

Forum Calls For National Water Fund To Bridge Gap In Urban Water Supply

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Participants in this year's Ghana Water Forum have called for the establishment of a National Water Fund which will serve as a safe net and help bridge the widening gap in urban water supply.

With an urban population currently pegged at 51 per cent of the total population of 24 million, the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) is able to serve 63 per cent with the remaining 47 per cent not having access to potable water.

The proposal, which is contained in the draft communique of the Third Ghana Water Forum and delivered by Mr Harold Esseku, a consultant on water and sanitation issues at the closing session, also comes on the heels of rising cost of water production as a result of pollution of water sources.

Further, rapid urbanisation due to rural-urban migration leading to the development of unplanned communities, urban slums and peri-urban communities without corresponding infrastructure development including water has become a major problem affecting sanitation, hygiene and health.

Water supply has seen an improvement since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000 and while rural coverage has increased by about 20 per cent over the period, urban water supply has remained stagnant according to supplier-based information from the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA).

The forum, the third in the series and organised by the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, was on the theme: "Water and Sanitation Services Delivery in a Rapidly Changing Urban Environment" and brought together sector players from both Ghana and abroad.

They deliberated on issues bordering on access to water as a human right, ensuring water quality and safety, how to bridge the access gap in sanitation and water, among others.

According to Mr Esseku, participants also conceded that the management of urban water supply must be decentralised to enhance efficiency.

"The separation of the key functions of production, transmission and distribution to be handled by different entities could also be considered," he said.

In making potable water accessible to all, participants also noted that rainwater harvesting must be encouraged, especially with regard to the construction of new buildings.

Other issues contained in the communique stressed the need for clear-cut funding to be targeted for sector stakeholders to enable households to provide their own sanitation facilities.

"Local authorities should also carry out their mandate to ensure building codes are enforced with respect to provision of toilet facilities".

The General Secretary of Friends of Rivers and Water Bodies, Nana Agyepong Debrah III, was the chairman for the occasion, which was also attended by officials of WaterAid Ghana, CHF International, [International Water Management Institute](#), UNICEF, Water Resources Commission, the CWSA, among other organisations.

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