Governance of Water and Sanitation for the Peri-urban Poor: Bridging the Gap between Policies and Practices

Adriana Allen
Development Planning Unit
University College London
Why to be concerned?

Living between two worlds
• A large percentage of the future population growth in developing countries will occur in the localised spaces where the urban meets the rural as cities and their impacts spread into outlying areas.

…and yet
• Current national and international initiatives and commitments to improve access to water and sanitation in the developing world tend to neglect the peri-urban context

Beyond the rural-urban dichotomy
• The traditional distinction between urban and rural areas is becoming increasingly blurred and insufficient to capture the reality of a large number of dwellers that live between those areas
What characterises the ‘Peri-urban Interface’?

- **The PUI is a mosaic of ‘natural’, ‘productive’ and ‘urban’ sub-systems**
  Affected by material and energy flows demanded by both rural and urban areas.

- **Heterogeneous and changing social and economic structures**
  Mix of newcomers and long-established dwellers.
  Mix of farming, residential and industrial land uses.
  Diversified livelihoods strategies

- **Fragmented institutional landscape**
  Made worse by rapid change and unclear boundaries and jurisdictions.
The Water-poor in the Peri-urban Interface
A wide spectrum of service providers

Source: Allen (2004:6)
Who will fill in the Gap?

Rapid population and environmental change

Relative lower population densities

Irregular land and housing tenure conditions

Higher distance to centralised wastewater disposal systems

Factors preventing capital intensive solutions

Affordability