

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HON. DR. FREDA PREMPEH, MINISTER FOR  
SANITATION AND WATER RESOURCES AT THE OPENING OF THE 34TH  
EDITION OF THE ANNUAL MOLE CONFERENCE ON WATER, SANITATION  
AND HYGIENE AT THE ROYAL COSBY HOTEL, JIRAPA IN THE UPPER  
WEST REGION ON MONDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2023**

**Chairman,**

*Honourable Regional Minister for Upper West, Honourable Municipal and District Chief Executives present, Chairperson of Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation, cherished Lead and other WASH sector development partners, representatives of the various Government Institutions and Agencies, our Hard-Working Representatives of the WASH NGO fraternity, Civil Society and Private Sector Organizations working in the WASH sector in Ghana, My good Friends from the Media, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a delight and a privilege to be here for this 34<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual Mole Conference on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, which creates a common platform for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in the WASH sector to account for the state of Ghana's WASH service delivery. I would like to congratulate the organisers of this year's MOLE Conference for their hard work and diligence in continually providing such a platform for knowledge sharing and learning.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** before I continue with my address, we should all take a reflection to ascertain whether we have been able to implement the communiqué that was issued at the last MOLE Conference that was organised in Elmina? My ministry was tasked to undertake the following:

- 1. The MWSR should fast track baseline data collection in all 261 MMDAs to feed into the Sector Information System (SIS) and roll out by July, 2023.**

The Ministry has made progress towards the operationalisation of the Sector Information System. Review of Standard Operating Procedures for SIS and Training of key Regional Officers was undertaken in June 2023. Training of District Officers and Data Collection in at least two MMDAs is scheduled for fourth quarter, 2023. It is envisaged that the data collection for MMDAs would be done next year, and baseline results would be available by October 2024.

- 2. MSWR should expedite action towards establishing the National Sanitation Authority (NSA) and the National Sanitation Fund. Other innovative financing like revolving funds that can offer low interest loans needs to expand to support poor households.**

Government is still committed to the establishment of the National Sanitation Authority. The Cabinet Memo was laid before Cabinet for the consideration. Unfortunately, it was

decided that the establishment be put on hold as a result of the IMF negotiations that were ongoing. I am of the firm belief that the NSA will get approval from Cabinet once the current economic hurdles have been cleared.

- 3. Ministry of Finance and MSWR should take immediate steps to develop a framework for managing the Sanitation and Pollution Levy (SPL). The Ministry of Finance should take immediate measures to render account of inflows and disbursements made on the SPL.**

The Energy Sector Levies Act, 2021 (Act 1064), directs the Minister for Finance to open and maintain an accounts for receiving monies realised from the Energy Sector Recovery Levy of which the Sanitation and Pollution Levy is among.

The Minister for Finance has presented reports to Parliament on the Management of the Energy Sector Levies and Accounts in accordance with Section 6 of the Energy Sector Levies Act, 2015 (Act 899), As Amended.

- 4. CWSA and the MSWR should make specific provisions in the new CWSA reform bill currently before parliament. The new CWSA law should create an enabling environment to strengthen the private sector to lead initiatives for the delivery of WASH services to achieve Government's agenda of job creation and Local Economic Development.**

I have tabled the revised National Water Policy to Cabinet for their consideration. The approval of the National Water Policy will enable the introduction of wider sector reforms for the water sub sector. These reforms will find space in the development of the CWSA bill that will be developed for Cabinet and Parliament. The Private Sector is a key stakeholder when it comes to WASH Services delivery, and they will play a critical role as we march on to provide WASH Services nationwide with our sole aim of meeting the SDGs come the year 2030.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, I am eager to know what has been done by CONIWAS and other stakeholders that were assigned responsibilities at the last MOLE Conference. We should strive to implement all the decisions that was tabled to ensure that this wonderful platform do not become a “Talk Shop” but a platform where Actions and Delivery of Outputs becomes our hallmark.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, the theme set for this year's edition, which is “**Building Inclusive and Resilient Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) systems to reach the unserved**”, resonates well as part of our collective efforts in achieving universal access to safe water and sanitation for all by 2030. The theme is relevant at this time where as a sector, we need to commit more through the services we deliver to the good people of Ghana, especially when we are left with only 7 years to the SDG end line, 2030. This requires more efforts towards innovative service delivery approaches, scaling up and ensuring we reach the unserved.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, the uniqueness of this year's theme is underscored by the importance of ensuring resilience of our WASH systems, with construction, operation and maintenance, as well as promoting system strengthening at all levels while

recognizing the uneasy task of safeguarding the needs of the underserved and unserved to have sustainable and equitable WASH services.

Following the United Nation's historical declaration in 2010 through Resolution 64/292, which recognized access to basic water and sanitation as universal human right, the pressure on us as stakeholders to do whatever it takes to ensure universal access even before the 2030 timeline has never been this high. We are admonished not to leave anyone behind. The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources and the Government of Ghana, with the support of committed WASH Development Partners, is delivering WASH services to the good people of Ghana, wherever they find themselves.

Ghana's performance towards the achievement of SDG 6, according to the global SDG dashboard, indicates appreciable improvement for basic water supply with moderate improvement for sanitation. However, if this same momentum is maintained, it may not be sufficient to lead us to our set goals by 2030. A careful look at our country-specific data, the Population and Housing Census presents an interesting case; the case where for instance, access to household toilets, which had reduced from 48% in 2000 to 46% in 2010, suddenly took an upward trend to 53.5 % in 2021, thanks to the ambitious collaborative interventions and hard work of all of you gathered here, for which the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources wishes to thank you for a job well done. Ayekoo!

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, it is important to say that as WASH stakeholders, we need to focus a bit more on delivering comprehensive district-wide sanitation services in order to meet our set targets. Meeting these set targets will require coordinated, cost-effective and inclusive efforts by all. The recently launched Ghana WASH Sector Development Programme estimates a total funding requirement of US \$1.9 billion to ensure WASH for all by 2030. I wish to inform you that the process for the revision of the 2007 National Water Policy has been completed whilst the revision of Environmental Sanitation Policy has started in earnest. I had the opportunity to launch the Hand Hygiene for All Strategy last week in Cape Coast as part of the activities to commemorate the 2023 Global Handwashing Day. Again, plans are in place for the Ministry to kick-start the Water Safety campaigns nationwide.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, Ghana has made remarkable progress in the delivery of safe drinking water and we are on track to achieving the SDG targets. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, 87.7% of Ghanaians have access to basic safe drinking water. However, approximately 3.8 million people still lack access to safe drinking water.

Despite this enviable achievement, we need to take water quality issues seriously to be able to derive maximum benefits from the use of water. For example, 5 in 10 point sources and 8 out of 10 household water, according to 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey are contaminated with E-coli. This calls for vigorous public education and sensitization on how to keep water safe from point of fetch to point of use.

The greatest enemy for the safe water delivery in Ghana is the galamsey menace. As WASH stakeholders, we need to make our voices heard on the on-going discussions aiming at

stopping galamsey. It is costing our urban water utility company so much to treat water for human consumption. This, in my view, is not sustainable at all.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** we could all attest to the negative impacts of Climate Change such as floods, droughts and rising sea level and how they affect the provision of WASH Services within the Country. The time has come for us to be innovative to ensure the provision of resilient and sustainable WASH Infrastructure. The provision of such infrastructure is essential not only for public health but also for sustainable development, environmental protection, and community resilience.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** despite several sensitisation activities on how to minimise littering of waste in public places, people still leave waste on the shoulders of the road. Some still dump waste beside empty public litter bins instead of dropping the waste into these bins, while others deliberately throw the waste from moving vehicles, onto the ground.

It is sad to note that notwithstanding the efforts made by the various Assemblies towards public sensitisation, the habit of street littering has not stopped, though our National and Local Bye-Laws frown on this practice. Moreover, it costs our city authorities fortune to collect and transport these wastes from our cities. These scarce funds could have been channelled to other development sectors of the district assemblies. Additionally, uncontrolled littering takes away the aesthetic beauty of our cities, which would have otherwise attracted tourists and thereby boost the local economy.

To say the least, indiscriminate dumping of waste at unauthorized places in our cities is a dangerous practice and should not be taken lightly as it impacts negatively on the local economy and the general environment in various ways.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I wish to inform you that the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources will continue to have open- door policy to welcome CONIWAS to discuss strategic policy issues that will impact and accelerate WASH service delivery in Ghana.

The Ministry is also committed to strengthen the enabling environment to attract private sector additional funding to reach the unserved and underserved with sustainable WASH services. As we work on rural and small towns sector reforms, we will review regulatory environment to incentivise the private sector, especially small water and sanitation enterprises to be more competitive.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** let me urge all participants of MOLE 34 to come up with implementable suggestions to help the WASH sector move forward in a more sustainable manner. It is my expectation that this Conference will be conducted in spirit of partnership but with a focus on real results.

Increasingly, the Ministry, its Agencies and Development Partners are moving closer towards the spirit of mutual accountability and ownership of our programmes in line with the spirit and letter of the SWA Mutual Accountability Framework. As players in the sector, we need to hold ourselves accountable and be each other's keeper. I believe this will not only help us to reach our desired destination of providing "WASH services for All" faster but also result in attracting more funding to the sector, ensure sustainability of our services,

improve transparency and collaboration and most importantly guide us not to leave anyone behind.

I am happy to note that our Development Partners and Stakeholders have become more sensitive to sector constraints, more responsive to sector needs, and certainly more realistic in their expectation of what can be accomplished in the short to medium term. I wish to thank them for their technical and financial contribution to the WASH sector all these years and assure them of Government's commitment, even within the current global economic meltdown.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, before I end my address, let me reiterate that:

1. My Ministry will continue to engage with all like-minded individuals and agencies to ensure the attainment of the WASH Sector Targets and Goals.
2. We will attempt to hold business meetings and intensive discussions to ensure that, we make our cities and neighbourhoods clean and liveable.
3. We will take pragmatic steps to ensure effective water resources management to safeguard water quality, accessibility and adequacy for all.
4. Hygiene improvement is at the core of my Ministry, and I personally see it as a mission to ensure improvement in hygiene services delivery for all, and especially for the girl-child, women, the aged and people living with disabilities.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, I have the singular honour to declare the 34<sup>th</sup> Edition of MOLE Conference on WASH duly opened and may you have fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.