



# CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD WATER DAY 2014

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## Learn About African Action on AIDS (AAA)

AAA is a tax exempt non-profit organization registered in the USA and operating under section 501(c) 3 of the IRS code. It is also registered in Cameroon (auth. No00174/A/MINAT/DAP/SDLP/SAC). It has special consultative status with the United Nations ECOSOC and the UN Department of Information.

AAA's work is based on 3 programmes:

### "JUST KNOW" Campaign emphasizes:

- Knowledge of one's body
- Knowledge that leads to behavior change
- Knowledge that helps to visualize a future without AIDS

### "Health before Wealth" Concept promotes:

- Testing for HIV
- Clean hands ( hand washing stations)
- Clean water (drinking stations)
- Dignified toilets
- Fighting against Malaria (treated mosquito bed nets)
- Vaccination
- Anti wormsmedicin

"Women's economic autonomy" through our Scholarship Programme. This scholarship enables each teenage orphan girl to complete at least a secondary, general or technical education that will lead to financial and economic autonomy, greatly reducing the risk of being infected with HIV through sexual abuse and violence.

In view of the celebration of the World Water Day (March 22), I participated in the screening of the movie **Ru—Water Is Life** today, Monday, March 10, 2014 in Conference Room C, United Nations HQ, New York City 3:00-4:15 PM. This movie is a story about the strength, joy and resilience of the South Sudanese, seen through the eyes of a young girl (JinaKeji), who makes daily trips (1 mile from her house to the well) three times per day, to an unsanitary well, totaling six miles per day. Jina is a 12 years old girl, primary caretaker of five younger siblings and a blind/sickly grandmother. Her mother died of water borne diseases, and her father is in the army. She lives in the Hai Village in South Sudan. With all her responsibilities, she's not able to attend school. Then things change for the better for her, when Water Is Basic (an organization that secures access to safe drinking water to rural poor affected by severe poverty, by using indigenous ideas and resources) completes a safe water borehole project in the village, within reasonable distance from Jina's house. This frees Jina to go back to school.

This documentary is very informative and educational. It is a success story about integrative-collaborative development work. Another important aspect of the documentary is the eloquence with which it depicts the feminization of poverty in the rural areas: it showed a classroom initially full of boys. The girls were not able to go to school until when they received sociological intervention. Then the school became gender integrated.

Finally, some of the panelists stated that: Water is a Human Rights issue; Integrated Water Management should use gender disaggregated data to enable more effective Gender Equality policies through the use of gender specific qualitative and quantitative data; Governments should include gender disaggregated Water & Sanitation Data through UNDESA's Gender Indicators in their national and local planning. The invention of the washing machine in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in the developed world may have fostered the significant increase in the number of women attending college. Promoting indigenous solutions to Water issues should be seriously considered by all development stakeholders.

This brings us closeto **the work of African Action on AIDS in rural Cameroon** including water wells, drinking and hand washing Stations in schools, rural women happily using water wells... *Please see pictures and watch more about AAA water works by clicking on this link*<http://youtu.be/z2bDVjiQON8>

## HAPPY WORLD WATER DAY !

MengueEka–Abila, Representative of African Action on AIDS

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In rural Cameroon - Before the Well



Women enjoying the new AAA well



A water well right in School Campus