

# **The Bases of Our Unity**

***First Consultation Workshop  
of Water and Sanitation Resource Centers in Asia***

*Viengtai Hotel, Banglumpu, Bangkok, Thailand  
September 27-28, 1999*

prepared by



Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation  
The International Training Network (ITN) Foundation

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*This report summarizes the results of the Consultation Workshop of Asian Resource Centers in Water and Sanitation held in Bangkok, Thailand on September 27-28, 1999. From page 8 onwards, the major outputs of the consultation workshop are presented. These include the: Asian Vision, Declaration of Principles, Code of Conduct, and summaries of workshops on the roles of Asian resource centers, SWOT analysis, and action planning.*

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# The Bases of Our Unity

*Leaders of Asian water and sanitation resource centers adapted the Bangkok Declaration of Principles on Resource Centers at a consultation workshop held at the Viengtai Hotel in Banglumpu, Bangkok on September 27-28, 1999. The leaders, representing 12 distinct organizations, also reviewed and approved the Proposed Code of Conduct for all Stakeholders in the Water and Sanitation Sector.*

*This consultation workshop of Asian leaders is the first ever regional meeting of water and sanitation resource centers involved in the process of implementing the STREAM (STudy on REsources and Management) Project which analyzes development processes and experiences for the strengthening of resource centers. The consultation-workshop is described by participants as “a meeting of sharing what we have, what we can give and how we can work together towards the same goal.” During this first consultation workshop, the Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation - International Training Network (ITN) Foundation was nominated Regional Coordinator for Asian Resource Centers.*

Participants of the consultation workshop of Asian resource centers deliberated on the various roles their organizations will perform in the context of the Asian vision for water for the 21st century. They then collectively analyzed the

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) faced by water and sanitation resource centers in Asia. Their SWOT analysis painted a bleak picture but the resulting action plan sought to aggressively tackle the obstacles through

unified efforts.

## **Background**

The Asian consultation workshop was proposed having in mind the on-going world-wide effort of coming up with a shared vision and framework

for action for water. In view of this, the building up of a strategic alliance that will ensure a collective effort towards the realization of the shared vision was considered. Coalitions of organizations at the regional, sub-regional and even at the national levels were looked into.

One of the objectives of the regional meeting of water and sanitation resource centers in Asia was to echo the outputs of the international workshop *Towards the Enhanced Role of Resource Centers in Capacity Building* held in June 14-19, 1999 in Delft, The Netherlands. This workshop was organized by the International Water and Sanitation Center (IRC) in the framework of the STREAM Project, which delves on resource center development processes and experiences. The workshop provided a venue for some 63 participants coming from resource centers, private and public sector organizations and

United Nations agencies to come together and discuss key issues and constraints for the development of resource centers, and the identification of ways to strengthen the resource centers to fulfill their role as capacity builders in the water supply and sanitation sectors in the light of the challenges of the new millenium.

Another objective of the regional meeting was to get to know who are the resource centers in the region and initially indicate what their needs are especially in terms of institutional strengthening, management enhancement, mainstreaming gender concerns, information technology, etc.

The regional meeting aimed to come up with a priority list of activities that can be undertaken to strengthen the Asian resource centers within the sub-regional context -- South Asia and South East Asia. It was expected to come up with underlying

principles or bases of unity of the regional coalition such as the proposed code of conduct for community-based water supply and sanitation programs. It was also expected to firm up a coordinating mechanism that will sustain communication and networking within the sub-regional and regional contexts.

### **Common Understanding**

Based on the above objectives of the regional meeting, it can be said that the consultation workshop was able to meet its expectations.

“We have reached common understanding.”

To the participants of the consultation workshop of Asian resource centers, this is one of the major accomplishments of the two days. Tentatively calling themselves Alliance of Asian Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Resource Centers, the participants

committed themselves to the needs of the water and sanitation sector.

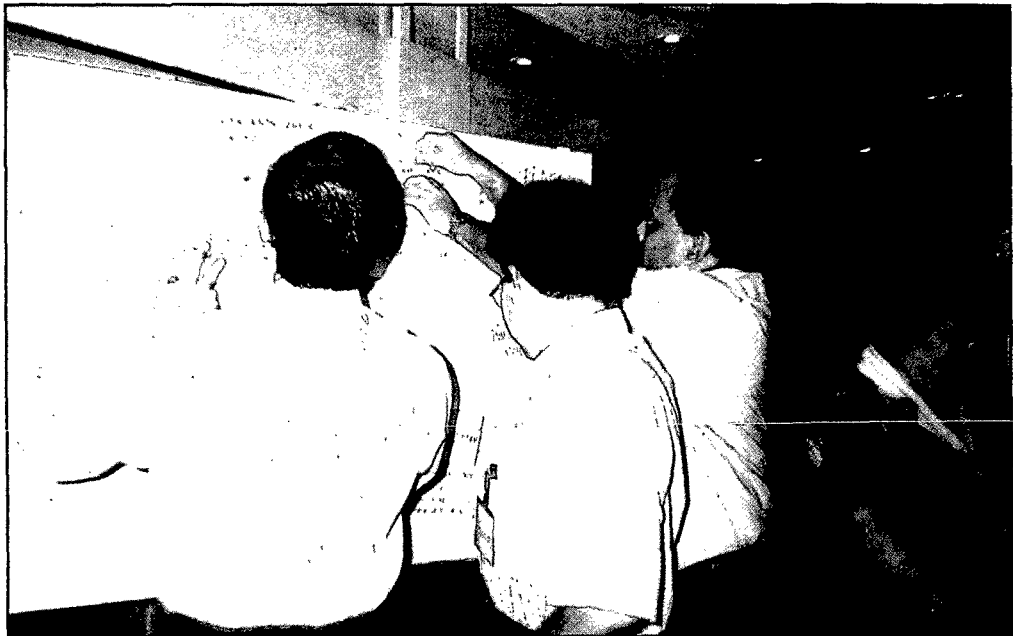
An evaluation of the two-day consultation workshop by the participants themselves revealed that they were

Vision for Water for the 21st Century.

“We have made the Action Plan and established the mechanism to set it in motion.” These words are listed among the

between and among resource centers.

They identified areas on resource center capacity building and discussed ways on how to share information and technology among their



satisfied with the outcome. They were happy to have started the process. They also noted that in adapting the *Bangkok Declaration of Principles on Resource Centers*, they have included the main points from the *Code of Conduct for Water and Sanitation Stakeholders* as well as from the Asian

accomplishments of the two-day consultation workshop enumerated by the participants themselves.

The participants noted that in meeting their partners in the Asian region, they learned more about an effective resource center and the best ways of sharing and cooperating

centers.

They also identified the criteria for membership to the Alliance of Asian Resource Centers (AARC) core group. These included: adherence to the *Bangkok Declaration of Principles on Resource Centers*; gender sensitive; interdisciplinary; devoted,

committed and passionate; resourceful and experienced. It was agreed that the number of core group members will not be less than three and not more than seven. The core group can form adhoc committees of technical action groups to do certain tasks.

Having formed the criteria and mandate for the core group of the AARC, the participants also identified from among themselves the Regional Coordinator --

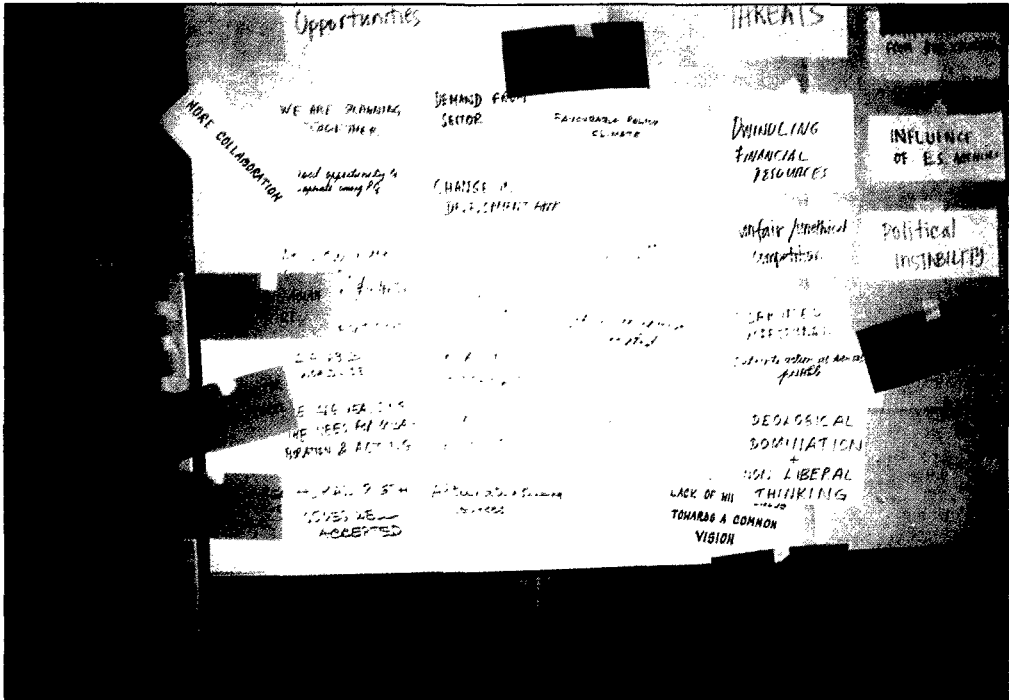
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The consultation workshop of Asian resource centers was made up of participants from 12 organizations doing work in water and sanitation. This is seen as a small group of organizations with high potential. From them, the AARC was formed. It is expected that this small group will have a leading role towards the future.

### AARC Meets in Gujarat

The participants agreed that the core group of the AARC will meet in November in Gujarat, India. The host is Gujarat Jalseva Training Institute headed by Dr. Jagdish Barot.

The AARC's meeting in Gujarat will include, among other agenda, the development of the Asian Gender Equity Framework.



# The Asian Vision

***By the year 2015, we, the people of Asia, living harmoniously in one earth community, interconnected with one another, upholding the principles of ethics and human rights, individually and collectively own and take responsibility to ensure an equitable and good quality of life through adequate hygiene, sanitation and safe domestic water supply.***

1. The men, women and children of Asia, irrespective of social, political and economic standing, acknowledge that we are part of **one global community**, enjoying the resources of the earth both for our survival and livelihood. We are grateful for such blessings and accept **the responsibility of stewardship** for the protection, management and care of such a vital resource.
2. Water supply, sanitation and hygiene are fundamental human rights. They are prerequisites for human survival and for a life of dignity and well being.
3. **It requires urgent action to reach the underserved and unserved population.** We see ourselves as part of the problem and agree to be part of the solution. Change in lifestyles, habits and mindsets are necessary. This awareness and realization must move from vision to tangible action **beginning with each individual and with institutions, leading to a united Asian movement.**
4. It requires **good governance and compassion for transparency and accountability and corruption free practices.**
5. We agree on a **gender sensitive, people centered development model** that fosters self-reliance and promotes



consultation and dialogues between and among all stakeholders, empowering those who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

6. It includes the use of **people-based technologies of high quality work**. People's informed choices are respected and not compromised. It should be **appropriate for meeting the intergenerational needs of the various societies**.
7. In the **sustainable management of water resources, the allocation and utilization of water for domestic purposes are of the highest priority**.



*The discussions during the First Regional Consultation of Asian Resource Centers in Water and Sanitation considered the concerns stated in the Asian Vision for Water and Sanitation for the 21st Century.*

# *Declaration of Principles*

## **Alliance of Asian Resource Centers (STREAM-ASIA)**

### *Preamble*

The following Declaration of Principles and ethics shall form the basis of unity of the Alliance of Asian Resource Centers (AARC). It is envisioned that through this document, a stronger partnership is established aimed at strengthening the position of resource centers in the region.

### *The PRINCIPLES*

1. We accept and adopt as our own the Asian Vision 21 Statement. We agree to take up the challenges posed by this Statement in the areas of advocacy and social mobilization, capacity building and partnership development. We will act as lead facilitators in the local, national, regional and international movements tasked to promote and implement the spirit and tenets of this vision.
2. We subscribe to the Code of Conduct defined by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council Working Group on Community Management and Partnership with Civil Societies.
3. We shall work in a spirit of camaraderie, mutual respect and openness, generously sharing between members time, talent and treasure when applicable and available.
4. We will collaborate as brothers and sisters as far as possible based on high moral, ethical, equitable and just principles.
5. We agree to establish a support mechanism that would enable the members of the Alliance to be recognized as high performers.
6. Members of the Alliance of Asian Resource Centers are expected to abide by the criteria and standards of the global STREAM Alliance.

# CODE OF CONDUCT

*(As adapted from the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council's Working Group on Community Management and Partnerships with Civil Society)*

1. The provision of safe and potable water supply and adequate sanitation shall be promoted.
2. Partner communities shall be consulted before any water and sanitation (WATSAN) schemes are formulated.
3. When undertaking WATSAN schemes, the stakeholders will put an emphasis on a process rather than on a project oriented approach.
4. Hygiene will receive equal importance and made integral part of WATSAN schemes.
5. Gender equity must be considered in all stages of WATSAN schemes to ensure effective management.
6. All stakeholders, particularly partner communities, will have access and right to all information concerning the scheme to achieve an equal and transparent relationship in WATSAN schemes.
7. Community organizations will get a legal status within an enabling environment allowing them to operate in security, own the assets or control the source.
8. Indigenous leadership, wherever available, will be strongly encouraged and supported in all stages of WATSAN schemes.
9. The stakeholders will incorporate traditional/local knowledge, skills and socio-cultural practices available within the community to maximize the effectiveness of WATSAN schemes.
10. The stakeholders will strongly take into consideration the views of partner communities in choosing the most appropriate WATSAN technology and level of services.
11. Every human being is to be guaranteed with minimum lifetime WATSAN

requirements at affordable prices. Water pricing and tariffs based on equitable and non discriminatory water consumption patterns between users will ensure sustainability of community WATSAN schemes.

12. Various contributions of partner communities shall be considered in the ownership of the water and sanitation facilities.
13. The stakeholders will respect the WATSAN needs of the rural communities first before exploiting water resources for urban, agribusiness and industrial purposes.
14. The stakeholders will actively promote the protection, conservation and revitalization of natural resources when undertaking WATSAN schemes.
15. In private WATSAN schemes, the interest of the socially and economically disadvantaged groups shall be protected and ensured.
15. All stakeholders will promote the provision of safe and potable water.

**We, the stakeholders, agree to abide and honor the above mentioned principles and ethics.**



# Results of the Workshop on the Roles of Asian WATSAN Resource Centers

The collective outputs of participants indicate that the roles of Asian water and sanitation (WATSAN) resource centers are in the areas of capability building, partnership, sharing of resources, and advocacy for the Asian Vision 21.

Outputs of the workshop show that resource centers are expected to facilitate the process of consultation, provide training from grassroot to managerial levels, prepare national human resource development plans and facilitate their implementation.

It is the role of WATSAN resource centers in Asia to undertake information exchange and increased collaboration with each other. They can build up a strong alliance of resource centers in the sector and form a task force to address WATSAN crises.

The participants recognize that it is the role of resource centers to get equipped to handle responsibilities. They see as their role the implementation of certain parts of the Asian WATSAN Vision for the 21st

*Build internal capabilities, undertake partnerships, share resources, advocate for the Asian Vision 21*

century. They are to link the Asian WATSAN vision issues in defining action plans of resource centers.

## Key Characteristics

Participants identified the key characteristics of Asian WATSAN resource centers. The responses were classified into positive and negative characteristics.

It was noted that Asian WATSAN resource centers lack visibility and resources. They are characterized by language barriers and fewer participation of the women population.

There was mention of the fact that Asian WATSAN resource centers are donor driven. They are not united and well accepted by all. They also lack exchange of

information. Their influence on the WATSAN sector is limited. Often, they are trying to invent the same wheel.

Asian WATSAN resource centers are typically faced with fund constraints. Another characteristic is poor management of the organization. The resource centers have little idea of the human resource requirements of their target groups.

On the positive side, it was noted that some Asian WATSAN resource centers are capable of responding to the challenges they face. The smaller resource centers are effective, efficient and inexpensive to maintain. Others have started advocating the Asian WATSAN Vision for the 21st century.

Participants also noted that Asian WATSAN resource centers are at a learning stage. Capability building is in process. They recognize the need to know each other better. They acknowledge that they know where they want to go as a group and realize that how to get there is the biggest challenge.

# SWOT Analysis Results

Participants were asked to reflect on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of Asian WATSAN resource centers. They identified 21 strengths, 20 weaknesses, 18 opportunities, and 13 threats.

## Strengths

Their coming together to this consultation workshop was viewed as a strength knowing that they "have partners now." They cited their common interest as a strength. There was also the strong belief for human service, the willingness to learn, the sharing of resources, and the information exchange at the regional level. Being focused was considered a strength.

The socio-cultural resemblance was viewed as strength. It was mentioned that Asia, where these resource centers are based, is blessed with natural resources. Some NGOs among the Asian WATSAN resource centers cited their voluntary action base.

Other resource centers identified the abundance of manpower; the great deal of knowledge; the recognition; the Asian Vision 21; committed, capable, resourceful, innovative, skilled staff; and the demand for

resource centers as among the strengths.

## Weaknesses

Foremost among the weaknesses identified were the lack of funds, focus, baseline information, monitoring and evaluation, openness and transparency, research knowledge, gender sensitivity, appropriate management tools, and the recognition by sector support agencies. The language and communication barriers as well as the unwillingness to speak out and to share responsibilities and pay were labeled as weaknesses.

The dependency on external support, the influence of politics, and the limited knowledge on the role of resource centers were also labeled as weaknesses. Other weaknesses cited were: poor quality products, no common levels of quality products and services, slowness in activities and progress due to process oriented approaches.

## Opportunities

Greater collaboration, cooperation, intercultural exchanges, interest in human rights issues, acceptance of the bottom-up approach, and development of the role of women were some of the opportunities open to Asian

WATSAN resource centers.

They noted the demand from the sector for the resource centers in the light of the Asian WATSAN vision for the 21st century. The opportunity to undertake the Vision 21 process and the planning together as collective resource centers were plus factors.

The favorable policy climate, the availability of more researches worldwide, the alternative funding sources, and the change in development approaches provide various opportunities.

## Threats

There were a lot of threats identified. Among them were corrupted professionals, unfair and unethical competition, dwindling financial resources, ideological domination, non-liberal thinking, competition from developed countries, influence of external support agencies, lack of donor interest and support, and, political instability.

Poor quality products and the lack of research knowledge were cited as threats to the resource centers. The uncontrolled population growth and the lack of political will were also definite threats.

# Summary of Action Plan

Action planning started with identifying various activities which Asian WATSAN resource centers can do together. These activities were later grouped into the following broad categories: information and communication, research and documentation, promotion, capability building, and coordination.

Under information and communication, the following activities were identified: holding of an annual conference as well as regional meetings for better understanding and sharing of experiences; frequent brainstormings and discussions of developments within and among resource centers; keeping members informed of relevant issues through a question and answer service and a website for regional resource centers.

For research and documentation, the plan included an inventory of institutions in Asia doing WATSAN resource center functions; writing up of best practices and lessons learned; translation of relevant books and documents prepared in different Asian countries; development of operation and management tools as well as tools for capability building; identification of WATSAN resource centers in Asian countries; rapid appraisal and needs analysis of Asian WATSAN resource centers;

enlisting all resource centers in the region to join the network; and cross visits among resource centers for feasibility studies.

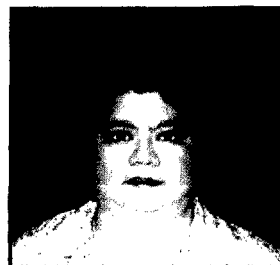
In terms of promotion, the action plan covers collecting and disseminating information of the country level resource centers; joint projects and expanding partnerships possibly with all WATSAN resource centers in Asia; promoting the Bangkok Declaration of Asian WATSAN resource centers; advocating for the WATSAN Code of Conduct; integrating WATSAN into other development activities; and stimulate debates on WATSAN activities at the village level in order to collect genuine ideas from the grassroots.

Inter country study tours and staff internships, regional training workshops, and the development of an Asian trainers resource pool are included in the capability building plan.

The setting up of a Secretariat and a regional focal point was identified as necessary to facilitate greater coordination and the establishment of linkages with other regional networks in the WATSAN sector. A core group of resource centers had to be formed to initiate and sustain the implementation of the action plan.

## Priority Tasks

The various planned activities were studied by the participants and then grouped according to priority and urgency. Activities for immediate action to be accomplished in three months include: development of the Bangkok workshop plan; setting up of a secretariat that will immediately link up the resource centers on areas of support required for one another; and, establishment of a regional focal point.



*Rory Villaluna, Executive Director of ITN Philippines, was chosen Core Group Coordinator tasked to lead the implementation of the Action Plan.*

In three to six months, the following tasks have to be accomplished: inventory and appraisal of WATSAN resource centers in each country; linking up with other resource centers; advocating the WATSAN Code of Conduct; needs analysis of member resource centers; developing tools for capacity building.

Tasks that will be accomplished in the long term include human resources development; WATSAN advocacy efforts; and, annual meeting of resource centers to be facilitated by the Secretariat.

# Asian WATSAN Resource Centers

## (Preliminary List in Alphabetical Order)

1. **Center for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation (CERWASS)** is a government organization in Vietnam. It is responsible for the long-term, short-term and annual planning for rural water supply and sanitation nationwide. It is mandated to control, monitor and report the national target program for the RWSS to the year 2005. Aside from managing the NTPRWSS, it supervises 61 provincial CERWASS.
2. **Central Health Education Bureau** of Myanmar's Ministry of Health has as its mission *Education in Action*. Its activities include social mobilization; community development; behavior research; operational research; and, formal, non-formal and informal trainings.
3. **Gujarat Jalseva Training Institution** in Gandhinagar, Gujarat State in India is a Government of Gujarat undertaking. It works with NGOs and is into training, research, quality control, networking and environmental sanitation.
4. **International Training Network Center for Water Supply and Waste Management (ITN) Bangladesh** is a project of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). Its key objective is capacity building in the water supply and sanitation (WSS) sector. Activities include: training of sector professionals and teachers in Engineering institutes; development of training materials; production of textbooks on low cost WSS; applied research and networking.
5. **National Water Supply and Drainage Board** of the Government of Sri Lanka is tasked with the provision of water supply. It undertakes partnership building, training, information dissemination, research and technical advise.
6. **Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH)** is a nongovernment organization (NGO) with 140 staff working all over Nepal. It supports local NGOs and community-based organizations to implement their water and sanitation (WATSAN) projects. NEWAH publishes issue sheets in WATSAN and undertakes research activities for the sector. It initiates coordination among agencies in the sector and trains WATSAN professionals.
7. **NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation** in Bangladesh is involved in human resource development, information and documentation, development communication, library services, research, social mobilization, advocacy, networking, water supply and sanitation projects, hygiene education and capacity building.
8. **Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation - International Training Network Foundation** does information dissemination, research, policy advocacy, training and social mobilization.
9. **Population and Community Development Association (PDA) Water and Sanitation Project** in Thailand aims to improve the quality of life of people. Its integrated

(page 19, please)



# Findings from 11 case studies

The on-going Study on Resources and Management (STREAM)-- a project aiming at strengthening water and sanitation resource centers -- initiated by the International Research Center (IRC) in Delft, the Netherlands is implemented amidst changing institutional settings in the water and sanitation sector. During the consultation workshop of Asian resource centers in water and sanitation held in Bangkok, Said Allaoui, IRC Research Consultant, shared the findings from 11 case studies of organizations participating in the STREAM Project.

The organizations include: CINARA (Colombia), ITN Philippines, NETWAS (Kenya), IWEE (Tampere University of Technology, Finland), SKAT (Switzerland), pS-Eau (France), IPD-AOS (Burkina Faso), SEUF (India), CFPAS (Mozambique), IWSD (Zimbabwe) and IRC (Netherlands). These organizations, referred to as resource centers, prepared case studies on the basis of an agreed format. One limitation of the STREAM Project is the small number of organizations participating in the study. The selection of participating organizations is another limitation.

## Results and Recommendations

Results of the 11 case studies show that most of the participating resource centers are young and very small organizations. Most have 10 to 15 people. There is limited staff capacity for synergy among activities. Management tools are largely insufficient. Performance of these resource centers is not clearly defined. There are no independent evaluations on a regular basis by an independent evaluator.

Findings indicate that there is a growing demand for information from the sector at all levels, and a greater emphasis on information sharing and capacity building. There is a gap between theory and practice as shown in the activities of the resource centers. There is

also the mismatch between activities and sector demands. For example, sanitation is lagging behind water supply.

Constraints identified for the development of resource centers include: lack of permanent share of core funding, insufficient diversification of funding sources, financial stability after withdrawal of funding support, insufficient marketing of services and products, limited networking and long-term partnerships. Without a minimum core funding, most resource centers find it difficult to sustain their activities. The funding limitations have resulted in a large number of small projects, which are not efficient and viable. There is a dilemma of serving as a resource center while competing for a niche in the marketplace as a consulting firm. There is a risk in relying on one major donor.

The 11 resource centers need to define clearly their strategic focus as to what they can do in the near future and beyond. They are faced with the big challenge of improving their sustainability and effectiveness as well as to know how to work in a business environment. As financial dependence on core funding tapers off, resource centers have to develop strategies for self-financing. Their products and services have to respond to local needs or new opportunities in the sector.

The management of the resource centers need to be supported by the development of a policy document, a business plan and a strategic marketing plan. The management systems created by resource centers, in particular financial management, have to be very transparent, and in conformity with professional management and control procedures.

Resource centers have a vital role in the development of the water and sanitation sector. The STREAM project can help develop partnerships among these resource centers.

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approaches tackle water rights, water cost, ownership, demand responsiveness, and management skills.

10. **Water, Research and Training Centre for a New Burma** is a NGO doing research, training, networking, knowledge management, advocacy, and free consultancy services. WRTC is based in the Netherlands and has 24 volunteers.
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## ***Philippine Center for Water & Sanitation International Training Network (ITN) Foundation***

*The Philippine Center for Water and Sanitation - The International Training Network (ITN) Foundation is a non-government organization doing public information, research, community organizing, advocacy and training for the awareness, appreciation, protection and conservation of Philippine water resources. It provides consultancy services to agencies about to implement or are already implementing water and sanitation projects. It also helps establish appropriate local water supply and sanitation structures to help develop and implement community-based water resource management projects. The Foundation actively promotes community participation and encourages local initiatives for the protection and conservation of water resources.*

*Experiences and learnings from the implementation of ITN Foundation's field research program are shared through publications, trainings, consultancies, learning centers and research-based advocacy efforts. Executive summaries with policy recommendations are presented to concerned groups and organizations for their action and for the improvement of the water and sanitation sector.*

*ITN Foundation currently works with research centers, media groups, people's organizations, academic institutions, voluntary agencies, and various development organizations in the Philippines and abroad for the sustainability of water resources. It works with government and nongovernment organizations in promoting a positive water culture that will effectively communicate, advocate and implement integrated water resources development and management among the major stakeholders.*

*ITN Foundation is the Country Coordinator and National Focal Point of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) which is based in Geneva, Switzerland and operates with a mandate from the United Nations General Assembly.*

*During the First Consultation Workshop of Water and Sanitation Resource Centers in Asia held in Bangkok, Thailand on September 27-28, 1999 ITN Foundation was nominated Regional Coordinator for Asian Resource Centers.*