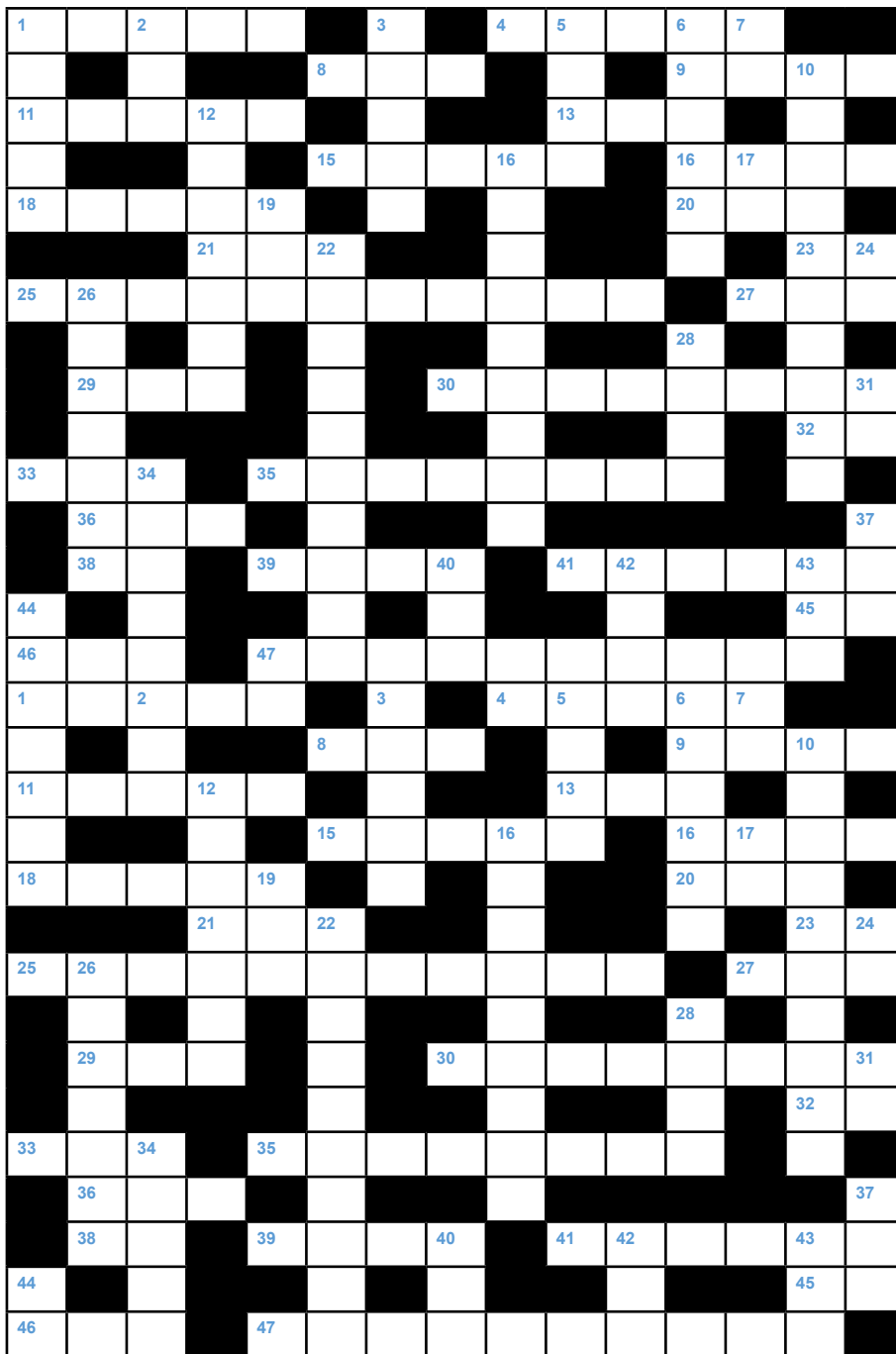
WORLD TOILET DAY

The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council also took part

in the commemoration of the World Toilet Day which was held at the Twashuka grounds in Chawama, under the theme 'Sustainable Sanitation and Climate Change'.

Other than issuing a Press statement for the event, NWASCO further sponsored the airing of the launch speech by the Minister of Water Development Sanitation and Environmental Protection, Honourable Dr. Jonas Chanda on the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Inorganic, transparent, tasteless and nearly colorless chemical liquid (5)
4. Green organs borne by the stem of plants (5)
8. Unit of measurement for electrical resistance between two conductors (3)
9. Region around the anus (4)
11. Chases and tries to kill an animal or bird (5)
13. Mild expression, typically of surprise or enthusiasm (3)
15. Negatively charged electrode (5)
16. Wound in joined sequence of concentric rings (4)
18. Turnips (5)
20. Two long parts of the upper body attached to the shoulder (3)
21. Service Level Guarantee for water -Hours of Supply (3)
23. Emergency room (2)
25. Respiratory Pandemic disease, virus (11)
27. Amounting to a single unit (3)
29. Wet and soft earth (3)
30. Bacteria causing severe diarrhea and dehydration (8)
32. Road, abbreviation (2)
33. Onsite sanitation systems, acronym (3)
35. Single celled microscopic organisms that live almost everywhere (8)
36. Apple operating system (3)
38. International system of units, acronym (2)
39. Fine sand or clay carried by running water and deposited as sediment, (4)
41. Man-made lake in Zambia (6)

45. Intergovernmental organization that aims to maintain international peace and security, acronym (2)
46. Non Sewered sanitation, acronym (3)
47. ".....Vermicular is", is a human parasitic helminth that mostly affects kindergarten Children (10)

DOWN

1. Capital City of Hubei province in China where the COVID-19 Virus supposedly originated from (5)
2. Unit of measurement equal to a thousand kilograms (3)
3. COVID-19 country of origin (5)
5. Outside limit of an object or surface (4)
6. Solid waste passed out of human or animal bodies (5)
7. Serial Number, acronym (2)
10. ".....canal", forms a passage for food from the stomach to the anus during digestion (10)
12. Bacterial disease spread through contaminated food, water or close contact (7)
16. Loose, watery bowel movements that occur frequently and with a sense of urgency (9)
17. Used to link alternatives (2)
19. A boy or man in relation to either or both of his parents (3)
21. Carry or support with ones arms or hands (4)
22. Refers to the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sewage disposal (10)
24. Prefix used with the meaning "again"(2).
26. Movement of water through a semi-permeable membrane from a region of high concentration to a region of low concentration, tending to equalize the concentrations of the water (7)

28. Opposite of "alpha", (4)
31. Short for "Edward", (2)
34. Clay, loam and sandy.....are examples of earth (5)
37. Metal container for cooking food in (3)
40. Digit of the foot (3)
42. Any Other Business, acronym (3)
43. Large motor vehicle carrying passengers by road (3)
44. Opposite of "Off", (2)

FEEL FREE TO COMPLETE THE PUZZLE AND SEND TO NWASCO OFFICES AND STAND A CHANCE TO WIN A PRIZE



Nwasc
NATIONAL WATER SUPPLY SANITATION COUNCIL

*The Board, Management and Staff
Wishes you and your family
a Merry Christmas
& a Prosperous 2021*