

## WASH Stakeholders Encouraged to Adopt and Adapt the SDG-PSS to Track SDG 6

Madam Lisa Guppy of the United Nations University – Institute of Water, Environment and Health has expressed the urgent need for stakeholders in the WASH sector to build synergies to ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources and the provision of sanitation for all by 2030. She said achieving such a feat would require stakeholders to analyse their systems to identify the gaps and challenges in their domestic policies and work towards addressing them.

The United Nations University-Institute of Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the Korean Environment Corporation (KECO), the Korea Ministry of Environment and Water Research Institute (WRI) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in collaboration with the Resource Centre Network (RCN) hosted the 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of the National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP 60) to introduce the international project “Water in the World We Want” and the SDG Policy Support System (SDG PSS) to stakeholders. The topic on which they shared was “Water in the World We Want and WASH Related SDGs in Ghana.” The Executive Secretary of Water Resources Commission (WRC) Mr. Ben Ampomah chaired the event and Lisa Guppy of UNU-INWEH gave an “Overview of SDG 6 and Water in the World We Want” project. There were other presentations on the themes “National Drinking Water Quality Management Framework,” “Water Quality and Public Health-Current Trends,” and “Current status and policy priorities for water related SDGs in Ghana” by Madam Suzzy Abaidoo of Ministry Sanitation and Water Resources, Dr. A.Y. Karikari of Water Research Institute and Dr. Felix Addo-Yobo of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) respectively.



“Water and sanitation are intertwined and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets of water required that there is collaboration and cooperation among WASH sector actors-government, CSOs, and NGOs” Madam Guppy emphasized. Expanding on the SDGs, she indicated that the SDG process was different from the MDG, explaining that during the MDG period there were minimal or no international processes or tools available across countries to assess the progress, and the focus was also primarily on developing countries. According to her tools have been developed to measure the progress of the newly adopted SDGs and these tools are universally acceptable and adaptable.

In order for the other SDGs targets to be achieved, Madam Guppy said there was the need for efforts to be made in shaping policies at the national level to ensure that all the water related SDGs were monitored to ensure that they were on track. She also called on governments to define their own national targets and priorities within the general SDG process and work assiduously on those that they can realistically achieve by 2030 and be mindful of the need to regularly report on progress.

On evidence for decision making, Madam Guppy said there was the need for a more credible water and sanitation evidence to inform policy making, as well as drive advocacy, stimulate political commitment, inform decision making, and trigger investments.

Touching on the SDG Policy Support System (SDG PSS) Madam Lisa Guppy said the system was a generic policy support system which recognised existing tools, initiatives and systems and simply draws these existing processes together to address gaps or challenges identified and then put

them together for policy or decision making at the national and organizational level.

She said the SDG PSS was accessible to interested individuals and organisations in Ghana to guide them in their work, adding that the SDG PSS had seven components and Ghana might not require all the components, but would need to tweak the system to suit its local needs. For the system to become enriched and relevant to institutional and national needs, Madam Guppy said it was critical for stakeholders to engage to contribute ideas to make it reflect the changing times. She said the project was ready to support Ghana in tracking the progress of the SDG 6 implementation, adding that Ghana required an evidence-based policy to ensure sustainable and accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

Dr. Felix Yobo of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) said the NDPC provided the context in relation to planning for the implementation of the SDGs in Ghana, indicating that the introductory section of the SDG Agenda 2030 entreats countries to implement the SDGs taking into consideration, their specific context, their level of development, resources, aspirations and capabilities, emphasizing, “Inasmuch as a global framework, it needs to be localized and Ghana is taking that seriously.” Dr. Yobo said the NDPC was the lead agency fronting SDG PSS project in Ghana and how to make sure that the SDGs were fused into the country’s local plans.

NDPC according Dr. Yobo had adopted the approach to aligning issues in the SDGs framework that were consistent with Ghana’s development plans and aspiration. Aside, the NDPC was also identifying the inconsistencies/gaps and putting the needed strategies to address them. The SDG alignment process, Dr. Yobo explained had been done in respect of Ghana’s Medium Term Framework- Ghana Shared Development Agenda 2 (GSDA-2). He said about 70% of the SDG targets were reflected in the GSDA which demonstrated that most of the things Ghana was doing were consistent with the SDG and that was a good starting point to build on and ensure the achievement of the SDGs. Additionally, the NDPC was adapting some of the SDG targets and indicators to its development planning. Dr. Yobo said some of the SDG indicators were being worked on to ensure that they reflect on Ghana’s national aspiration and once they are done with them, these indicators would be drafted into the medium term framework. The SDG according the NDPC was also being implemented within the context of Ghana’s 40-Year Development Plan and that the first part of the long term plan would be heavily influenced by the SDGs.

### Drinking Water Quality Management Framework

Giving highlights on Ghana’s Drinking Water Quality Management Framework, Madam Suzzy Abaidoo of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources said the framework was to address the high water and sanitation related disease burden, including cholera outbreaks which constitute 70%

of OPD cases in Ghana (OECD, 2007), strengthen coordination among institutions responsible for drinking water quality management and prepare Ghana towards the post-MDG agenda, which had strong focus on safe water access.

Madam Abaidoo explained that Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources was supported in 2012 by UNICEF to carry out a rapid assessment of the Water Quality Status and its management in Ghana.

The purpose of the assessment was to:

- i) Identify the challenges and gaps in the existing drinking water quality management
- ii) Make recommendations to address the identified challenges and gaps
- iii) Formulate a National Drinking Water Quality Management Framework
- iv) Specify capacity needs related to policy, tools, logistics and expertise for effective operationalization of the framework.

The following findings were made after the assessment was conducted on the Water Quality Status and its management in Ghana: The study revealed that:

- A number of drinking water quality parameters did not conform with standards which was a threat to public health.
- Institutions carried out their mandates without formalized coordination
- Water quality of self-supplies, vendors and tanker water suppliers were not effectively and consistently monitored.
- The national drinking-water quality standards did not provide risk-based approach as a requirement for the water supplier.
- The District Assemblies (DAs) were in-charge of ensuring water safety with coordination and support from regional and national level relevant organizations
- The DAs lacked clear and consistent guidelines for drinking-water quality management and were mostly under resourced, constrained with inadequate staff capacity and characterized by weak collaboration and coordination with other sector organizations.
- Independent water quality check was not practiced, except few spontaneous checks by PURC that was limited to water supply by Ghana Water Company Limited in urban areas.
- The Disaster Management Plans at district level were not regularly updated and most of DAs did not have the necessary emergency supplies in place.
- The overall drinking-water quality management followed the traditional reactive approach (not risk based) where action were taken based on the results of water quality tests. A major limitation of that traditional approach was that water quality results were only available after exposure had taken place.

### Water Quality and Public Health

Making a presentation on Water Quality and Public Health, Dr. Anthony Y. Karikari and Mr. Mark Osa Akrong said the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had a universal goal of ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoyed peace and prosperity, while the SDG 6 addressed the issues of drinking water, sanitation, hygiene, and the quality and sustainability of water resources worldwide.

According the WRI, about 6.6 billion people representing 91 % of the global population in 2015 used an improved drinking water source, while about 663 million used unimproved water sources. Also, about 1.8 billion people in 2012 were exposed to drinking water sources contaminated with faecal matter. WRI said about 4.9 billion people globally in 2015 used an improved

sanitation facility with an estimated 946 million people reported to have lacked adequate sanitation facilities. In 2011, 41 countries were said to have experienced water stress, hindering the sustainability of natural resources, as well as economic and social development.

### Recommendations

Stakeholders at the end of the 61<sup>st</sup> NLLAP session recommended that:

- The SDG PSS should adopted and adapted to suit the Ghana's local and national context.
- Ghana should address the soft issues of development such as work ethics, work values, attitudes at work places while working towards the achievement of the SDGs
- WASH stakeholders should galvanize themselves and provide more compelling evidence to Government in order shape Government policies towards achieving the SDG targets.
- Stakeholders in the WASH sector should collaborate with each other frequently to share lessons and best practices in order to scale up these best practices.
- The NDPC should involve all stakeholders especially WASH sector actors in the process of aligning the SDGs with Ghana's Long Term Development Plan.
- Indicators for monitoring Water Quality should be incorporated into SIS
- A MoU should be signed with stakeholder institutions in water quality management to improve collaboration.

### Conclusion

In his closing remarks, the Executive Secretary of the Water Resources Commission (WRC) Mr. Ben Ampomah encouraged stakeholders in Ghana to adopted and adapt the Sustainable Development Goal Policy Support System (SDG PSS) since it was user friendly and generic. He said one advantage of the SDG PSS is its flexibility and urged stakeholders to tweak the system by adding more components that are suitable the Ghanaian context to enable them monitor the implementation of the SDGs effectively.

Mr. Ampomah explained further that it was critical to unpack the system also to develop and find a way to have an agreeable system to suite Ghana's local and national contexts.

On use and management of water bodies, Mr. Ampomah indicated that it was the business of everybody in managing the water resources. The Executive Secretary of WRC said the WRC was in the process of turning all water reservoirs into security zones and very soon water would be treated as a security resource. He said a security post had been created at the Weija River. He also advised stakeholders to take a look at the Ghana Living Standard Survey Reports as there were a number of results and outcomes on water related issues critical for decision making.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the Korean Environment Corporation (KECO) and the Ministry of Environment (MOE) from the Republic of Korea, and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development and the Water Research Institute (WRI) for bringing the forum to Ghana and urged stakeholders in the WASH sector to contribute effectively to enrich the SDG PSS for the benefit of all countries.

The NLLAP is a WASH sector multi stakeholder platform with the overall goal of improving sector learning and dialogue. It is hosted by the Ghana WASH Resource Centre Network (RCN). The platform offers learning and sharing opportunity for sector players as one of the practical approaches to improving sector engagements/sharing with the long term aim of achieving a knowledge driven WASH sector that delivers quality and sustainable services in Ghana. NLLAP meetings take place on the last Thursday of every month and opened to all interested parties. The discussions of each NLLAP meetings are summarized and shared with wider WASH community. The topics of upcoming meetings are decided on by the RCN secretariat and a list of upcoming meetings can be found on the RCN website [www.washghana.net](http://www.washghana.net).

If you are interested to propose a topic for a meeting please contact us on,

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