

MOLE XX Communiqué

We, the participants of Mole XX Conference, held in Ho, Volta Region, from 14-18th July, 2009, on the theme “Twenty years of multi-stakeholder dialogue in Ghana: the state of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene”

Reaffirming our commitment to fulfilling the needs of the poor and the fight against poverty in the knowledge that the provision of sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services in a coherent and properly coordinated environment is a prudent and essential step towards poverty alleviation and socio-economic development,

Noting that the Mole Series has, over the past 20 years, contributed a great deal to sector dialogue, knowledge and the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services to the people of Ghana and has thus been acknowledged as a very useful platform,

Recognising that a number of pertinent issues still have to be vigorously addressed if Ghana is to attain the goals set for water, sanitation and hygiene,

Do hereby agree to the conclusions of the conference and issue this communiqué as follows:

1. Moving Mole Forward

We will sustain and improve on the Mole Conference Series through financial contributions from civil society, sector actors and partners to ensure even better planning and raise the standard of organization by including innovative activities such as field trips, inclusion of more voices from those that we serve, as well as political authorities at the local level and parliament.

2. Sector coordination

We pledge to consolidate the gains made through improved sector coordination, and to collectively work towards improving it through compliance with and respect for sector policies, regulations and standards;

3. Tracking the achievement of water and sanitation: Country Status Overviews

We have taken note of the requirement for African countries to report their water and sanitation actions to the Summit of the African Union (AU) through the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) and urge Government, civil society and all water and sanitation actors to fully participate in the country dialogues that will lead to the finalisation of Ghana's Country Sector Overview report on water and sanitation to be submitted to the AU in 2010;

4. Improving efficiency of water use

We recognise the significant impact that savings in water use can make on the lives of the poor and the unserved population and express support for the development and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes and the enactment of requisite legislation to promote water-saving devices and practices;

5. International commitments

We reaffirm our commitment to constantly engage in dialogue with Government to ensure that Government fulfils its international commitments to water, sanitation and hygiene;

6. Data harmonization

We have taken note of the fact that there are different types and sources of sector data to meet the specific requirements of the user which demands that there should be intensified stakeholder education on the efficient selection and use of data;

We further request that all sector stakeholders - including provider agencies and data gatherers – agree and/or comply with common definitions on sector parameters to reduce the current disparity in numbers so as to inform better sector planning and investments;

7. Private community partnerships

We have taken note of the laudable private initiatives aimed at improving access to water and sanitation services to low income communities and urge Government and its agencies to evaluate and draw lessons from them;

We further urge proponents and managers of these initiatives to seek dialogue with the appropriate agencies and ensure that their processes and practices are in line with existing policies, strategies and standards;

8. Management of small town water supply facilities

We urge the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to speed up the establishment of the District Works Department as stipulated under the Local Government Services Secretariat Act to ensure proper monitoring and supervision of the activities of Water and Sanitation Development Boards by Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), among others;

We have further taken note of the several challenges facing the operation and maintenance of small town water systems, including the negative impact of the high cost of power in the determination of tariffs, non-payment of utility bills by Government institutions and external interferences in the operations of water boards, and propose the following for the consideration of Government and its agencies:.

- a. Provide a special rate of tariffs for power used in the operations of small town water systems;
- b. Pay utility bills promptly, failing which Water Boards shall have authority to disconnect service to defaulting institutions, with the exception of essential facilities such as hospitals and schools;
- c. Reduce undue interference in the operations of small towns water systems through the enforcement of the bye-laws governing the establishment of Water Boards ;

We further request Government agencies, District Assemblies, CONIWAS members and academic institutions to support the development of the capacity of the Association of Water and Sanitation Boards and its members;

9. Knowledge Management

We urge various institutions and projects promoting knowledge management to develop capacity for effective knowledge sharing to enable the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector make the required impact at the local level.

We further encourage all sector institutions to set aside a budget for knowledge management in their operations;

10. Commitment to Hygiene

We have taken note of the low level of commitment towards Hygiene, and propose the development of a comprehensive Hygiene Education strategy by the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate;

11. Commitment to Gender

We have observed that Gender is not given adequate priority and attention and urge the encouragement of gender disaggregation in data analyses, planning and decision making by all sector institutions;

12. Urban Water Delivery

We request Ghana Water Company Ltd (GWCL) and Aqua Viten Rand Ltd (AVRL) to ensure customer satisfaction by making services reliable, affordable, and of good quality and respond promptly to customer complaints;

We further request Government, GWCL and the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) to ensure financial sustainability of the sub-sector through the reduction of non-revenue water, increase in collection ratio, and value-for-money audits and impose or demand stiffer punishment for people involved in mal-practices;

We also call upon government and development partners, as well as non-traditional actors, to increase investments in the urban water sub-sector so as to meet the needs of the poor and un-served communities.

Issued in Ho, Volta Region, 18th July 2009