

Second Ghana Water Forum opens in Accra



Over two hundred participants from the water and sanitation (WASH) sector have converged in Accra for the second Ghana water forum. The three day forum is under theme: "Water and Sanitation Service Delivery in Ghana: The Sustainability Factor".

The forum will create a platform for all stakeholders in the WASH sub-sector in building consensus on measures that will ensure the sustainability of the installed facilities.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Mr Joseph Yiekeh Chireh, indicated that the theme is expected to bring to the fore the urgent need to ensure that facilities provided remain functional throughout their life cycle and beyond, to guarantee increase in universal access to safe water and basic sanitation and sustainable hygiene promotion.

He said to ensure sustainability of water facilities, that his Ministry and the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing have initiated the development of a sector strategic development plan (SSDS) to be completed by the end of next year.

Mr Yieleh Chireh said the SSDP will provide the blueprint for harmonization, ownership, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and social accountability, thereby entrenching the concept of sustainability in service delivery at all level.

In an address read on behalf of the His Excellency, President John Evans Atta Mills, the Minister for Water Resources, Works and Housing, Honourable Alban Bagbin, said the government is committed to providing clean potable water and access to good sanitation throughout the country.

He stressed that the issues of sustainability should be a prime concern to Ghanaians since without sustainability, efforts to increase access and coverage to water, sanitation and hygiene will be an illusion.

He stressed that clean water does not only tell on the expenditure of the nation's fund but an investment in the future of the country and assured that the government is still committed to bring fresh investments into the sector to meet the nation's MDG WASH targets.

The theme address was delivered by Jean de la Harpe, of the IRC. Ms Harpe, emphasized the following as key elements of sustainability: proper planning, coordinating, social accountability and role of local government authorities.

The Ghana Junior Water Prize was also officially launched to encourage the youth to participate in WASH knowledge activities.

Winners of the 2010 prize, a team of four students from Mfantsipim Senior High School were also awarded for their innovation in surface water treatment in Obuasi, a mining community in Ghana.

The students had earlier participated in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize organised at the World Water Week celebration in Stockholm, Sweden in September 2010.



The 2010 Ghana Junior Water Prize winners

An exhibition mounted by sector Institutions, Government Agencies, Business Community, Development Partners and NGOs showcasing achievements, innovations and business opportunities available in the water and sanitation sub-sector is underway alongside the forum.



Minister for Water Resources, Works and Housing, Honourable Alban Bagbin at the WaterAid Ghana stand at the exhibition

Other side events includes a Ministerial and Development Partners Roundtable, a Business Roundtable and a Ghana Youth and Children’s Forum.