



GOVERNMENT OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Sustainable access to improved sanitation and water – the enduring face of improved quality of life

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1st High Level Meeting, Sanitation and Water for ALL: a Global Framework for Action (SWA)

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Preamble

This statement reaffirms the position of the Government of Ghana (GoG) that building partnerships to tackle global crisis of any kind can yield tremendous results. Global initiatives such as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD, 1981 – 1990) and the UN Millennium declaration of 2000 on the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 demonstrate the power of stating our collective aims. Although, we do not always achieve some of the stated goals we have significant progress on many fronts and this is understandable, as more often than not, the goals are SMARTT¹.

The Sanitation and Water for ALL: A Global Framework for Action (SWA) presents yet another opportunity for making rapid progress as we approach 2015.

The title of this short paper “*sustainable access to improved sanitation and water – the enduring face of improved quality of life*” captures our belief that beyond attaining middle-income status as indicated, by GDP, the coverage for sanitation and water coverage is a better yard stick because these services directly affect our ways of life, everywhere, every day.

Our Commitments

A. ENHANCING POLITICAL PRIORITIZATION AND COMMITMENT

Joining SWA initiative and attending future HLM

The Government of Ghana (GoG) duly affirms joining SWA. This commitment is attested by the fact that the Minister for Water Resources, Works and Housing (MWRWH) and also the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) are attending this 1st High Level Meeting (HLM). We pledge to attend future meetings.

Prioritizing sanitation and water as essential services

Sanitation and water is at the core of achieving all the MDGs, yet it does not receive the same attention as education and health. Ghana currently spends annually US\$85 million on malaria treatment alone.

Ghana is off-track for the sanitation MDG and has to raise national coverage from 13% (2008) to 54% by 2015.² Obviously we have to accelerate the provision of improved sanitation. If we achieve this target, 46% of our population will still be without access to improved sanitation. Although we made progress on the provision of improved water 22% of our population will still be without improved drinking water by 2015. We need to invest more to sustain gains and improve services to the unserved poor.

Based on coverage data and costs from our service providers we have to allocate up US\$200m annually to sanitation and water reach in order to overcome the huge deficit in sanitation and sustain achievements in water provision. To address the “crisis” situation of indiscriminate discharging of sullage, septage and faecal sludge that affects mostly residents of poor neighborhoods and into water courses, rivers and beaches, further allocations of up to US\$150m annually will be made.

Poor sanitation behavior is one of the critical challenges facing the sanitation sector and we have proposed to implement a vigorous program of raising awareness for behavior change provide adequate funding to cover capacity building for hygiene education including proper hand-washing methods and nation-wide Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) campaigns.

Ensuring country-led, country-owned and country-managed sector programs

While progress is gradually being made in following country-level policies and plans, there are still donor-led interventions that often lead to the creation of parallel structures. To further buttress the Paris Declaration Principles and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), the GoG will strengthen and

¹ In Ghana the targets for district environmental sanitation are required to be SMARTT (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, targeted and **TOUGH!**)

² WHO/UNICEF JMP 2010.

enhance the capacity of Water Directorate and the Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorate with increased budget allocations (including activities for performance reporting by the WSMP) in the 2011 budget.

A number of specific issues to be tackled include the completion of a Code of Conduct (COC) and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with our DPs and Civil Society for harmonizing procedures under a SWAp framework for the sanitation and water sector.

B. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

GoG pledges further to respond to future UN GLAAS (Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water) surveys and continue to implement interventions that respond to pro-poor and priority needs of the Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (2010 – 2013)³. The reporting on sector performance aligned to country-led planning and reporting frameworks at the highest political level is also important. This will be taken up as part of results-based monitoring and appraisals for the annual performance reporting (APR) of all national sectors.

C. LINKING NATIONAL POLICIES TO PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

Ensuring that components of national plans to reflect sector priorities

Sanitation and water are important components of national policies and plans. Core components of the current Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (MTDPF, 2010 - 2013) cover strategic objectives for environmental sanitation and water.

Ensuring alignment of pipeline Development Partner programmes to national plans

While governments overarching aim of decentralization is pursued through preparation of Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs) by MMDAs, sector plans are often not reflected at these lower-tiers. In line with the principle of subsidiarity of our policies, GoG will ensure that its own plans as well as those of DPs are derived from and reflect MTDPs of MMDAs.

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability and good governance mechanisms

GoG will continue to employ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to mainstream environmental sustainability measures in all policies, plans and programmes. GoG undertakes to adapt strategies and mechanisms in the design and delivery of services in order to reduce the effects of Climate Change and Global Warming. GoG is committed to enhancing the participation of civil society in future GLASS surveys and Annual Performance Reviews (APRs) of water and environmental sanitation sector strategies of the MTDPF.

The points listed (under A,B and C above) are not exhaustive but are indicative of the Government of Ghana's commitment to, and sharing of, the SWA principles as well as those of the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action and other declarations of the AU.

In conclusion let me add that I have deliberately avoided quoting the obvious economic benefits of having a large segment of the population with access to improved sanitation and water. A lot of that has been captured by the background papers to this HLM. What I would want to add is the immense potential to create jobs and affect MDG 1(one) as well as the other MDGs. I recall, as reported, the enduring improvements earned by many citizens of the USA during the great depression of 1930s due to the recommendation of President Roosevelt's Brain Trust for massive improvements in water and sanitation provision as a key strategy for overcoming difficulties of those times.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are coming out of another recession and as developing countries we can learn from the past. In solidarity with our civil society and other development partners we trust that we can work together to remove the shackles of this last taboo to achieving an enduring improved quality of life for all.

³ The MTDPF is the follow-on national development framework to the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRSII, 2006 – 2009). The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) publishes an Annual Performance Report (APR) for all sectors.