

Royal hosting of the 22nd Mole conference



The 22nd edition of the Mole Conference (9th to 13th August, 2011), which focused on the theme, "Towards decentralized Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Service Delivery; Challenges and Lessons" received a royal hosting by the chiefs and people of the Western Region of Ghana.

Hon. Alban Bagbin, Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing (MWRWH), officially opened the Conference under the distinguished patronage and chairmanship of Nana Kwesi Agyemang IX, the Paramount Chief of Lower Dixcove in Busua near Takoradi. In a keynote address delivered by Dr. Al-Hassan Sumani, the Director of Water at the MWRWH, the Minister acknowledged the key role of the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in sector development processes. He congratulated Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS)

for sustaining the Mole Conference series for the past 21 years; and urged them to strengthen the learning component. The Minister also commended the organizers for focusing on a very important aspect of the WASH development agenda, decentralized WASH services delivery, this year.

Delivering the theme address, Dr. Esther Ofei Aboagye of the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) shared insights and concluded that the trends in Ghana are mainly towards a decentralized, multi-sectoral, demand-driven and private-sector oriented approach to WASH services delivery. The effectiveness of this approach, according to her was measured by the extent to which the poor have had sustainable voice in the decision making processes for WASH service delivery within the context of decentralisation.

In the theme address presented on

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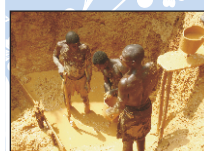
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EDITORIAL: Concern over multiplicity of meetings

The Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) is concerned about the multiplicity of meetings and duplicity of forums in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. Farouk Braimah, Vice Chair of CONIWAS, made this clear when he welcomed participants to the twenty-second edition of the Mole conference. Similarly, WaterAid In Ghana expressed concern over the inaction with regards to past conference communiqués, and challenged organizers of Mole to device means of monitoring communiqués with clear indicators, so as to avoid repetition and make real progress. This editorial focuses on these concerns and the possible way forward.

Admittedly, a week barely passes without one meeting or the other in the WASH sector. Compared to other sectors the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector maybe well ahead, when it comes to platforms for learning and sharing ideas and experiences. Should we be concerned over this development or rather uphold and encourage organizers of these meetings to focus on answering the key questions of coordination, documentation and reflection among others?

It is significant to note that meetings, forums or other forms of social engagements are important channels of dissemination, action research and developments, where reflective monitoring can also be vigorously applied. It is important to stress on documentation and communiqué monitoring if we want to make progress and avoid duplication.

Indeed, much as Mr. Braimah was worried about the scattered approaches and meetings, he recognized the great strides the sector made in recent years through some of these meetings. According to him,

“There have been increasing number of positive steps and initiatives ...in the water and sanitation sector since the last Mole conference was held. We can recount the National Environmental Sanitation Policy that was reviewed and approved in 2010. The WASH sector has seen a tremendous development in the learning and sharing through the National Learning Alliance Platforms, the Ghana Water Forums and the National Environmental Sanitation Conference”.

“At the same time the sector is striving to ensure effective coordination of these activities and resources through the

progress of conference outcomes with the responsibility to report back at subsequent conference sessions.

This recommendation was basically complementing some suggestions from Mole XXI which was held in Accra in 2010. At that particular edition, participants urged that civil society organisations should work with their partners to ensure that project proposals are done in consonance with national systems to fit into National Programmes.

It was emphasized that sector interventions cannot be effective when



Participants of Mole 22.

development of the sector wide approach. The sector strategic development plan is now being prepared, and the sector capacity assessment is also underway. There is also a sector working group that acts as the apex body for ensuring these things happen.” Mr. Braimah added.

Considering these concerns in the three-day deliberations, participants of the conference in a communiqué adopted at the close of Mole XXII, agreed that a communiqué monitoring team should be set up to develop a monitoring plan with time-bound indicators to track

they are carried out by actors operating in solitude. The need for the integration of water governance institutions into existing governmental/decentralised institutions and a clear definition of roles and responsibilities cannot be overemphasized. This will definitely prevent duplication of efforts and improve efficiency.

Likewise, civil society actors can make more impact by working together. Lastly, improving harmonization and alignment will strengthen learning and enhance adaptive capacity of the WASH sector in Ghana.

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her behalf by David Osei-Wusu of the ILGS, Dr. Aboagye stated that the institutionalisation of decentralisation through the transfer of power and authority including political, administrative, legal and fiscal responsibilities from the centre to local levels of government has been a major development strategy for countries. According to her the theoretical and empirical evidence suggest that when effectively implemented, decentralization facilitates improvement in the level and quality of local services; improvements in revenue generation; better matching of local services to the preferences of local constituencies; and greater accountability.

"In Ghana, the District Assemblies are the vehicles for promoting socio-economic development at the Local Level. The concept has helped local government authorities to provide the impetus for sustained community-driven development" she added. Dr. Aboagye also examined the extent to which WASH

services delivery had engaged seriously with the decentralization process to involve the communities for whom the benefits are intended. She also touched on the challenges and lessons in the efforts to provide continuous, reliable and affordable WASH services.

Earlier on the Western Regional Minister, represented by his Deputy, Hon. Emelia Arthur and the chair of CONIWAS took turns to welcome participants to the region and another edition of the Mole conference respectively. Short solidarity messages were delivered by a number of sector institutions including Water Aid in Ghana, Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Unicef on behalf of Development Partners, Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate of MLGRD and the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing among others.

Nana Kwesi Agyemang IX supported by Hon. Emelia Arthur, Dr. Al-Hassan Sumani and Mr. Demedeme, Ag. Head, Environmental Health

Division of the Ministry of Local Govt. & Rural Dev't. later opened the Mole XXII Conference Exhibition amid local cultural display, music and dancing. The exhibition had CWSA, PURC, Relief International, CHF International, Polytank, CONIWAS Secretariat, the Sanitation Working Group/TREND, and the RCN and partners among others displaying a wide range of information products, technologies and approaches.

The conference officially ended under the chairmanship of the paramount chief of Busua with a 17 point communiqué (see back of inside page) after three days of interactive deliberations. The annual platform, named after the venue of the maiden edition, Mole in the Northern Region of Ghana, was as usual organised by the Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) and brought together over 160 sector practitioners from NGOs, Government, Private Operators, Networks, CBOs, CSOs, among others.

– Abu Wumbei/RCN

Ghana sets new record: No guinea worm case in a year

Ghana has carved a niche as a pacesetter, especially in the West African sub-region. It can be confidently said that Ghana will not hand over its pace-setting role to any other country, especially after becoming the only country not to have reported even a single case of Dracunculiasis (Guinea Worm) in a year.

Besides, Ghana is the only country to have reduced reported Guinea Worm cases from above 3,000 to zero within three years.

From the experiences of 16 countries that have embarked on guinea worm eradication, the average number of years it takes any country to reduce cases from 3,000 to zero is eight-and-

half years. But Ghana was able to reduce the number of reported cases from 3,338 in 2007 to zero in May 2010,



Jim Niquette making a presentation at the conference.

slashing off more than five years.

"There hasn't been a case since May 2010. We don't think there is any more," Jim Niquette, now Director of Water in Africa Through Everyday Responsiveness (WATER) said at Mole

XXII. Mr Niquette formerly worked on the Ghana Guinea Worm Eradication Programme (GWEP) when he was with the Carter Centre.

What we already know

Participants of Mole XXI, which took place in Accra in 2010, will recall that as of June 2010 only eight cases had been reported.

In an update on the Guinea Worm Eradication Programme (GWEP) in Ghana, participants were informed that from January-June 2010, eight cases were reported compared to 228 cases reported over the same period of 2009. This represented a 96% reduction. A total of 242 cases were recorded at the

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Mole Recognises Six WASH Personalities

Mr. Minta Aboagye, the immediate past Director of Water at the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (MWRWH) and five other WASH personalities were recognised at Mole 22 for their invaluable contribution to the development of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector, and the Mole series in particular. It is said that a nation that does not recognize its heroes (and of course heroines) is not worth dying for. Perhaps this was what informed the decision of CONIWAS to recognise the contribution of the six personalities.

The other five awardees were Hon. Edem Asimah, Member of Parliament for South Dayi in the Volta Region, Ms. Aoife Gibbons of CIDA and former DP lead, Mr. Kwabena Sarpong Manu, a private Consultant and CEO of Mime Consult, Mrs. Theodora Adomako-Adjei, Extension Services Coordinator of the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), and Ms. Cecilia Mensah of Pronet South. Each of the awardees received a citation and a parcel (undisclosed content).

Mr. Aboagye was thankful for the recognition and stated that he felt more energized and encouraged than ever before. He added that though in retirement, he was ever willing to support the sector in any capacity where his services will be needed as long he has the strength.

Hon. Asimah, Ms. Aoife and Mr. K. S. Manu were not present in person and had their awards received on their behalf by Seyram Asimah of Trend, Patrick Moriarty of IRC Ghana and Asante Sarkodie of MWRWH/WSMP respectively.

Mr. K. S. Manu, sent a statement to be read on his behalf. It read "My

sub-sector." She stated.

Mrs. Cecilia Mensah, whose contribution to the Mole series spans a period of 20 years was the next to receive her award. She stated after receiving her award, "I am very surprised... I thank CONIWAS," She then counseled: "I will advise each and everyone here that whenever you are called upon to work, do your best and I know that you will be rewarded. Amen!"

In his closing remarks, the chair for the night, Mr. Othniel Habila of UNICEF recounted the enormous contribution and support of Mr. Aboagye to the sector, to the coordination and harmonization efforts, and to the DP group over the years. He admitted that on each occasion of

his interaction with Mr. Aboagye he appeared to be on top of issues and manages every situation with a touch of humour, foresight and diplomacy. He commended the organizers for such an appropriate and timely award.



Mr. Othniel Habila of UNICEF presents the award to Mr. Minta Aboagye.

special message to CONIWAS and WASH fraternity is let us all be advocates for transparency and accountability and ensure that every pesewa or penny meant for the WASH sector is actually used to improve on the WASH situation in the country and together we all will work towards ending WASH poverty in our country and in all our continent. I thank everybody."

Mrs. Theodora Adomako-Adjei, seemed pleasantly surprised when her name was mentioned for the award. "What can I say? I thank all of you for recognizing my efforts in the sector and specifically towards the Mole series. Thank you for this award. This will strengthen me and encourage me to continue to promote extension issues in the



Mrs Vida Duti of IRC Ghana shares sustainability perspective with the Civil Society Organisation.

Oil and gas impact - A case for prioritizing WASH

Without doubt, the hottest topic for discussion in Ghana is oil. Everywhere, every time, you will find individual or a group of Ghanaians discussing the management, the politics, the revenues, the impacts, etc., of the nascent oil and gas industry.

Logically, the 22nd edition of Mole Conference did not overlook the oil and gas industry and its impact on the WASH sector. Oil and gas was one of the four thematic areas for discussions at the conference, and was deemed most appropriate, especially because the conference venue, the Western Region, which is home to the oil discovery.

The Western Region, as estimated, is



Effects of Oil and Gas on our water bodies.

already experiencing a boom in tourism. The number of visitors trooping to the region, and seeking permanent or temporary stay is on the increase. With a high price tag on housing, less wealthy people will have to give way to wealthier visitors who are able to pay a better price for the choicest apartments in the choicest parts of Sekondi-Takoradi. This means the poor would gradually be displaced to the peri-urban areas, or those sections of the twin-city with no or less reliable services.

This brings into sharp focus the oil and gas industry's ramifications for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector. According to organizers of the Mole conference, the demand for

WASH services would outstrip the capacity of the already overstretched municipal or district authorities. The consequences could be dire for local government authorities, citizens and central government.

This calls for the encouragement of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Western Region, especially those closest to oil and gas production platforms, to take long-term view of development and how to build and sustain viable local economies using petroleum activities as catalyst.

Six of the 17 MMDAs in the region are considered frontline districts. They are: Sekondi-Takoradi, Ellembelle, Jomoro, Shama, Ahanta West and Nzema East. It is thought that these districts are more likely to experience impacts of the oil and gas industry than the other districts in the region.

Capacity

In the 17-point communiqué adopted at the close of the conference, there was a call on Government to work to improve the human and logistical capacities of MMDAs in the Western Region, especially those impacted by ongoing oil and gas exploitation activities, to enable them respond to anticipated pressure on WASH infrastructure and services.

They argued that there is enough evidence that the mining and oil industries in the region have brought more pressure on the quality of water resources and WASH service delivery through pollution and migration.

"With the abrupt increase in migration and tourist attractions to some MMDAs in the Western Region as a result of the oil find, and with the likelihood of further increases, the Government should work to improve the human and logistical capacities of the affected

MMDAs in the region to respond to the expected pressure on WASH infrastructure and services."

Prioritisation

The conference also called for "intensified advocacy to ensure that WASH is considered among the top four priorities for petroleum (and mining) revenue investments to mitigate the impact of the pressure."

This point was a reiteration of a call by the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), a socialist inclined non-governmental organization with its headquarters in Accra. In a paper titled *Petroleum Exploitation in Ghana – Water and Sanitation Implications* presented on his behalf at Mole XXII, Bishop Akologo, Executive Director of ISODEC, said in order to make oil and gas revenues count for citizens government must ensure that the WASH sector is one of the four sectors to be prioritized in the nation's petroleum revenue spending scheme.

The call was occasioned by a provision in the Petroleum Revenue Management Law, Act 815, 2011, which spells out modalities for spending petroleum revenues, that the Minister of Finance should prioritise four sectors when planning how to utilize petroleum revenues.

The law states in Section 21 subsection 5 that "In order to maximize the impact of the use of the petroleum revenue, the Minister [reference to Minister for Finance] shall prioritize not more than four areas specified in subsection (3) when submitting a programme of activities for the use of the petroleum revenue."

Subsection 3 provides a list of, in no order of priority, 12 areas where oil revenues should be invested in the absence of a long term national development plan. These include: agriculture and industry; physical

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infrastructure and service delivery in education, science and technology; potable water delivery and sanitation; infrastructure development in telecommunication, road, rail and port; physical infrastructure and service delivery in health; and housing delivery. Others are environmental protection, sustainable utilization and protection of natural resources; rural development; developing alternative energy sources; the strengthening of institutions of government concerned with governance and the maintenance of law and order; public safety and security; and provision of social welfare and the protection of the physically handicapped and disadvantaged citizens.

Seven out of ten parts of oil revenues is supposed to be channeled into the nation's annual budget. In distributing this budget amount, another seventy percent is supposed to be utilized for public investment expenditure, according to Act 815. "For any financial year, a minimum of seventy percent of the Annual Budget Funding Amount shall be used for public investment expenditures consistent with the long-term national development plan or

with subsection (3)," stipulates Section 21 sub-section 4 of the Act.

Stating one's case

Undoubtedly, both the Regional Coordinating Council and MMDAs in the Western Region need to monitor environmental impact as well as economic impacts of the oil production. This calls for their empowerment "to respond to increasing pressure for services."

But that empowerment is not automatic; the RCC and MMDAs must state their case unequivocally. This is against the backdrop that in sharing revenues from oil and gas there will not be direct allocations to district assemblies or communities based on their proximity to the production platform. Rather, allocations will be done through the annual budget based on how strongly districts are able to argue their case for more resource allocation.

"Thus the only way to lay claim to more funds is to demonstrate in your local plans what impacts there are," Dr Steve Manteaw, Chairman of the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas also stated when he made a presentation on *Oil*

and Gas and its implications for the WASH sector.

He emphasized that it is imperative for frontline districts in the oil and gas catchment area to make strong argument for more funds from oil and gas revenue to finance WASH. But how oil production will impact on these localities must show in the development and strategic plans of the respective MMDAs.

Conclusion

Oil is a major factor to fresh water pollution, so rationally we shouldn't discuss water without talking about oil. It is also true that oil has a potential to deny all of us access to essential social services if revenues accruing from the sector are mismanaged.

Civil society can play a critical role in preventing mismanagement of the revenues by demanding strict adherence to transparency and accountability principles.

Beyond that, it behooves on central government to prioritize WASH services and infrastructure. In addition, MMDAs must engage in evidence-based strategic planning and do less ad hoc planning.



RCN, CONIWAS, CWSA and others exhibit at Mole XXII



Learning session features new WASH initiatives.

Benedict Tuffour announces the WASHTech project, while (from right) Ms. Lois Ohene Ayisi of Relief International, Habib Yakubu of SANIPATH, Edmund Smith - Asante of GWJN, Destina Samane of CREPA, Prince Antwi-Agyei of SNOVS, Emmanuel Addai of WSMP, looks on.

Re-examining mining to safeguard water resources

“There is enough evidence that the mining and oil industry have brought more pressure on the quality of water resources and WASH service delivery through pollution and migration. There should therefore be intensified advocacy to ensure that WASH is considered among the top four priorities for petroleum (and mining) revenue investments to mitigate the impact of the pressure.”

That was how the communiqué point 14, adopted at the end of Mole XXII crystallizes general suggestions made by participants. The recommendation was against the backdrop that activities of mining firms and some illegal miners were particularly having very negative impact on water bodies through pollution and destruction.

The first key expression of disapproval for the manner in which mining, especially surface mining by multinational companies, was impacting on WASH came from the Chair of CONIWAS, when he welcomed participants to the conference.

It was noted that the negative impact of surface mining on river and water bodies and the environment was well-documented and worrying. And that land had been stripped of its forest cover in the name of open mining and attempts at reclamation, if any have been very minimal. It was also noted rivers in the region [Western Region] were becoming heavily silted through the deposition of sand from lands which have lost their forest cover.

CONIWAS through the Vice Chair, Mr. Braimah stated that the chemicals and industrial waste of mines were finding their ways into the drinking water of communities with the effect that people's healths are severely affected. Without discounting the role played by illegal small scale miners or “galamsey operators”, he said the galamsey

operators have been highly criticized probably because they are easy target and their activities are more visible at the roadsides. But the major culprits are the conglomerates. Thus: “The nation needs to take a second look at the activities of big mining companies especially those engaged in surface mining.”



Small scale miners (Galamsey operators) busy at work.

Mr. Braimah then posed some few questions, “We want to ask: how are these companies managing their waste? Where have they come from? And who holds them responsible for ensuring that standards are met? Does the Environmental Protection Agency have the capacity to undertake the responsibility and can it demand accountability from these big mining companies?”

These questions from the opening day were still fresh on the minds of participants when Samuel Obiri of the Centre for Environmental Impact Analysis (CEIA) took the floor to present a paper on *“Implications of Gold Mining on the WASH Sector: A Case Study of Arsenic Pollution in Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality and Prestea Huni Valley*

District”.

The presentation was largely based on a baseline study conducted by CEIA & WACAM, an NGO that advocates for mining communities, in 2008.

Mining in Ghana

Historians say gold mining in Ghana began long before the arrival of the

Europeans and modern gold mining began in Tarkwa (Western Region) around 1880 and was later extended to Obuasi (Ashanti Region) in 1896. Over the years, the method of mining has moved from traditional methods through alluvial mining (for example around rivers like Ankobra, Birim, Tano, etc.), shallow pit method, and deep shaft mining (diameter of 1 metre and depth 50 metres deep) to surface mining.

“It must be noted that the traditional methods of gold mining did not involve the use of chemicals,” Mr Obiri clarifies. The Western Region where Mole XXII came off, Gold, manganese and bauxite are popular minerals mined in the area. Gold attracts prominence in the mineral sector with its revenues accounting for

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about 96% of the total mineral revenues of the country. Total annual mineral exports rose from US\$115.3 million in 1984 to US\$995.2 million in 2005, according to statistics.

Therefore, Mr Obiri does not fail to recognize that gold mining has played a significant role in the socio-economic and socio-political life of Ghana for the past 200 years.

However, there are social and environmental costs that make many people believe that perhaps mining has been more of a curse than a blessing. “Out of the 160 streams/ivers in Obuasi mining area, 145 are perceived by residents to be polluted by the operations of mining companies and galamsey operators,” the presenter argued.

“Similarly, all the 117 rivers/streams in the Tarkwa mining area are perceived to be polluted by mining companies and galamsey operators.

“Most of the residents perceived that alternate source of water provided for them by mining companies are not of good quality.”

These perceptions were part of the factors that informed the CEIA and WACAM to conduct their 2008 baseline study and the outcomes proved some of these assertions. The researchers found that Arsenic concentrations in water bodies sampled for the study exceeded World Health Organisation and other regulatory bodies' permissible guideline values.

They also found that “There is a strong relationship between arsenic exposure via oral route and incidence of arsenic induced diseases reported at health institutions in the study area.”

Indeed a 2008 report issued by the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) on human rights abuses in mining communities confirmed the assertion

of residents of mining communities that most of the water borne diseases they suffer are as a result of the bad quality of water supplied to them after their sources of drinking water have been destroyed.

Impacts

The documented impacts of mining on water bodies and sources include:

- In the case of the Obuasi Mine company reports document numerous spills from 2004-2006 in which mine waste water and tailings were spilled, flooding homes and affecting neighbouring communities and the Nyam River.
- The Pollution of river Asasre in Himan by galamsey operators is also documented
- Acid mine drainage, seepage of toxic chemicals from abandoned tailings dam, cyanide spillages, siltation of rivers, Arsenic contamination are among the impacts of large scale mining activities
- Small scale miners have also contributed to increased exposure of rural communities to mercury, dust and other chemicals, and vulnerability to the effects of noise,

Recommendations

Lumor Mawuli of the Water Resources Commission (WRC) who has also done some work on the *Implications of Mining on Water Resources in the Western Region*, recommends that there should be strong collaboration among regulatory agencies including the WRC, Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Forestry Commission as well as Civil Society Organizations.

There is also a need for the simplification of the licensing

procedures for Small Scale Mining to address the socio-economic and environmental issues.

There is the need to pay attention to the following suggestions as well:

- Adequate financing for capacity building in Integrated Water Resources Management at the lowest level
- Strong enforcement of regulations and international standards including the provisions of the Section 17 (Water Right) of the Minerals and Mining Act of 2006; and Instruments for the protection of Economic, social, environmental and governance issues in mining such as ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples- ILO Convention 169 Of 1989, African Union Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, UN Declaration on the Universal Human Rights – 1948, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UN Global Compact, Right to Clean Drinking Water – UN Resolution A/RES/64/292, and ECOWAS Directive on the Harmonisation of Guiding Principles and Policies in the Mining Sector
- Site-specific management and regulatory framework
- Abstraction charges for pit dewatering
- Regular ground- and surface-water monitoring
- Monitoring and supervision of the activities of small-scale miners by ensuring acceptable mining practices with minimum damage to the environment
- Incorporation of the “Polluter Pays Principle” in the legal framework.
- Strong collaboration among

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- stakeholders
- Educational campaigns on mercury pollution to mining communities
- Training of SSMs on mercury usage (encourage the use of technology e.g the retort glass or a simple, efficient and fast method of separating gold from alluvial concentrates without the use of mercury developed by the School of Mines,Tarkwa)
- Organization of Artisanal and Small-scale mining groupings into cooperatives and associations.
- Continuous education of illegal miners to regularize their operations

With specific reference to the CEIA/WACAM study:

- A similar study should be conducted in different regions or mining communities to assess the health impacts of exposure to toxic chemicals used in mining operations by both small scale mining and mining companies.
- Ghana Health Service should develop a new format for reporting and recording of mining related diseases that are reported at health institutions in mining communities in the country.
- Civil society organisations working in the sector should advocate for mining companies to conduct Health Impact Assessment in addition to the EIA.
- EPA, WRC, NCCE, CHRAJ & Minerals

Commission must educate residents of mining communities on the contents of EIA documents before the public hearing on EIA documents submitted by mining companies.

- There should be a composite law that would define legal requirements for decommissioning of mines, restoration of land, etc.
- Disclosure of information especially on mining effects of communities and the environment
- Government must take a decisive decision on galamsey operations by using National Security to flush out illegal miners from certain hot spots

Ghana sets new record: No guinea worm case in a year

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close of 2009 in 13 districts in the Northern, Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Eastern regions. Central Gonja, Tamale, Yendi, Tolon-Kumbungu, Kwahu North, Chereponi, East Gonja, Savelugu Nanton, West Gonja, Ejura-Sekyedumasi, Kintampo North and Karaga were the districts in which cases were recorded.

The 2010 cases were limited to only four villages in three districts in the Northern Region. Diare's four cases make it the most endemic village. There were two cases in Dipali and a case each in Karaga Town and Dipali. The last case was reported on May 11 while the last containment was done on June 2, 2010. The most significant change occurred in the Central Gonja District where no case had been recorded as of June 2010. In fact, the district was the most endemic in 2009, recording 148 (about 60%) of the 242 cases recorded for 2009.

The statistics show that six (75%) of the

2010 cases were reported by males while two (25%) were reported by females. Two cases affected persons who were 15 years or younger whereas four cases affected those within the age bracket of 30-44 years. A case each was reported for persons between 16-29 years and those above 45 years.

The massive reduction represented 99.8% since the biggest outbreak in recent years in 2006 (4,136 cases) and 99.99% reduction since the inception of the GWEP in 1989.

The Good news

Now, it has been more than a year since the last case. This means Ghana broke the Guinea Worm disease transmission at the close of 2010. Usually, six months is required from the last reported case to break transmission of the disease. And mandatory three-year pre-certification activities are required for final certification of eradication of guinea worm.

Given current trends, it can be safely presumed that in a maximum of two-and-half years, Ghana will become guinea worm-free.

Whose credit?

A massive drive to improve water supply is a major factor for the achievement but the most important catalyst has been the acceptance of ownership of the Ghana Guinea Worm Eradication Programme (GWEP) by local actors.

"Why did we achieve it so fast? The answer to that question is we got everybody involved; it wasn't just the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and partners. There were many more people involved in the Northern Region, Upper West and Brong Ahafo," Niquette said during a panel session at the Mole XXII Conference.

He said given the levels of local ownership, prospects for sustainability were high.

NGO/CSOs must be accountable

In current global context, many nations are seeking to make the most of their resources through the establishment of linkages between transparency and accountability on the one hand and governance on the other.

The tenets of good governance include transparency and accountability. This is not just important for governments but also for citizens' groups which seek to represent the interest of many ordinary people in the nations where they operate.



Mr. Braimah making a presentation at the conference

The consequences of lack of transparency and accountability have been documented severally; these include corruption, misapplication of funds, diversion of funds, poorly executed public works, etc. In the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector, cronyism and misappropriation of funds coupled with weak monitoring systems have been noted to have led to weak infrastructure base and its consequent poor service delivery.

Some of these challenges have informed the work of citizens' groups – non-governmental organisations, civil society groups, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations – who continue to advocate for progressive reforms and mechanisms that support the weak and disadvantaged citizen.

In Ghana, “The NGO and civil society subsector continues to play an

important role in WASH services provision. We work to reach the poor and the marginalised through both direct and indirect implementation. Civil societies advocate on behalf of poor people, making sure that their voices are heard and the services delivered to them. In doing so, the civil society organizations mobilize resources, both financial and technical from different sources,” Farouk Braimah, Vice Chair of CONIWAS, observed on the opening day of Mole XXII.

He mentioned that CONIWAS also works with sector organizations and represents its members on sector working groups and commissions. Unfortunately, there have not been conscious attempts at quantifying the NGOs or civil society contribution to the sector. “We may ask: how many people do NGOs or civil societies reach with their services in a year? And how much does this cost in monetary terms?” Braimah queries.

He was emphatic: “I’m yet to see any sector document which reflects on this situation.

“But who is to blame? I dare to say...that it is the NGOs and CSOs themselves, they have to be blamed.”

It will be fair then to demand to know what moral justification NGOs/CSOs have to be asking of accountability from duty bearers when they have very little evidence on what they themselves do. In the view of Braimah, “The inability of the NGOs and CSOs to coordinate their activities with respect to their contributions to the sector has created a gap in the sector implementation process.”

He does not absolve himself of blame when he states that: “We cannot demand transparency and demand accountability from duty bearers when we do not want to hold ourselves

accountable.

“There are challenges that NGOs and CSOs have to take up and deal with. We hear your voices. Let us see how many or how much you are contributing to the sector.”

Way forward

- It is now time for CONIWAS members, especially those involved in direct delivery, to closely work through the MMDAs and ensure that their contributions are documented as part of their contribution to addressing water and sanitation problems in the districts they operate.
- Members should disclose their budgets meant for water and sanitation interventions to the MMDAs.
- As participants agreed in the conference communiqué, a systematic process of gathering information on NGO/CSO contribution to the WASH Sector, including facility delivery, innovations and financing should be put in place and periodically collated and made available for capture in the Annual Sector Performance Report.
- Current efforts at establishing sector information systems should take into consideration the inadequate information and data on what happens at the decentralized level, which sets new challenges for addressing corruption and improving transparency and accountability in the WASH sector.

To end, these words of Braimah are worth reflecting on: “We will have the moral duty to hold other duty bearers accountable to the people if we ourselves are seen to be accountable.”

Mole XXII Conference Communiqué

Governance, Accountability and Aid/Development Effectiveness - Actions

1. Ghana has the relevant structures to ensure good governance, accountability and aid effectiveness in the WASH sector. The Government, Development Partners and CSOs should work together, develop the necessary systems and checks and balances, to ensure that all laid down principles, procedures, regulations and laws are complied with to the letter.
Responsibility: Government, DPs, CSOs, Media
2. A systematic process of gathering information on NGO/CSO contribution to the WASH Sector, including facility delivery, innovations and financing should be put in place and periodically collated and made available for capture in the Annual Sector Performance Report.
Responsibility: CONIWAS
3. The NGO fraternity should deepen their partnership with relevant local stakeholders to ensure that decentralized and mandated institutions that are responsible for WASH service delivery take charge of their obligations.
Responsibility: CONIWAS
4. Current efforts at establishing sector information systems should take into consideration the inadequate information and data on what happens at the decentralized level, which sets new challenges for addressing corruption and improving transparency and accountability in the WASH sector.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CWSA, CONIWAS
5. The Sector Strategic Development Plan (SSDP) is the hub of the success of the Sector Wide Approach. All stakeholders, including NGOs and Development Partners, should show commitment to supporting and complying with the principles contained in the plan.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD
6. A communiqué monitoring team should be set up to develop a monitoring plan with time-bound indicators to track progress of Mole Conference outcomes with the responsibility to report back at subsequent conferences.
Responsibility: CONIWAS

Dealing with Long-term Financing for WASH - Actions

7. While we recognize the renewed commitments in the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Compact, we also wish to draw government attention to the fact that the 2011 commitments were not fully met. Government and partners should fulfill the agreed commitment fully in subsequent budgets.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CONIWAS, MoFEP
8. Direct support cost and capital maintenance expenditure are essential elements for sustainable small town water supply delivery. Led by the Government with effective support from all partners, a mechanism should be established for direct support for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to manage small town systems beyond the project phase.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, CWSA, MMDAs
9. A well constituted WASH sector team/platform should be established to develop a strategy to engage the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) to periodically discuss WASH financing and budgetary gaps. The Team shall also have additional responsibility of exploring other innovative long-term financing options for WASH.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CONIWAS
10. Attempts by CWSA to develop a framework, based on water quality, sustainability and functionality indicators, to undertake national sustainability audit and functionality mapping exercise on existing systems should be encouraged and supported.
Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CONIWAS, CWSA
11. To respect individuals' right to safe drinking water, any institution providing drinking water is required to ensure that Ghana's water safety standards are met. In this respect, efforts should be made for an innovative and sustainable funding mechanism for CWSA's Water Safety Framework.
Responsibility: MWRWH, MLGRD, CWSA, MMDAs,
12. All WASH interventions should recognize the central role of communities in sustainable WASH service delivery and allocate adequate resources for community mobilization and capacity building.
Responsibility: CWSA, CONIWAS, ILGS, MMDAs
13. To increase the chances of long-term funding and sustainability of rural and small town WASH services, current sector efforts at highlighting and promoting the District Ownership and Management (DOM) component of the Community Ownership and Management (COM) concept must be intensified and accelerated.
Responsibility: CWSA, MMDAs

Mole XXII Conference Communiqué continued

Mining, Oil and Gas exploration and implications in the WASH Sector -Actions

14. There is evidence that the mining and oil industry has brought more pressure on the quality of water resources and WASH service delivery through pollution and migration. There should therefore be intensified advocacy to ensure that WASH is considered among the top four priorities for petroleum (and mining) revenue investments to mitigate the impact.

Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CONIWAS, WRC, EPA

15. With the increase in migration and tourist attractions to some MMDAs in the Western Region as a result of the oil find, Government should improve the human and logistical capacities of the affected MMDAs in the region to respond to the expected pressure on WASH infrastructure and services.

Responsibility: Water Directorate, EHSD, CONIWAS, MMDAs

Scaling up Sanitation and Hygiene - Actions

16. With Ghana's sanitation coverage of 13% as our national shame, and with proof of Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as a potential to propel Ghana to attain its MDG target on sanitation faster, there should be conscious efforts by MMDAs to incorporate CLTS as well as District CLTS Implementation Roadmaps in their various District Environmental Sanitation Strategy and Action Plans (DESSAPs) as a matter of urgency.

Responsibility: MLGRD/EHSD/MMDAs

17. To facilitate the scaling up of CLTS at the local level, government should immediately establish Regional Inter Agency Coordinating Committees on Sanitation (RICCs) and District Inter Agency Coordinating Committees on Sanitation (DICC)s in all Regions and Districts by Regional Environmental Health Units and Regional Water and Sanitation Teams (RWSTs). There should also be intensive orientation for District Environmental Health Officers on the CLTS approach.

Responsibility: MLGRD/EHSD/MMDAs



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing

WASH Sector Events Calendar - January - March 2012

WASHTech Consortium meeting/ TAF Training	February 9-14, 2012	Accra
National Learning Alliance Platform: <i>Social Norms in the WASH Sector in Ghana</i> (http://www.washghana.net/page/808)	February 23, 2012	Accra
Sustainability of Rural Water Services Data Validation	February 27-28, 2012	Erata Hotel, Accra
Launching: National strategy for community participation in the management and delivery of urban water and sanitation services	February 28, 2012	Accra
6th World Water Forum: <i>Time for Solutions</i>	March 12 - 17, 2012	Marseille, France
Life Cycle Cost Approach Training	March 13-14, 2012 March 20-21, 2012 March 27-28, 2012	Sunyani, BA Ho, VR Tamale, NR
High Level Sector Retreat (organised by the MWRWH)	February 27- 28, 2012	Erata Hotel, Accra
First Annual Star Ghana	February 29, 2012	Holiday Inn Hotel, Accra
Testing modified CLTS for scalability	Feb 20-24, 2012	Luxury Hest Hotel, Dodowa
World Water Day Celebrations (organised by the WWD Planning Committee)	March 22, 2012	TBD
National Learning Alliance Platform: <i>WASH Technology Assessment Framework in Ghana</i> (http://www.washghana.net/page/808)	March 29, 2012	Accra

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