

25/10 Submission AquaFed

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The conference is of interest to AquaFed in more ways than one: In a context where the private sector is called upon to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6 of the 2030 Agenda, our companies are ideally placed, given their field experience as operators, as well as their experience in the financing of water and sanitation projects. Tens of millions of people around the world have benefited from access to water or sanitation through Public Private Partnerships implemented by our companies, and this experience demonstrates how PPPs are an effective catalyst for public authorities to further their agenda. PPPs guarantee the execution of the public will through a performance contract, with all the necessary indicators, both technical and economic (as well as penalties), to constantly monitor progress, intervene appropriately, and of course review the governance of the contract when necessary.

In the perspective of the UN conference of March 2023, we consider that modern public service contracts, briefly described above, are tangible and proven game-changers, which, contrary to popular belief, have rarely been attempted: less than 10% of the world's population receives water and sanitation services involving a private operator in some way, and local ecosystems are rarely well-informed about the design and management of public service contracts.

It is also worth recalling the conclusions of the consultation on the conference; recalled by Deputy Secretary General Amina J. Mohammed in the consultative meeting. In particular, she stressed the need to put in place the conditions for the deployment of public-private partnerships and to promote access to private finance.

- AquaFed echoes the statements by the UNOSG/UNDESA in the opening session underlining the contributions to the 2023 Questionnaire
- AquaFed seconds the statements made this morning that water issues are governance issues in the first place. Money is available, technology is available.
- Under governance, we spot transparency and accountability. Also regulations: Independent regulation and regulatory bodies, free of political control, are mechanisms that we know can be very effective. Also, Information is a public good and people must be given information about their public water and sanitation services: price, costs, performance against KPIs.
- About the room for PPPs, we have several points to make:
 - o Freedom of local organisation of water services is the precondition for accountability of public-decision-makers.
 - o This freedom is a precondition for innovation and game-changing: imposing a single model runs against the necessary diversity which allows new solutions.
 - o Strong governance is absolutely necessary for no one to lose sight of the targets, transparency and equity requirements, and this applies regardless of the nature, public or private, of the operator.

- About what PPPs are exactly, they must be understood as Public Service contracts where the public authority remains in charge:
 - o PPPs ensure a clear separation between decision roles on the one hand, by the public authority, and execution duties on the other hand, handled by the operator for the duration of the contract.
 - o They are based on transparent KPIs on all Human Rights criteria, and earmarked budget allocations. There are clear enforceable contracts and there is abundant proof that operations can return in public hands.
 - o Governments have drastically evolved the tender specifications, to respond to challenges of governance (thus separation of decision roles and operators roles, transparency and accountability, public participation), social protection (including specific measures to the poorest), and environmental challenges.
- PPPs today play a marginal role in water supply and sanitation: less than 10% of the world population. There is room to use it more effectively as innovation means, which also opens a wider door to private / blended finance
- We have heard that POLITICAL WILL is the number 1 game changer: Strong political will, governance and transparency are fundamentals at the root of water and sanitation development, regardless of whether the operator is public or private.