

# Ghana

## Country Overview

### 1. Introduction

The 2022 Sector Ministers' Meeting is being held under the shadow of a triple crisis that has hit the world. First is the worst global health pandemic in over a century, second, the resulting economic repercussions and lastly the climate change crisis, which has increased the number of extreme weather events.

Notwithstanding, Ghana can achieve all the SDG 6 targets, and do so ahead of schedule. Government and its partners are retooling to overcome decade-old bottlenecks that have bedeviled the sector until now. At all fronts, something is being done to ensure the attainment of national and other international targets.

In the rural water sub sector, ongoing reforms to transition Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) from a facilitator to a rural water utility is a key government reform agenda that will help overcome the remaining service delivery challenges that pertain in the rural populations. In the urban sub sector, the poor is receiving new attention as Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) has established a Low-Income Customer Department (LICSD) and is in the process of crafting a strategy for the department. The Water Resources Commission (WRC) is doubling efforts to safeguard the integrity of water resources through improved regulation and monitoring of the pollutants including pathogenic microorganisms, putrescible organic waste, fertilizers and plant nutrients, toxic chemicals, sediments, heat, petroleum (oil), and radioactive substances, in water bodies. The sanitation sub sector has increased its capacity to stop open defecation nationwide and ensure households have access to sustainable household toilets, whilst supporting institutions like schools and healthcare facilities to have decent, gender friendly toilets and changing rooms.

At the center of all these achievements has been mainly through the establishment of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR). Political leadership is on the increase. Amidst budgetary constraints spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic that wreaked havoc on all economies including that of Ghana, much is being done to mobilize as many partners as possible to extend services to the unserved populations. More importantly, the enabling environment is being created to further enhance the role of other stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector. The commitment for the establishment of the National Sanitation Authority (NSA) and the National Sanitation Fund is on course. The government has in recent past established the Sanitation and Pollution Levy to enhance the provision and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure in the country. The sector is blessed with committed development partners who are intervening in

various ways - from technical assistance, service delivery, capacity building and creating partnerships to increase delivery effectiveness.

## 2. Sector Outlook

### Access to Safe Water

Currently, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census as released by the Ghana Statistical Service, 87.7% of the populace have access to basic water supply services. However, there is a disparity between urban and rural communities. About 96.4% of the urban populace have access to basic water supply services while 74.4% of the rural populace have access to basic water supply services. About 8% of Ghanaian households continue to rely on unsafe sources (PHC 2021)<sup>1</sup>. Despite the apparently high access to safe water in urban areas, sachet water dominates (51.5%), with pipe-borne water accounting for only 33.6%<sup>2</sup>. The vision is to have about 70% of populace/households in urban/peri-urban and 50% in rural areas connected to a piped water network and using safely managed water services by 2030.

### Improved Sanitation

Progress in access to basic improved sanitation has not been as impressive as water. As of 2021, only 25.3% (PHC 2021) of the national population had access to improved sanitation that is not shared. About 17.7% of Ghanaians still practice open defecation. The cost of poor sanitation in the country is high as Ghana loses about US\$ 290 million annually due to poor sanitation (World Bank, WSP 2012). This is the equivalent of US\$12 per person in Ghana per year or 1.6% of the national GDP. The country also loses an additional US\$ 79 million as a result of open defecation.

### Liquid Waste Management

As a result of urbanization and economic development the volume of wastewater will increase significantly. It is estimated that the production of liquid waste will increase along population growth and urbanisation. While small scale sewerage and wastewater treatment facilities may receive emphasis in the coming years, septic tanks are expected to remain the most common used systems. Bio-digesters have just started to enter the market, and will take time to become significant in terms of number of households installing them across the country. The provision of desludging services thus needs to be significantly expanded, both in quantity and quality. The emphasis on livelihoods in the sector new focus calls for increased efforts towards resource recovery and re-use of waste rather than the current scenario of treating and dumping.

### Hygiene

The proportion of people in Ghana having access to hand hygiene facilities has increased and is currently at 48.5% (MICS 2018). The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has re-echoed the need

<sup>1</sup> Ghana Statistical Services, 2022; Ghana Population and Housing Census 2021, General Report.

<sup>2</sup> ibid

to expand the use of hand hygiene facilities beyond the home to other settings such as workplaces, markets and transport terminals, community centers and other public places.

### **Water Resources Management**

The total surface Renewable Water Resources of the country is about 53.2 billion m<sup>3</sup>. This translates to about 1,773 m<sup>3</sup> per capita. This is expected to drop below 1,600 m<sup>3</sup> by the year 2030. Available internal Actual Renewal Water Resources are enough to support uses if properly developed. Given the action being taken by government to curtail illegal mining in the country, the southwestern river system, which comprise about 22% of the country's water resources, will no longer be under threat of pollution by "Galamsey". All other water resources will be protected from pollution through the minimization of illegal waste disposal, agriculture and encroachments, especially in protected areas. The quality and quantity of the water resources in Ghana, including ground water resources, will be strictly monitored and effectively managed.

### **3. Our Aspirations**

By 2030, 100% of the population in Ghana will use an improved source of water for drinking. Improved sources include water that is piped into the dwelling, piped to a yard/plot, from a public tap/standpipe, or taken from a borehole, a protected hand dug well, or a protected spring.

The next 10 years will be characterized by rapid urbanization and population growth, resulting in more dense and more expanded cities. The increased density will result in higher demand for water, sanitation, hygiene and liquid waste management services. The expansion of new urban and peri-urban settlements require expansion of the distribution network going hand in hand with road construction, drain construction and other utilities. Improvements in the rural economy will lead to increased demand for quality WASH services. As a result, rural water supply will shift towards mechanization of existing or new boreholes that will increase pipe connections to, or near homes. At the same time rural populations become more empowered through civil society interventions and exposure to media which greatly influence their sense of entitlement. Aspirations of citizens will generally be higher, and people will no longer be satisfied with some of the existing technologies and service levels, such as hand pumps, low-cost toilets etc., but will aspire for high end services such as yard connections and aspirational toilets, etc. Notwithstanding, safely managed service coverage will still lag behind SDG targets.

### **4. Our Commitments**

In January 2017 a new dedicated Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources was established on the basis of Executive Instrument EI 28 to provide leadership, focus and better coordination of sanitation and water service delivery. The Ghana Water Company Ltd (GWCL), Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Water Resources Commission (WRC), the Water and Environmental Health and Sanitation Directorates (EHSD) and the Schools of Hygiene are the key institutions of the Ministry dedicated to service delivery, human resources development and water resources management. A critical reform agenda of the Ministry is to create a sanitation authority, refine the mandate of the CWSA to become a rural water utility and ensure capacity

development within the sector. The absence of a dedicated Agency to coordinate sanitation is a major gap in sector governance, hence the plan to establish the National Sanitation Authority, a proposal that has received widespread support amongst all stakeholders.

## **5. The Priority actions of the MSWR (2022-24) and our commitments include the following:**

1. Accelerate the delivery of Household Sanitation to poor households living in Low Income Communities through targeted subsidies and revolving funds. All sanitation facilities provided will be climate resilient and sustainable.
2. Develop a strategy for better targeting of Low-Income Customers in the urban sub sector with safe water.
3. Improve the enabling environment for WASH services delivery in Ghana. The MSWR will push through two pieces of legislation that will greatly contribute to universal coverage of WASH in Ghana. First is the law establishing a National Sanitation Authority, along with a National Sanitation fund to drive national efforts towards universal access to Sanitation in Ghana. Second is a law converting the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) from a facilitator to a rural water utility.
4. Take steps to ensure that environmental issues are sufficiently mainstreamed into all sector policies, strategies and plans. In this regard, the MSWR will review the WASH aspects of the National Determined Contributions 1 (NDC1), and based on that, ensure all stakeholders have a common understanding of their implications for the WASH sector. The MSWR will further ensure that the WASH sector integrates the NDCs into WASH project implementation.
5. Increase public financing for WASH, in partnership with Development Partners, NGOS and the private sector.