

Ghana launches dedicated Ministry for Sanitation and Water Resources

Water and sanitation services are finally set to get the attention they deserve.

The new government of Ghana has taken an important step to prioritise the water and sanitation sector. Presenting the second batch of 12-ministerial appointees on 11 January 2017, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo announced the new Ministry for Sanitation and Water Resources among others. He also named Hon. Joseph Kofi Adda, a member of parliament for Navrongo as the minister designate. According to the president, the decision to respectively split water and sanitation from the Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development stemmed from the neglect of the sub-sectors.

IRC Ghana welcomes the announcement and fully supports the move. “It is indeed an exciting moment in Ghana for those of us in the WASH sector; the new government has started on a good note with the creation of a new Ministry for Sanitation and Water Resources. Sanitation and water are at the very core of sustainable development, the creation of the Ministry therefore will go a long way towards achieving much of the developmental targets of the country if given the needed attention and financial prioritisation it deserves” stated the IRC Ghana Country Director, Vida Duti.

Challenges

IRC and other partners have long advocated for sector reform in Ghana. This has contributed to increased coverage particularly for water services. In 2015, 89% of the total

population and 84% of those in rural areas had access to improved drinking water sources ([WHO/UNICEF JMP](#)). This progress, however, is threatened by the huge challenge of non-functionality of rural water supply services. [Six regional fact sheets](#) published by the Community Water and Sanitation Agency and IRC reported the non-functionality of about 26% of handpumps and 14% of piped schemes of the existing rural water and small town facilities in 119 out of the 216 districts.

The challenges facing the sanitation sub-sector are even greater. Only 15% of the population has access to improved sanitation. Over a third of the rural population practices open defecation ([WHO/UNICEF JMP](#)). This is one of the reasons why the government launched the [Sanitation Challenge for Ghana](#) in 2015. IRC Ghana in partnership with Ghanaian consulting firm Water Health Solutions is implementing this UK-funded initiative on behalf of IMC Worldwide.

Prioritising finance

While good sector policies are in place, budgets and resources to convert them into tangible impact on the ground are insufficient and reliable monitoring systems are missing. Donor funding is decreasing as a result of the reclassification of the Ghanaian economy to Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC) status. Developing a clear alternative finance mechanism to bridge the gap in donor funding, therefore needs to be a priority of the new ministry, says IRC Ghana. Otherwise the gains made in the last years and the ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG6) of universal access to water and sanitation by 2030 are at risk.

For more information read IRC Ghana's [press release](#).

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Source: Resource Centre Network Ghana (www.washghana.net)