

Ghana: WRC Rallies Stakeholders for Efficient, Sustainable Water Use

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press release

The Water Resources Commission [WRC] has held a day's media training workshop for media personnel in the Upper East Region of Ghana on Integrated Water Resources Management [IWRM]. The training held in the Region's capital, Bolgatanga also delved into environmental reporting, water laws and regulations. This media training workshop formed part of the Commission's nationwide training workshops on Water Laws and Regulations. The WRC, established by an Act of Ghana's Parliament Act 522 of 1996 is the overall body responsible for water resources management in Ghana. It co-ordinates relevant government policies, fashioned out to ensure the efficient and sustainable use of the country's water resources.

The White Volta Basin Officer of the Commission who is based in the Upper East Region, Mr. Aaron Bundi Aduna in a presentation noted that the traditional fragmented approach to water resources use and management was no longer viable and must be substituted with a more holistic approach such as the IWRM.

He said it was on that background that the Integrated Water Resources Management [IWRM] approach was introduced and its implementation underway. He emphasised that IWRM was internationally accepted as the way forward for efficient, equitable and sustainable development and management of limited water resources.

According to him, the WRC proposed comprehensive plans for the utilisation, conservation, development and improvement of water resources, granted water rights/license and also collected, collated, stored and disseminated data and information on water resources in Ghana among many other duties.

Mr. Aduna called for the integration of all stakeholders in the planning, decision making and implementation of policies on water governance stressing that all economic and social sectors on water-related developments should be planned in an integrated way and related to national economic policy. "For instance, water issues have far-reaching effects on food and energy depending on how they are managed," he added.

He revealed that the constitution the WRC included the Forestry Commission, the Ghana Water Company Ltd., Minerals Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Irrigation Development Authority, Community Water and Sanitation Agency, Volta River Authority, Water Research Institute, Hydrological Services Department, Ghana Meteorological Agency, Traditional Authority, Women's representative and Civil Society.

He however mentioned the media as a very critical ally in the Commission's work as it would take the medium of radio, television and other forms of communication to reach out to water users as well as other organisations with vested interest in water use and management.

The Public Relations Officer of the WRC, Mrs. Adwoa Dako who took the media personnel through appropriate reporting on the environment and water resources said journalists ought to have an understanding of scientific water language and jargons, kept abreast of water-related events such as World Wetlands Day, World Earth Day, World Water Day and also had general understanding of current global concerns on water.

Mrs. Dako further noted that the ability to keep abreast of water policy decisions such as Agenda 21, the UN Convention to combat Desertification, International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, UN Watercourses Convention, the Ramsar Convention and a good knowledge of historical water organisations including the International Water Association (IWA), Water Aid and the **International Water Management Institute [IWMI]** would put journalists on a sound footing to report accurately on the environment and water usage issues.

According to her, the ability of media personnel to communicate all these information to the public in such a manner as to be easily understood would be an effective boost to the efforts of the Water Resources Commission. She entreated the participants to interrogate information and arguments that seemed ambiguous especially the technical terms and long-winding statements from experts.

She said journalists should never be embarrassed to say 'I don't understand' and further urged media personnel to ask sources and officials to explain their findings for easy understanding.

Source: ISD (NELSON A. MBA & PETER ATOGEWE WEDAM)