



Ghana Coalition of NGOs in the
Water and Sanitation Sector



CONIWAS - WATERSHED PROJECT

Report on CONIWAS engagement with Parliamentary Select Committee on Water and Sanitation on 2019 Budget.



23rd November, 2018

1.0 Introduction

CONIWAS is working with IRC Ghana, in the Watershed project, aimed at empowering citizens and building the capacity of civil society to advocate for WASH and proper watershed management. The project aims to achieve improvements in the governance of WASH and water resources, ensuring the sustainability of WASH services.

One of the activities under this project is to engage with the ministry or parliamentary select committee on works and housing, on relevant WASH and IWRM issues.

The second of these dialogues was organized with the parliamentary select committee on works and housing on the 23rd of November, 2018.

1.0 Objectives

The objectives of the meeting included the following;

- Strengthen CONIWAS's collaboration with the select committee
- Make them a key partner in establishing the movement for WASH
- Establish a periodic meeting with the select committee
- Share key concerns of the 2019 budget for WASH with focus on funding for IWRM and
- Call on the committee to support in advocating for increased budgetary allocation for the WASH sector

1.2 Participants and Methodology

In all, thirty five (35) People participated in the meeting. This was made up of Eleven (11) Members of the select committee and 5 participants from the parliament house and well as Nineteen (19) Members of CONIWAS. Among the CSOs were representative from IRC, Mr. Abu Wumbei and partners from the watershed project; HFFG and GWJN.

The meeting was very interactive. Both CONIWAS and the select committee deliberated on how to strengthen the relationship and work together to promote better WASH service delivery.

2.0 Opening and Remarks by CONIWAS Chair

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Ms. Rose Meda, an Executive Committee member of CONIWAS at 12:07pm. Participants from CONIWAS introduced themselves as well as the various organisations they worked for.

The Chairman of CONIWAS, Mr. Martin Dery introduced the Executive body of the Coalition and the new Executive Secretary to CONIWAS, Ms. Basilia Nanbigne. As chair, he led the group in stating CONIWAS's reason for meeting with the committee by outlining key issues of concern to CONIWAS.

In his introductory statement he indicated that in as much as this meeting should have taken place before the final budget was read to Parliament by the Finance Minister, he believes it is still not late, since in the near future, CONIWAS with experts in the water and sanitation sector will

have the opportunity of making inputs into the budget before it is finalised and delivered by the Finance Minister on the floor of Parliament.

He apologised for the inability of the coalition to invite the Parliamentary Select Committee to participate in the just ended Mole XXIX conference which was held at Cisneros Villa, Sogakope in the Volta Region of Ghana and briefed the committee members about the successful completion of the Mole 29 conference. Mr. Dery indicated that, the catch word for the Mole 29 was 'The need for a movement for WASH, and added that such movement can only be complete with the inclusion of the parliamentary select committee. The focus of WASH to the sector has been broadened to look at water beyond domestic purposes, to focus on water for household use. And looking at sanitation beyond liquid waste, to solid waste as well, taking into consideration the whole value chain for sanitation.



The Chairman of CONIWAS, Mr. Martin Dery,(left) addressing the meeting

He praised the successful attempts by the government to combat galamsey activities which were destroying our water resources. He commended that since water was a finite resource it needed to be protected and operation Vanguard was a step in the right direction by the president to combat the menace of water pollution by galamsey activities. He added that, since both CSOs and Parliamentarians represents the interest of the people, it is therefore important to collaborate and champion a good course for WASH.

Before dwelling on the budget for WASH especially on IWRM, he commended the government for setting up a ministry for Sanitation and Hygiene. This he said was in the right direction, in giving more attention to sanitation especially. However, it is important that government should give prominence to WASH as well in its budgetary allocations. He mentioned the fact that, the 2019 budget indicated lower financial allocations to the water and sanitation sector. This he compared with the 2017 budget and 2018 allocation for the sector. He indicated that, to meet the SDGs for sanitation, there is the need for more funding allocation to the sector. And so with the low funding allocation, Ghana will not be able to meet its SDG target for WASH by 2030.

He added that, CONIWAS is happy that government is investing in regulating dams and is focusing on demarcating buffer zones to safeguard our resources. He also applauded Government for their good work with early warning systems regarding floods. However, he noted that the 2019 budget, allocation to IWRM which is for the WRC, was allocated from the IGF provided by the

WRC, and this is woefully inadequate. He advised that, government should give some importance to water quality issues, and so increase the budget for WRC.

The chairman also registered CONIWAS's concern about the fact that other ministries were allocated funds to implement WASH projects even though the funding allocation to the main sector was low. He added that, as a coalition, to make tracking easier, 'we would prefer that, funds for WASH are put into one ministry. There are several water and sanitation projects in the country which are not supervised or sanctioned by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation or by the Ministry of local government. These include borehole drilling projects being carried out by the ministry of Special Projects. CONIWAS is seeking the office of the Committee to see how best it will be to get these adhoc projects consolidated and coordinated in order to avoid duplication whiles sharing best practices'.

He concluded by adding that, as CSOs, CONIWAS will continue to mobilize resources to support the WASH sector. CONIWAS will also continue to engage with the parliamentary select committee on relevant sector issues.

2.1 Opening Remarks by Chair of Parliamentary Select Committee

The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Select committee for Works and Housing, Hon. Nana Boamah congratulated CONIWAS for a successful Mole XXIX conference and also accepted the apology rendered by the CONIWAS chair for not inviting the committee. He expressed his desire to have participated in such a conference to broaden his knowledge about the current trends in the sector as well as learn about the successes and challenges in the sector. He gave the chance for his colleagues to introduce themselves to CONIWAS before they took turns to respond to the issues raised by CONIWAS as summarised below.

In as much as the budget for the 2019 was not as high as it was in 2017 for the water and sanitation ministry, it was achieved by series of consultations with the Finance Department in order to help Ghana achieve the SDG 6 by 2030.

CONIWAS as the mouth piece of CSOs in the sector should intensify their advocacy in order to draw the attention of the government to the water and sanitation crises in the country. When CONIWAS speaks, it will be taken more than when politicians speak, since what politicians say is usually politicized. Therefore, the committee is always willing to work together with CONIWAS in pushing the government to meet SDG 6 by 2030.

If 80% of the sector financing is depended on donors, then WASH in the country will face challenges when donors withdraw their support to the sector. Therefore they understand the need for government to increase budget for the sector. However, since CONIWAS works with donor partners, CONIWAS should encourage them to continue to support the sector. Indeed CONIWAS' collaborating with the committee for Works and Housing, will amplify the issues of WASH.

CONIWAS should broaden its membership base and ensure that NGOs in the water and sanitation sector are registered under the Coalition to help regulate the work of NGOs in the sector, and ensure a consolidated effort in tracking activities in the sector for reporting purposes. The committee is ready to help CONIWAS with any legal framework that mandates all NGOs in the country to join CONIWAS if need be.



Cross section of Parliamentary Select Committee for Water Resources Works and Housing

Regarding the budgetary allocations to other sectors/ministries for WASH activities (eg. MSDI), this is one of the ways government intends to prioritizing developmental initiatives that are important to the government. Therefore, making WASH a priority in these initiatives should be applauded. CONIWAS therefore should see it as a complement to the WASH sector initiatives and so rather try to strengthen the monitoring of funding to these ministries, to ensure that it delivers on its mandate. CONIWAS should ensures that these ministries account for funds given to them by government for projects that is intended to improve water and sanitation service delivery in the country.

3.0 Conclusion and Way Forward

To conclude the engagement, some recommendations were made for both teams, while some request was equally made to the CONIWAS team. These included the following;

CONIWAS should submit a list of all their members and their field of specialization and area of intervention to the committee so they can work with them where necessary for support in documentation and information when the need arises.

The chair of the committee admitted that engagement such as this, with CONIWAS is very welcome and should be structured and held more often. It was agreed by both CONIWAS and the Committee that the engagement should be a quarterly engagement, so that both teams will

be updated on progress on both ends as the coalition and the committee are to work together for a common purpose.

CONIWAS should also;

Endeavour to invite members of the committee to sector events so that they can learn more about issues in the sector.

Collaborate with the committee to undertake budget tracking exercise as well as support the committee with adequate research on WASH financing, IWRM and other WASH issues, so that the committee can use it to enrich their debate in the house.

Develop strong argument to convince the committee on why government should have a consolidated budget for WASH under one ministry

Develop strong argument and collaborate to equip the committee to convince government to increase budget for WASH

Enhance tracking of government's expenditure on WASH

Share key sector issues with the committee to educate them on issues about the sector.

4.0 Closing and closing remarks by the Chairman of CONIWAS

The chairman of CONIWAS appreciated all the issues raised by the committee members and reassured the committee that they will be invited to the next Mole conference. He also promised to ensure that the committee is invited to other sector events. On behalf of the team, he thanked the committee for the audience and hoped to meet soon with them again.

The meeting came to a close with a prayer from Ibrahim.