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Water Campaign Local Water Governance

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Abstract

Water as a common resource is vulnerable to conflicts. Unenlightened leadership and weak management mechanisms to enact on responsive local water legislations, to make informed decisions and to steer integrated actions would lead to further conflicts. If left unchecked, fragmented responses to conflicts and/or interests would render the local government and its constituents more vulnerable to socioeconomic and environmental risks and disasters.

The framework for local water governance does not assert that water resources within a Local Government Unit's (LGU's) political jurisdiction are solely "owned" and/or "controlled" by the local government. The crux of advocacy through local capacity-building is stewardship over water--water as a finite resource, a common good, and a basic human need-- where the LGU shares accountability and responsibility with other sectors and local governments.

"Local authorities play an important role in overseeing the implementation of IWRM activities both within their boundaries and within the local and regional watersheds. They act both as regulators and as service providers and have a role in financing. Despite varying levels of jurisdiction over water services, local governments have both direct and indirect responsibility for the water security of their communities." (*Source: Toolbox on Integrated Water Resources Management, Global Water Partnership, Version 2—2003*).

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability is a global association of local governments. It is devoted to enabling local governments implement sustainable development actions while protecting global common goods. As a non-profit organization, one of its major functions is providing consultancy services to local governments and other partner institutions along the lines of local policy improvements and development planning, program development and management, and workshop design, organization and management. The Water Campaign, in particular, aims to protect freshwater resources through local government actions. Visit our website at www.iclei.org.

Ms. Oppus has served ICLEI for eight years now, and has had fifteen years of experience on local government development and institution-building.