



# Water Barometer

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1. **Introduction:** Water accessibility, availability, acceptance and water quality (AAAQ) are a cause of concern to residents in Harare Metropolitan Province as the water being received falls short of the residents' expectations. The AAAQ influences the water supply policy to citizens and is a benchmark in the realization of the right to water in Zimbabwe. This water barometer will analyse water situations in the following suburbs New Tafara and Mabvuku, Kuwadzana, Highfield, Mufakose, Budiro 3 and St Mary's KC
2. The Danish Institute for Human Rights Denmark's National Human Rights Institution explains the AAAQ framework as follows;
  - 2.1. **Availability**<sup>1</sup>: identifies whether there is a sufficient amount of water available within a given geographical area (e.g. a country, a district or a village) and whether there is a regular supply of water over time.
  - 2.2. **Accessibility**: concerns the level of access and identifies who has access and thereby encompasses the human rights principles of non-discrimination, participation and accountability. There might be an abundance of water within a country or a district, but there are a variety of factors that influence rights holders' ability to access water. Accessibility is divided into four sub-criteria to help identify the barriers for accessing water.
    - 2.2.1. **Physical accessibility** means that water must be within physical reach and that it can be accessed without physical threats.
    - 2.2.2. **Economic accessibility** is often referred to as Affordability and concerns the cost of accessing water and attention is given to whether the cost of water threatens the realization of other rights; e.g. if a family is forced to prioritise between water for the family and school fees for the children.

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<sup>1</sup> The Danish Institute for Human Rights  
Denmark's National Human Rights Institution

- 2.2.3. **Non-discrimination** is a specific element of accessibility as well as an overarching human rights principle for all AAAQ criteria. In its simplest form, the non-discrimination criterion can be addressed through disaggregating data on the other AAAQ indicators based on prohibited grounds of discrimination. An in-depth analysis of marginalised groups and equal access to water requires a range of measurements based on the types of discriminatory practises (e.g. refusing migrant workers access to a borehole) for each of the marginalised and vulnerable groups in the country (e.g. women, people living with HIV/AIDS or disabilities or elderly persons).
- 2.2.4. **Information accessibility** concerns the accessibility of information on water related issues and should consider e.g. the frequency, medium, form and language of the information. In a broader perspective, information accessibility also relates to the openness and responsiveness of public institutions to the requests and needs for information about water governance institutions and processes. This includes provision of information about how and when rights holders can participate in policy and decision-making processes as well as establishment of mechanisms for feedback and complaints.
- 2.3. **Acceptability:** concerns subjective assessments of the rights holders' perceptions about water and the delivery of water.
- 2.3.1. **Consumer acceptability** includes the characteristics of the water (e.g. odour, taste and colour) as well as procedural considerations (e.g. the behaviour of water suppliers).
- 2.4. **Quality:** concerns the quality of water in objective, scientific terms and it is closely tied to international quality standards. Assessing the quality of water is highly complex and requires technical expertise on micro-organisms and chemicals that might pose a health risk. WHO and UNICEF are leaders in the field of water quality and have defined a set of core parameters for water quality (microbial quality, physical parameters and chemical parameters). When measuring water quality, efforts should be made to either make use of quality assessments from WHO and UNICEF or engage technical expertise on water quality.
3. **Executive summary:** Harare has frequent water cuts or shortages sometimes caused by power cuts resulting in water not being pumped. This compromises on Availability and results in residents using

water from unprotected wells or burst connections on main holes. Houses on higher ground only access water at night when the pressure is high as those on lower ground will not be using water. Queues at boreholes are long or the nearest borehole may be broken, resulting in residents going without any water. Distance to the borehole may be prohibitive resulting in the elderly and persons living with disability not accessing it. In Harare, residents pay for water but household income has deteriorated and this affects affordability. Residents therefore delay payments and this in turn affects the local authorities from maintaining and servicing water infrastructure. C.O.H. removes meters from households and therefore these are replaced upon payment of rates. Acceptability works hand in hand with the quality of water. Quality of water is of concern as standards are not consistently maintained. Residents complain of the colour, taste and odour of the water. The waterworks at Morton Jeffrey may be good but its delivery to the consumer leaves a lot to be desired as reservoirs are dirty and the pipes are old resulting in burst pipes causing leakages. The main holes are abused and this leaves the water dirty. Another area of concern is the seepage of sewage into shallow wells as they have septic tanks on 150-200 square meter stand. When the septic tanks fill up, sewage flows seeping into the water sources as these are shallow wells. This is happening in Chitungwiza. The municipal sewer pipes have long ceased to work. It costs us\$100 to empty the sewer tanks and residents may not have the money for that exercise.

4. **The objective of the water Barometer:** The information is obtained from raw data presented during suburban meetings, Public meetings and other activities that are part of the HRT community penetration strategy in order to improve the quality, accessibility, availability and affordability of water. The Harare Residents Trust (HRT) has been doing the recording of service delivery patterns within suburbs so that it can update residents together with service providers. This will improve the service delivery in Harare Metropolitan Province. The HRT is using the service delivery update tool as a way of engaging service providers.
5. Below is an analysis in the selected suburbs:
  - 5.1. **New Tafara and Mabvuku:** There are about 12 boreholes in New Tafara and five of them are not working. Residents have water three days per week but had three weeks without receiving any council water. The amount residents pay per month is the same whether the meter has been read or not or had water during the period showing that it is irrelevant to have a working meter.

Donnybrooke area, Mabvuku they keep having burst pipes. It is claimed that people in that area have no water so they drill holes into pipes in order to get water. Area D in Mabvuku has a borehole working but the gate to the community centre is always locked, so people have no water access.

5.2. **Kuwadzana** : Kuwadzana 5 the area has only one borehole and long queues can be seen after 2200 hours and as early as 0400hours in the early hours of the morning. The borehole is no longer prolific as the water table has gone down. Houses on the lower side of Kuwadzana 5 have had no water for a week (3-10 December 2015). The two boreholes at two schools are used during school time only. Kuwadzana Extension is supplied with municipal water on daily basis however depending with gradient areas that lie on the higher ground receive water during the night and those that are on low lying areas receive water all day long. They only experience water cuts when Morton Jaffrey Water Works is undergoing maintenance. Residents said water received is best used for all other domestic chores except for cooking and drinking as it smells raw sewer and at times it smells rust, when allowed to settle overnight brownish sediments and other visible impurities can be noticed and if allowed to settle for over three to a weeklong water turns to a greenish colour making it sceptical for residents to even consider the water safe for consumption. Kuwadzana has five boreholes which are stationed at the following points; one is stationed opposite City Council though not working, the other one is stationed near Kuwadzana Satellite Clinic, the other one is at Kuwadzana 8 Primary School, two others are stationed at churches namely Forward In Faith Ministries International (ZAOGA) and Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Zimbabwe (AFM). The boreholes once they have broken down the Member of Parliament, Betty Kaseke and Councillor Resias Masunda take turns to fix them. The water reservoir which supplies water in Kuwadzana has worn out and has an old fashioned ball valve which cannot sustain water pressure and as a result once full water spills over causing damage to the Kuwadzana Extension main road.

5.3. **Highfield**: Houses number 7100 onward have had no water for two months and are relying on water from other houses nearby 6700. Water is dirty smells like fish and sewer, turns green. No boreholes in the area. So they are asking for a borehole at the bus terminus. Residents usually got water from Kwayedza Secondary school but now they cannot access it.

- 5.4. **Mufakose:** Mufakose Area E from late November to early August every year they receive water seven days a week, but from late August to early November water is supplied on daily basis from 6am up to 12 midday. The quality of water is questionable because the water smells of raw fish and at times raw sewer despite that they use it for drinking and all other domestic chores because they believe it is safe as it is treated water. There are six boreholes. Four were drilled by Latter Day Saints and two by Member of Parliament Mrs Thembanj, the boreholes are stationed at the following areas, Mufakose Spar Shop, Along Mupane Road, at Gwinyiro Grounds, Jachacha , Mutsvanzva and at Rutendo hall. The boreholes are failing to effectively cater for all residents of Mufakose Area E because they also cater for residents of Budiriro 5 and most of them have been hijacked by people who are into car wash business. In Mufakose Magandanga the water has a bad odour and when allowed to settle in a container visible green stuff settles also. There are two boreholes stationed next to the hillside along Chiraramhene road and besides Mufakose Spar Shop which were drilled by Latter Day Saints. When water cuts are done no notices are given to residents.
- 5.5. **Budiriro 3:** Water is rusty, turns green, quality of water is bad. One borehole at Chimbumo, residents queue up for water, water table low so it takes time to fill up a bucket. Dumpsite at the borehole and this contaminates water. When the boreholes breaks each resident requested to contribute a dollar to fix them. The borehole is far from most residential houses, making it difficult to for the elderly and People with Disabilities (PWDs) to access water for daily consumption. Sometimes spend three weeks without council water and when it comes it comes for two days a week.
- 5.6. **St Mary's KC:** There are no public boreholes so residents have resorted to digging shallow wells at their respective houses. The problem is there is seepage of sewer water into the shallow wells causing contamination of the water. When they do get the council water it will be dirty, this can be attributed to the rusty, old pipes that the water flows through.
6. **Conclusion:** It is not sustainable to go to the borehole everyday to fetch water for drinking and for household purposes and sometimes long distances are covered for this purpose. The main complaint is the poor water quality and distribution as some suburbs (Northern Suburbs) are not receiving any water. The High Density areas receive more water due to the population in the area

but there are some high density areas that have no water for long periods e.g. Tafara/Mabvuku and Budiro. The report would be incomplete without analysing the City of Harare Billing system. Although malfunctioning meters are being replaced, there are still some areas with meters not working. Residents are continuously receiving high bills from estimates when meter readings would give the amount of water used and the amount to be paid. The unfortunate part is that the water bill is included in the composite bill resulting in the residents being denied their right to water through water disconnections, when they are in arrears in rate payment. Water is Life and cannot be withdrawn at any given time. It is the residents' plea that water is charged separately! The water ceases to be a right when it is not affordable due to the other services added on to the Composite/Water bill.

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