



Press Release  
26 November 2015

## **Only 1 out of 3 citizens have access to piped water** **One year after implementation of Big Results Now in water sector, citizens report no change**

**26 November 2015, Dar es Salaam:** Just over one out of three citizens (36%) has access to piped water. The majority of citizens rely on either wells (35%) or surface water (18%), which are generally less hygienic sources. The difference between urban and rural areas is significant: half of urban residents (51%) have access to piped water on their premises compared to only 11% of rural citizens. Despite the introduction of the Government's Big Results Now, and expiry of the Millennium Development Goals, access to piped water has been static in the last year. Overall only 41% of rural residents have access to any kind of improved water source as compared to 69% of citizens in urban areas.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Half empty or half full? Citizens' views on accessing clean water*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,852 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) between 9 and 26 September 2015.

Close to half (44%) of citizens spend over 30 minutes collecting water for their needs, while the government guideline recommends that citizens should not spend more than half an hour per trip to collect water. In both urban and rural areas, around one out of three citizens in both urban and rural areas cite the lack of water points as a major challenge.

In general, citizens experience a range of issues in accessing water, with significant differences in the experiences of rural and urban communities. Rural residents emphasize the distance to water points (47%) and dirtiness of the water (40%), while urban residents are troubled by irregular supply (43%) and cost (40%).

Just over half of citizens (57%) report doing something to make their drinking water safe. The majority of these say that they boil the water (85%). Other popular alternatives are straining (69%) or letting the water stand and settle (38%), but these are not considered, by international standards, to be acceptable methods of water treatment.

Unsurprisingly, 65% of citizens see access to clean water as the major challenge facing their community. Despite two years of the Big Results Now initiative, most citizens (80%) report seeing no change in the water sector over the past two years.

In recent months there has been significant media coverage of Cholera outbreaks in the country. Cholera spreads through contaminated water, among other things. However, here the story is more optimistic as only 6% of citizens have seen or heard of someone diagnosed with Cholera in the four weeks before the survey.

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza said *“The saying goes, Maji ni Uhai (Water is Life). Sadly for too many Tanzanians, water can actually be deadly. Years of data have shown us that merely increasing resources does not improve access to safe, clean water. As the new government begins its work, we have a unique opportunity to radically review our strategies in the water sector. Providing every citizen with water in a sparsely populated, large country such as Tanzania is particularly challenging. But there is no escaping the need to reach every citizen with this vital service. So, we have no choice but to think quickly and creatively to guarantee citizens’ basic right of access to clean and safe water.”*

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**Notes to Editors**

- Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a globally respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa’s largest annual citizen assessment to assess children’s learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership
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- Twaweza is also currently organizing the Mkikimkiki 2915 election debates series. To express interest in attending please email [pr@compass-tz.com](mailto:pr@compass-tz.com) or call +255 768 129974. You can also follow Mkikimkiki  
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