

COMMUNITY WATER AND SANITATION AGENCY (CWSA) 2019 REVIEW CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

THEME: “*STEPS TOWARDS A UTILITY SERVICE ORGANIZATION: THE SUCCESS STORY, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD*”

PREAMBLE

The Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) is the lead public sector Agency in rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Ghana. The Agency was established in 1998 by an Act of Parliament, Act 564 with the object of facilitating the provision of safe water and related sanitation and hygiene services to rural communities and small towns. After 20 years of its establishment, CWSA has facilitated the provision of **1,033** Piped Water Systems of varying sizes, **32,466** boreholes, **82,970** household latrines, **5,391** Institutional latrines and enhanced the capacity of several sector partners across the country.

In spite of the achievements above, sustaining these interventions remained a major challenge over the years. This situation triggered consensus for organizational reforms aimed at transforming CWSA into a Utility Service Organization.

In 2017 therefore, the Agency took a bold step to initiate policy reforms to transform the CWSA into a Utility Service Organization with the responsibility of providing and managing rural water systems due to implementation challenges with the Community Management Model.

The CWSA 2019 Review Conference which started on Monday 2nd to Thursday 5th September, 2019 at Noda Hotel, Fumesua in the Ashanti Region was under the theme “*Steps towards a utility service organization: The success story, challenges and way forward*”.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE WERE:

- To evaluate the achievements and constraints of CWSA’s management of piped systems
- To document the lessons learnt in the management of piped Systems
- To deliberate on innovative approaches in technology and finance
- To formulate strategies to consolidate the gains and scale-up towards the completion point

KEY OUTCOMES

The key outcomes of the conference were as follows:

1. CWSA would explore technological and innovative approaches to improve water production and efficiency
2. CWSA would improve water production, efficiency and quality
3. CWSA would explore financial management risk and establish appropriate control mechanisms

4. CWSA would adopt a business model to guide its operation to ensure sustainability
5. CWSA would initiate a change management process to enhance staff understanding and buy-in
6. CWSA would continue to sign performance contracts to enhance performance at all operational levels
7. CWSA would enhance Human Resource capacities to meet the skill requirements of the reform
8. CWSA would intensify communication and stakeholder engagements on the Reform and enhance its corporate visibility
9. CWSA would prioritize investment in a manner that will lead to sustainability of the Water Systems
10. CWSA would scale-up sanitation and hygiene promotion initiative to maximize the health benefits of people living in rural communities and small towns
11. CWSA would formulate a two-year Action Plan to guide its operations

STATUS OF THE REFORMS

The overall goal of the Reforms is to achieve sustainability through creation of wealth and jobs required to improve water system operation and management, build capacity, establish a new organizational culture and increase innovation in the sub sector to improve WASH services delivery. Under the Reforms, the Agency has so far participated in the management of 125 Water Systems and deployed 792 Water Systems Management Staff across the country. The Agency has also formulated a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) spanning 2018 to 2019 to guide the implementation of the reforms. The Agency has signed and evaluated Performance Contracts with its Regional Offices, engaged stakeholders on its reform direction, trained staff, redeveloped boreholes, constructed new water systems and provided logistics to water systems to deal with technical challenges.

Key sector partners, namely; Ministry of Sanitation & Water Resources, Parliamentary Select Committee on Works and Housing, Office of the Head of Local Government Service, Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council, MMDAs, KNUST, UNICEF, CONIWAS and Public Utility Workers Union (PUWU) along with the CWSA Board of directors, management and staff from the sixteen regions, participated in the review conference to support the Reforms and made significant contributions on the transformation required by CWSA to improve WASH services delivery and sustain sector investments.

CONCLUSION

CWSA will not relent on its efforts in ensuring that WASH facilities are sustainably managed to deliver safe water, water-related sanitation and hygiene services in small towns and rural communities with the support of all stakeholders.