



Press Release
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Access to water especially in rural areas has remained largely stagnant over the past ten years
Half of citizens (54%) have access to an improved water source, 46% in rural areas and 74% in urban areas

21 March 2017, Dar es Salaam: It appears there have not been large changes in the level of access to water, particularly in rural areas, over the past ten years. Although there are multiple datasets to compare, only two – which are strongly related – show a consistent improvement in recent years.

- **Sauti za Wananchi** shows access to water in rural areas at 55% in 2014 and 46% in 2016
- The **National Bureau of Statistics** shows access varying between 40% and 50% over the ten years with nine out of ten surveys showing data within this range
- For the same period, the **Ministry of Water** has reported higher access, at between 50% and 60%
- Figures for **Big Results Now** report a rapid increase in access from 40% in 2013 to 67% in 2015

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Clean and Safe? Water, sanitation and hygiene*. 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 1,808 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) in October 2016.

More than half of citizens (54%) reported that they use an improved water source as their main source of drinking water. However, there are large variations between urban (74%) and rural (46%) households and between wealth groups (75% of the wealthiest and 41% of the poorest use improved sources). In rural areas, the most commonly used sources are unimproved: unprotected wells (26%) and surface water (20%); far fewer households use the most common improved sources which are public taps (17%) or protected wells (16%).

In urban areas, improved sources are more common. Half of all urban residents have piped water, either into their plot (31%) or through their neighbour's supply (21%). Fewer than 1 out of 10 citizens in urban areas use unimproved sources including unprotected wells (7%) or water trucks (7%). Additionally, 6 out of 10 citizens report that they treat their water before drinking. The most common method of treatment is boiling (49%) followed by straining (27%).

In addition to having lower access to water generally, rural households are disadvantaged by the distance to their water sources, as more than half (57%) spend more than the government target of 30 minutes collecting water compared to 28% of households in urban areas. When it comes to water collection, the burden is largely carried by women; 6 out of 10 citizens (61%) report that fetching water is the responsibility of the female head of household or the wife of the head of household.

The findings also show that urban and rural areas face different yet similar challenges in accessing water. Irregular supply (rural: 28%, urban: 37%) and an insufficient number of water points (rural: 35%,

urban: 26%) are among the most common problems in both rural and urban areas. The top three challenges in rural areas are distance to water point (39%), insufficient number of water points (35%) and dirty water (32%) while the top three challenges in urban areas are irregular supply (37%), water cost (27%) and insufficient number of water points (26%).

MPs are put on notice about citizens' water needs. A total of 7 out of 10 citizens (69%) remember that their MP promised the community a water project during the last election campaigns. However, 3 out of 4 (75%) say that none of these commitments have been implemented, while 23% concede that some of them have been implemented.

On handwashing, when asked to name an activity after which they washed their hands in the last 24 hours, 8 out of 10 citizens (81%) did so after using the toilet, and 4 out of 10 (36%) before eating. However far fewer citizens mentioned washing their hands with soap before preparing food (10%), after cleaning a toilet (8%), after/while cleaning a child's bottom (4%) or before feeding a child (2%).

Sauti za Wananchi also established whether citizens participated in public cleaning activities as directed by the President on Independence Day 2015. Almost all citizens (93%) reported that they participated and furthermore, 7 out of 10 (72%) report that there are ongoing cleaning activities / days in their communities. Ongoing designated cleaning days are more common in urban areas (87%) than rural areas (64%).

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said: *"Access to water features little in the media and in the general public discussion. Yet these data clearly show that many citizens do not enjoy a clean, safe and reliable water supply. As they cope daily with these difficulties, citizens do remember the many promises made by campaigning politicians about their lives better by providing water. Sadly, these promises are not kept. We cannot afford to ignore this sector . Improving access to clean water, maintaining existing water sources and encouraging hygienic practices will require committed collaboration and smart partnerships between citizens, government and water providers. The time to act is now."*

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Notes to Editors

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, or www.twaweza.org/sauti
- 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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