

# WASH Digest Newsflash

## April 2018



### WASH Digest 1

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the first Ghana WASH Digest! This is a periodical that seeks to highlight topical sector issues in order to influence dialogue and sector thinking. This maiden edition seeks to outdoor the digest with a snap shot of the Ghana WASH sector and aspects of information shared on sector learning platforms over the 2017 period.

The second (September) and third (December) editions will respectively focus on, (i) the changing financing landscape and the role of local government for citywide sanitation service delivery; and (ii) professionalizing small town water management systems for sustainable service delivery in Ghana.

Happy reading!

# A snap shot of the Ghana WASH sector

Ghana met the drinking water target for the millennium development goals (MDGs) achieving 89% (urban, 93%; rural, 84%), but fell short of the MDG target for improved sanitation achieving 15% coverage (urban, 20%; rural, 9%).

## Access to water services

For water services in Ghana, the population with access to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) standard of *safely managed water*<sup>1</sup> is estimated at 27% (urban 44%; rural 7%). The population with access to *basic services*<sup>2</sup> is estimated at 51% and population with access to *limited services* at 11%<sup>3</sup>; about 5% of the population relies on *unimproved sources* for drinking water while 6% rely on *surface water* sources. The government faces the double challenge of providing access for everyone and improving the level of service to achieve the safely managed standards.

## Access to sanitation and waste management

For sanitation, there are no estimates available for safely managed sanitation; however, the population with access to *basic services*<sup>4</sup> is 14% (urban 19%; rural 9%). The population with *limited service* sanitation<sup>5</sup> is 57%, while 10% of the population rely on *unimproved* sanitation facilities. Overall 19% of the population still practice open defecation (urban 8%; in rural 31%). Ghana faces a significant task in catering for the huge population without access to improved sanitation, and in ensuring that excreta are safely managed.

## Hygiene

Hygiene education and enforcement of regulations have been important tools for improving sanitation behaviour and maintaining public health<sup>6</sup>. Hygiene has multiple dimensions, but the global SDG indicator focuses on the proportion of population with hand washing facilities with soap and water at home (JMP 2017). In Ghana the national population with access to basic hygiene services<sup>7</sup> is 19% (rural, 11%; urban, 25%). About 26 % have limited access, while 55% have no access hygiene (65% rural, 47% urban). This low coverage requires government to strengthen behaviour change communication throughout the country.

## Water resources management

Ghana is well endowed with freshwater resources for current and foreseeable use. However, the amount of water available changes markedly by season and from year to year. Moreover, resources are at risk of depletion and degradation due to: i) Poor agricultural practices, population pressure, deforestation and surface mining; ii) Climate change and climate variability, which makes the river water flow highly variable; and iii) Population growth and urbanisation leading to heavy demand on natural resources, conflicting and competing water uses and pollution. Despite efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for managing water resources, Ghana still faces a number of challenges<sup>8</sup>.

## Governance

Well-elaborated sector policies and strategies remain weak in practice. Lack of a collective vision and operational management framework has been a fundamental impediment to harmonisation and coordination in the WASH sector. Sector mandates are fragmented, leading to overlapping functions and gaps, unclear mandates

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<sup>1</sup> SDG 6.1 defines the indicator for safely managed drinking water services as an improved source accessible on premises, available when needed and free from contamination.

<sup>2</sup> Basic water services are defined as an improved drinking water source within 30 minutes walking distance.

<sup>3</sup> Limited water services are defined as an improved drinking water source more than 30 minutes walking service.

<sup>4</sup> Basic sanitation services are defined an improved facility that is not shared.

<sup>5</sup> Limited sanitation services are defined as shared use of an improved facility.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2010) - National Environmental Sanitation Strategy and Action Plan

<sup>7</sup> Basic hygiene service is defined as population with a handwashing facility with soap and water (observed).

<sup>8</sup> Water Resources Commission (2012) - National Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Plan

and accountability and uncoordinated approaches. The mechanism for tracking the delivery of services and reporting on progress is yet to be fully established.

The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources established in January 2017 will provide leadership, focus and better coordination. However, the Ministry and supporting agencies need to be better integrated. The central role of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) is not always evident.

Private sector participation in water service provision and management is growing, but is hardly visible in water production, distribution and management.

Sector learning has achieved vigorous practice in some areas but there are no mechanisms to systematically distill lessons and feed them into national strategies. Gender and social inclusion policies are top of the agenda, but are not being achieved in practice.

Sustainability continues to be threatened by deep seated institutional and structural bottlenecks, including ineffective operational and financial management, poor asset management, and weak local capacity for managing complex small- town water systems.

## Finance

Ghana has made significant progress in economic growth and development<sup>9</sup>. The shift to lower-middle income status presents complex challenges to institutional responsibilities, system changes aid flows and development partnerships.

There is a significant shortfall in WASH sector investment to meet national and international commitments which have hitherto had been funded with grants and concessional loans. Budgets and resources are insufficient to show tangible impact on the ground. Over the last eight years, less than 50% of allocated sector funds have been disbursed.

Sustainability is also threatened by unrealistic tariffs, negative attitudes towards payment, inadequate post construction finance, and lack of focus on demand and pro-poor issues.

## Emerging trends

Ongoing changes in policy and strategic realignment in the WASH sector include reassignment of departments and agencies from other ministries to the new Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, namely Ghana Water Company limited (GWCL), Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Water Resources Commission (WRC), the Water Directorate, the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate (EHSD) and the schools of hygiene.

Scenarios for the future role and function of the CWSA in the rural water subsector level were outlined following the organisational assessment in 2017,<sup>10</sup> including the need to professionalise the management of water supply schemes especially for small towns and larger piped networks, reconsider roles in the rural water delivery chain, and extend regulations to rural areas, especially for water quality.

The Government is working to create a National Sanitation Authority to drive change<sup>11</sup>. This follows the November 2017 [presidential launch](#) of the National Sanitation Campaign (NSC) with a number of policy

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<sup>10</sup> Conducted by IRC, CWSA and MSWR

<sup>11</sup> A comparative analysis of similar bodies has commissioned by the MSWR and WSUP; Rural Operational Sanitation Research - UNICEF/ MSWR are conducting research to strengthen the evidence base for the review of the Rural Sanitation Model and Strategy; Kingdom of the Netherlands through UNICEF has launched a € 5.9 million Euros

initiatives and directives. These included, i) Establishment of the National Sanitation Authority; ii) Establishment of National Sanitation Fund; iii) Establishment of a National Sanitation Brigade, made up of Ghanaian youth, to enforce sanitation laws nationwide; iv) Development of three new material recovery sites for the recovery and recycling of waste from Accra; v) Deployment of automatic sweepers for major streets; and vi) Sanitation Ambassadors to be appointed to support the campaign.

The other presidential directives included: vii) Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) and Attorney General's office to set aside a day to try sanitation offenses; viii) The government to adequately resource waste management companies with modern and effective tools for their work; ix) All government departments and agencies to assign two officers - sanitation marshals and deputy marshals, to ensure the compliance to sanitation by-laws; x) Local government charged to ensure adherence to the one-house-one-toilet policy; and xi) The evaluation and monitoring minister to publish Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assembly's (MMDAs) sanitation performances quarterly.

### **Reactions to emerging issues and conclusion**

However, these sanitation policy initiatives are viewed by many stakeholders as key milestones that need to be detailed out and implemented to the letter, as remarked by the IRC Ghana Country Director, "The enormous task of implementation will require the same level of political leadership, effective coordination, resources to convert the proposed policy initiatives into tangible impact on the ground, as well as a reliable mechanism for tracking delivery, use of services and reporting on progress." On behalf of Ghana's Development Partners, a representative of UNICEF commended government for the NSD initiative and proposed three key issues for consideration: sustaining the campaign, funding that should be targeted at the poor who critically need improved sanitation services and key performance indicators to track progress towards impact and results.

The MSWR and its agencies need to find institutional alignment with MMDAs, other ministries and other sector stakeholders and to pursue organisational and sector change management. Hopefully the Minister for Monitoring and Evaluation will monitor the NSC and other WASH initiatives to ensure that the goals are attained and the journey towards SDG 6 is unimpeded.

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## **Learning event products**

**WASH Reflections:** [A review of the national level learning alliance platform discussions and recommendations](#)

**Mole Conference (Special Edition):** [Mole Special Edition is a review of discussion and decision points that came up at the WASH sector CSO learning event \(October 2-6, 2017\)](#)

**Stocktaking Forum (Special Edition):** [Basic sanitation stocktaking forum 2017 special edition is a review of learning exchanges and decision points at the 2017 Annual National Basic Sanitation Stocktaking Forum \(July 9-14, 2017\)](#)

## **Sector publications**

**Innovative financing** [for capital maintenance expenditure in small towns water systems in three districts in Ghana: Akatsi South, East Gonja and Kintampo South districts](#)

**A study on drivers and barriers to coordination** [and harmonisation of water service delivery at the district level: findings from Bongo and Sunyani West districts](#)

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Project aimed at improving access to sanitation with a focus on urban areas. This includes developing and urban sanitation strategy and The World Bank with the MSWR through the GAMA Sanitation and Water Project for Ghana aims to strengthen management of environmental sanitation in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)

**Achieving full coverage** [and sustainable water service provision: the needs and gaps.](#)

If you would like to feature your publication or organization's materials or suggest other content for upcoming issues of WASH Digest, please send them to RCN, at [rcn@washghana.net](mailto:rcn@washghana.net). Don't forget to check out the RCN website, [www.washghana.net](http://www.washghana.net) for additional information and WASH updates.