**“Productive uses of water supply systems: encouraging common practice, for investments with high benefit-cost ratios ”**

The Multiple use water services (MUS) Group, together with some of its members and partners (IRC, IWMI, Winrock International, RiPPLE, CINARA, World Vision, USAID, Virginia Tech University and Rockefeller Foundation) convened a session at the Stockholm World Water Week on ‘Scaling Pathways for Multiple-Use Services, for Food Security and Health’ with the aim of identifying scaling pathways for MUS to reach the tipping point. ICID president Zao Ghanyi was the chair.

The introductory video "Keeping the Water Flowing: Multiple-Use Water Services" conveyed the advantages of meeting all water needs in rural and peri-urban areas. The five speakers showed cases where 75 percent of people already use water supplies for productive uses, in spite of planners’ assumptions they are only for domestic uses. Designing services for these multiple uses can derive high incremental benefits from small incremental investments. Also, the MUS Group’s synthesis of guidelines for planning and providing MUS in eight national and international organizations was presented, showing that there are now structured approaches for implementing MUS. The final presentation asked the question: “why doesn’t MUS scale up, if it is such a good idea?”. The answer to this question lies in the narrowly defined institutional mandates, with corresponding financial earmarks, limiting the possibility to follow a MUS approach. But, also evidence was presented of pathways to overcome these institutional ‘silos’ in the water sector. For all presentations, see <http://bit.ly/PKO3Wz>.

The panel discussion further explored the institutional barriers to adopting MUS and the challenges faced in scaling up, with the following members

* Honorable Minister Stanislas Kamanzi, Minister of Natural Resources of Rwanda;
* Ato Abiti, Director Research & Development, Ministry of Water and Energy of Ethiopia;
* Jeremy Bird, incoming Director General of IWMI (International Water Management Institute);
* Abraham Asmare from the World Vision East Africa Regional WASH Learning Center; and
* Sharon Murray from USAID.

The members of the panel confirmed MUS is a “no-brainer”: it is an approach that makes sense, provides a high benefit-cost and there are practical working models. The real advocacy message to focus on, in order to get to scale, is the financial one: investing in MUS costs less than if parallel investments were done. But, they also encouraged the Group to provide further clarity on what “good” MUS is, so as to allow for better quality control.

As sectoral boundaries and silos are today’s reality, which will not change in the foreseeable future, the panel recommended that scaling needs to start by working from within these silos on issues of policies, financing and incentives, so as to gradually find space for MUS there. At the same time, research should focus on these institutional barriers and opportunities.

Finally, scaling requires funding, and it was suggested to identify multiple finance sources, as the incremental costs do not all need to come from public institutions; cost-sharing between others, including users or the private sector, needs to be explored.