

Flemish Partnership for Water : partnerday 28/10/2009

Luc Thomas and Luc Daems, both members of our International Commission, I participated yesterday at a meeting in the framework of 5 year existence of the Flemish Partnership for Water.

5 years ago the Flemish Government, partner in our project at Tamatave, Madagascar, decided to set up a program helping a population of 6 million persons (corresponding to the number of inhabitants of the Flemish region), spread over many developing countries, with projects of water and sanitation. This objective should be realised over a time period of 15 years that started in the year 2000 with the millennium targets of the United Nations.

This program should be realised with as much as possible, partners and organisations from the public and the private sector.

Where are we today ?

Since 2004 30 projects, mainly in the subsaharian region, including Madagascar, started helping 500.000 persons directly to drinking water (Access to drinking water within a radius of less than 1 km).

3.930.000 persons could get better water quality through better management of water systems (the importance of sensitisation actions).

Direct sanitation (latrines) were brought to 262.000 persons.

3.593.000 persons got an education and training for better sanitation and prevention against troubled waters.

After this overview several interesting interventions took place by persons representing as well public organisations, a high school of the Antwerp Region, and private companies who realised projects of water and sanitation in countries such as Niger, Benin, Congo, Haiti, Burkina Faso and Guinée –Bissau.

Finally the coordinator of the World Health Organisation in Geneva, explained the links between drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and health, concluding that more efforts and more priority should be given for sanitation projects such as our Rotary-project in Tamatave.

He said sanitation being more important than access to drinking water and being even more important than worldwide actions and prevention programs against many diseases.

The representative of the Minister (Schouvliege) emphasised that in the future development programs of the Flemish Government, drinking water projects will always have to be linked with sanitation projects.

Government help will only be accepted in the framework of a multiple partnership.

Africa, including Madagascar will be continue getting the first priority.

Partnership is not only necessary in the south of the globe, but also in the northern part.

It is announced that Rotaryclub Brussel-Cantersteen and in particular its International Commission Tamatave, is trying to convince several Dutch speaking Brussels schools to set up common actions around water and sanitation and that a public action will take place at the next World Water day in February 2010. An important meeting will take place on 9th of November in the Agneessens-Funck school in the center of Brussels.

We thank our commission members Rob van Eijkeren and Luc Thomas for their involvement for this action towards the schools.

The Partnerday ended with the signature of the DECLARATION OF ENGAGEMENT WATER FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Luc Daems of our International Commission was very honoured to put his signature on this document.