

## Give Sanitation More Attention-WASH Sector Actors Advocate

Stakeholders in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector at the 66<sup>th</sup> National Level Learning Alliance Platform (NLLAP) meeting have called for deliberate attention to be given to sanitation in the country if Ghana wanted to make gains towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 6. Stakeholders were unanimous on the need for government to begin to prioritize funding for sanitation through adequate budget allocation.

*The 66<sup>th</sup> NLLAP took place at the Coconut Grove Hotel, Accra, on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 on the theme: Opportunities for Knowledge Sharing Partnership Development via the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance. Madam Ruth Miskelly of WaterAid UK took participants through the "Opportunities for Knowledge Sharing and Partnership Development via the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance," and Mr. Kweku Quansah of the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) shared the "Strategic Priorities of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR)". NLLAP 66 was chaired by the Head of People and OD of WaterAid Ghana (WAG) Madam Antoinette Shor-Anyawoe.*



Participants bemoaned the low prioritization of WASH activities at the local and national levels and that they indicated was manifested in the low budget allocation for WASH activities especially liquid waste management. They said for instance MMDAs invested less than 1% of their budget on sanitation and there was weak coordination of sanitation activities at the decentralized level. Also identified as a major challenge to winning the sanitation battle, was the policy inconsistencies in the implementation of sanitation activities and indicated for instance, the policy of no subsidy for rural sanitation and subsidy for urban sanitation.

In her introductory remarks Madam Ruth Miskelly of WaterAid UK said the Sustainable Sanitation Alliance (SuSanA) was a global knowledge management and collaboration platform established in 2007 to support national-level sanitation sector actors to invigorate efforts towards the attainment of international development goals by promoting a systems approach to sanitation especially the SDG 6 sanitation targets.

Madam Miskelly said Ghana was chosen for the SuSanA initiative due to the strengths identified among sanitation sector actors in Ghana which could assist other countries towards SDG 6 attainment. Adding that it was an opportunity for the SuSanA project to illustrate how Knowledge Management could support the achievement of the new 2018 - 2022 Strategy of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources.

Expanding further the SuSanA initiative, Madam Miskelly said the WASH sector would be supported in Ghana through a well-supported and coordinated knowledge management initiatives at

the national level in a 2 way partnership and knowledge sharing cycles and therefore urged sanitation actors to share their expertise with global sanitation actors using the SuSanA platforms.

The SuSanA initiative, Madam Miskelly explained currently has 311 partner organisations, 8000 members and 13 Working Groups sharing knowledge through;

- Online Discussion Forum
- Monthly webinars
- Thematic Discussions
- Factsheet Development
- Face-to-face meetings and
- SuSanA library

### **Membership and Resources**

The Project Lead of the SuSanA initiative Madam Miskelly said the SuSanA platform has a large number of resources (2300 documents in SuSanA library, Project Database) available to all sector actors and therefore called on sectors to register to become members and partners to help shore up the reach of knowledge products and services to all sanitation actors.

### **Partnership Opportunities Under the SuSanA Initiative**

Partnerships under the SuSanA initiative would focus on:

- Addressing the knowledge gaps that exist in the sanitation sector to ensure Increased efficiency for more rapid progress as well as make impact more measurable to merit funding
- Individual topical knowledge sharing partnerships facilitated between SuSanA and Ghanaian sector actors through technical support on specific tasks, internships and mentoring.

### **Key Strengths identified in the Sanitation Sector**

The following were identified as key strengths with the sanitation sector in Ghana;

- Prioritization of WASH by the Government with the creation of the Sanitation and Water Resources Ministry.
- Some best practices in the management of sanitation facilities (public toilet and urinal facilities) by private sector actors
- Existing learning and knowledge management platforms such as the National Level Alliance Platform, Mole Conference, National Sanitation Stocktaking Forum
- Existing comprehensive policies on sanitation

### Knowledge Gaps Identified in the Sanitation Sector

- Inadequate information on standards and strategies for managing sanitation facilities
- Lack of transparency and accountability in the management sanitation facilities in the country.
- Low prioritization of sanitation especially, liquid waste management.
- Low prioritization of funding for sanitation intervention
- Low sensitization on sanitation bye-laws
- Lack of enforcement of sanitation bye-laws and regulations.
- Socio-cultural beliefs and practices
- Low investment in sanitation research and development
- Weak coordination in the sanitation sector leading to duplication of efforts among actors
- Low recognition of indigenous knowledge and community participation in sanitation activities design and implementation
- Inadequate knowledge of the general public on the various sanitation financing models available
- Weak linkage and engagement between private sector, government and CSOs.
- Low incentives from government to motivate the private sector to invest in sanitation sector.
- Inconsistencies in policy implementation (subsidies for urban sanitation and no subsidy for rural sanitation)
- Low prioritization of sanitation at the household and community level due to poverty.

### Stakeholders at the end of the session suggested the following actions to be considered in order to improve sanitation in the country;

- That, all sanitation facilities should be designed to conform to the beliefs and practices of community members
- WASH sector should increase awareness on improved sanitation by working closely with the media to designed and implement social and behaviour change messages to effect the appropriate behaviour among the general public to improve sanitation especially open defecation.
- Government and leadership at the local level should demonstrate political will and commitment by enforcing sanitations and bye-laws to help improve sanitation in the country.
- Government should prioritize sanitation financing by allocating adequate budget for sanitation improvement.
- Government should correct the policy inconsistencies that currently exist between rural and urban sanitation by streamlining these policies.
- Government should incentivize the private sector to invest in the sanitation sector through tax holidays and prize inducement.

- That, Government should institutionalize knowledge management and learning by mainstreaming it into its activities and operations
- That, Government should begin to budget for knowledge management and learning in the sector in order to make sector learning and knowledge management sustainable.
- That, the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, WaterAid Ghana and the Resource Centre Network coordinate should coordinate the SuSanA partnership on sector learning and knowledge management in Ghana while the MoSWR and the Technical Working Group exercising an oversight responsibility over the partnership.

Mr. Kweku Quansah of the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources in a presentation detailing the strategic priorities of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources said the Government was poised to improve the sanitation situation in the country through the promotion of decentralized sewerage system for high density communities where, and the promote the acquisition and use of household toilets through effective enforcement of bye-laws as well as review and upscale the rural sanitation Model and Strategy.

Mr. Quansah also indicated that, Government was working assiduously to enhance learning and knowledge management through research and development of appropriate technologies for urban/rural peri-urban areas.

On hygiene promotion, Mr. Quansah said the Ministry was reviewing the country's approach to hygiene education and enforcement Regime and that Government would soon roll out innovative and creative behaviour change campaigns and programmes as well as put in place strong regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

According Mr. Quansah, the sanitation sector did not need to reinvent the wheel by initiating new policies, since the sector had all the relevant documents, policies and strategies and stated that the challenge faced in the country had to do with implementation and therefore called on all sector players to support the Ministry with all the needed technical expertise to implement policies that would help improve sanitation in the country.

In her concluding remarks, the Head of People and OD of WaterAid Ghana (WAG) Madam Antoinette Shor-Anyawoe expressed her delight about the SuSanA initiative, adding that WaterAid had become more deliberate in the way it wanted to tackle the sanitation in the country in order to sustain the gains towards the achievement of the SDGs 6. She said the SuSanA initiative was not to duplicate efforts, but to multiply the learning platforms towards sanitation improvement in the country.

*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 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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