



EXECUTIVE BREAKFAST CONVERSATION
(A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE)

THEME

UNLOCKING GHANA'S SAFE DRINKING WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION PUZZLE



REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS

DATE

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VENUE

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Sincere appreciation goes to the Chairman of the Conversation, Dr. Yaw Ben Ampomah, the expert panellists, our friends from the media and the distinguished participants who attended and contributed to the discourse.

This conversation was moderated by Mr. Yaw Attah Arhin, WASH Technical Specialist, World Vision Ghana with technical support from Mr. Robel Lambisso Wamisho, WASH Technical Program Manager, World Vision Ghana

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I BACKGROUND

Safe drinking water and improved sanitation are both an enabler of poverty reduction and a catalyst for growth and socio-economic development. Ghana has made giant strides in its efforts towards the achieving the national and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target for safe drinking water. The Ghana Statistical Service has recently revealed that the proportion of the country's population with access to basic drinking water services is 87.7% (PHC 2021) and this varies substantially between urban (96.4%) and rural (74.4%) and among regions, from 97.6% in Greater Accra to 54.8% in North East.

At the end of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, the country had posted an impressive 89%, exceeded its basic drinking water target of 78%. According to the JMP report on progress towards achieving the SDGs, access to basic drinking water supply in Ghana stands at 86% (JMP 2021). Due to this good progress, the expectation of Ghana's ability to achieve the SDG target for safe drinking water is quite high. However, the lack of access to safe drinking water in several communities, schools and healthcare facilities is also a major challenge which poses a serious threat to maternal and child health as well as quality basic education.

Unfortunately, the good progress achieved in safe drinking water supply cannot be said about environmental sanitation. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, 42.6% of Ghana's population has access to basic sanitation (toilet) facilities with 55% sharing latrines while 2.4% use unimproved sanitation facilities. Admittedly, this is good progress and a major improvement compared to data from JMP 2021 and MICS 2017/18. Almost eighteen percent (17.7%) of the population practise open defecation with more than five regions recording more than 50% while 23% use public toilet facilities. The basic sanitation situation in schools and healthcare facilities is also a huge challenge. EMIS 2018 estimates that 30% and 49% public basic schools lack access to safe drinking water and improved toilets respectively.

Stakeholders believe that to achieve at least the SDG target for basic drinking water and basic sanitation, Ghana needs to ensure greater prioritization, political commitment and increased investments. The country also needs to pay special attention to issues of equity and inclusion, water quality challenges, operation and maintenance and the sustainable management of water resources. The growing threat posed by the effects of climate change also requires serious attention.

This dialogue focussed on soliciting stakeholder inputs and recommendations in order to determine a strategic way forward for leaving no one behind.

2 OPENING SESSION

2.1 *Dr. Ben Yaw Ampomah, Executive Secretary of the Water Resources Commission*



In his opening remarks, Dr. Ben Yaw Ampomah traced the evolution of Ghana's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector and maintained that quite a lot has been achieved even through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Making reference to the limitations in respect of financing, the Executive Secretary of the Water Resources

Commission was, however, quick to indicate that a lot also remains to be done in the areas of water resources management and WASH services delivery. The chairman was of the opinion that sector players have worked together over the years to overcome many of the challenges confronting the sector. He believed that the conversation afforded participants the opportunity to continue to identify issues and challenges and propose practical solutions to the sector's outstanding challenges.

2.2 *Welcome remarks by the National Director of World Vision Ghana, Mr. Dickens Thunde*



Referring to the Executive Breakfast Conversation as a Family Breakfast Dialogue, Mr. Dickens Thunde welcomed participants to the event with great honour. For him, the sector was "facing a very important issue before us". There were a lot of good things in the WASH sector of Ghana that stakeholders should be celebrating. The National Director referred to the creation of the Ministry of

Sanitation and Water Resources only a couple of years ago, with greater emphasis on sanitation, as one of the celebrations. For him, following the creation of the ministry great strides have been achieved in respect of improvement in access to clean water. Making reference to the launch of the National Sanitation Campaign when the President expressed his vision of making Accra the cleanest city in Africa, he reminded participants that the country was lagging behind in terms of improved sanitation.

Mr. Dickens Thunde indicated that consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between World Vision Ghana and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, the forum was created to discuss the issues frankly towards ensuring that all people have access to safe water and improved sanitation in the spirit of SDG 6. According to Mr. Thunde, in spite of the fact that this

was a very tall and ambitious goal, stakeholders in the country have a responsibility to contribute to its realization, and he was glad that the participants were carefully selected with that in mind. He reiterated that the sector was presented with opportunities and challenges and that this dialogue was meant to ask the hard questions, discuss recommended solutions in order to bring them to scale so that Ghana would be ready by 2030 and all stakeholders can take pride in our collective achievement.

2.3 PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Patrick Apoya, Chief Executive Officer of Skyfox Limited



In his introductory remarks, the presenter cautioned that “today is not the time for lamentations, complaints and excuses, but to see whether in the midst of all the difficulties there are still opportunities for us to make a difference in the sector.” Mr. Patrick Apoya began his presentation titled “WASH in Ghana” with two famous quotes as follows:

“We shall not defeat any of the infectious diseases that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care.” *Kofi Annan, Fmr. UN Sec. General*

“Although we take it for granted, sanitation is a physical measure which has probably done more to increase human life span than any kind of drug or surgery” *Deepak Chopra, an American Philosopher*

The brief presentation discussed the following themes:

- Ghana as a lower middle income country
 - The inter-linkages of the SDGs and the place of WASH
 - Sector policies and strategies
 - The institutional framework for WASH services delivery and the National Sanitation Authority as a potential game changer
 - Water resources management and the threats from illegal mining, sand winning, farming and other unacceptable human activities
 - Safe drinking water – achievements, challenges and way forward
 - Improved sanitation – achievements, challenges and way forward
 - WASH in Schools
 - Solid waste management
 - The cost of poor sanitation
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3 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mrs. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Honourable Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources



In her introductory remarks, Mrs. Cecilia Abena Dapaah expressed her pleasure and satisfaction for participating in “this historic Executive Breakfast Conversation which was designed to take stock and propose practical ways of supporting the accelerated delivery of safe drinking water and environmental sanitation in Ghana.” She praised the initiative of World Vision Ghana and partners for putting this conversation together in collaboration with the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources.

Describing the theme for the conversation *Unlocking Ghana’s Safe Drinking Water and Environmental Sanitation Puzzle* as “apt”, the Honourable Minister to truly propose practical solutions to the gaps that would be identified. Mrs. Cecilia Abena Dapaah reminded participants that “the theme for the conversation was a reminder to all of us that in spite of the several good initiatives that government, development partners and all other stakeholders have introduced, we are still faced with challenges that hinder our progress towards universal WASH services delivery.” According to her, the fact that the country has not recorded any incidence of cholera or dysentery was, however, a huge achievement.

The Honorable Minister further assured participants that the issue of safe drinking water and environmental sanitation were top priorities in government’s development strategy since access to them was fundamental to maternal and child health, poverty reduction, quality education and socio-economic wellbeing. She emphasized that “indeed all strategies for growth and sustainable development must put the need for safe water and improved sanitation first.”

While recounting the numerous steps government and her ministry were taking to improve the water and sanitation situation in the country, Mrs. Dapaah also confirmed that the processes

towards the establishment of the National Sanitation Authority was also progressing steadily and that the bill was ready for cabinet's approval. She was quick to recognize that this task cannot be delivered by government alone but should be a collective responsibility. The Minister accordingly urged all stakeholders to redouble their efforts and work together to achieve lasting improvements in the country's environmental sanitation.

She further assured that government was committed to increasing its support to the Ghana Water Company Limited to expand infrastructure, further reduce non-revenue water and ensure efficiency in urban water supply. Government will also continue its support to the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA) to facilitate the implementation of the ongoing reforms to ensure efficient water and sanitation delivery in rural and small towns.

Concluding her address, the Minister indicated that Government would further strengthen efforts to deal with the negative effects of illegal mining and climate change which continue to pose a threat to raw water sources with multiplier effects on sustainable water supply. She outlined the following measures towards improving water resources management and accelerating access to sustainable WASH services:

- Increase our efforts to implement international commitments related to water and sanitation;
- Raise the profile of sanitation by addressing the gaps in the context of the 2008 eThekwini Ministerial Declaration on sanitation in Africa adopted by AMCOW.
- Create a conducive environment to enhance the effective engagement of local authorities and the private sector;
- Ensure the equitable and sustainable use, as well as promote integrated management and development, of national and shared water resources;
- Put in place adaptation measures to improve our resilience to the increasing threat of climate change and variability to our water resources and our capacity to meet the water and sanitation targets;
- Increase domestic financial resource allocation for implementing water and sanitation activities while developing innovative financing arrangements for sustainable WASH services delivery.
- Introduce appropriate measures to position the WASH sector for emergency response and sustainable development

Mrs. Cecilia Abena Dapaah finally expressed appreciation to all development partners and stakeholders for their continued support to the sector. She further reiterated government's commitment to ensuring adequate funding to this vital sector in order to improve the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the people. The Minister ended by once expressing her gratitude to World Vision Ghana and partners for working in collaboration with her Ministry to host this Executive Breakfast Conversation and assured that her ministry's doors were always opened for such progressive collaborations.

4 PANEL DISCUSSION



During the panel discussion, panelists addressed the issue of why the country is where it is, what is not being right and how things could be done differently to improve the situation in respect of rural and urban water delivery, rural and urban sanitation and waste management. The panel was composed of Ing. Worlanyo Siabi – Chief Executive of Community Water and Sanitation Agency; Ing. Harold

Esseku, Senior WASH Advisor of the World Bank; Mr. Kweku Quansah – Deputy Director (sanitation) of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources; and Mr. Patrick Apoya – Chief Executive Officer of Skyfox Limited.



Ing. Worlanyo Siabi, Chief Executive, Community Water and Sanitation Agency

Providing a background of financing in the rural sub-sector, Dr. Worlanyo Siabi indicated that so far approximately US\$1.5 billion dollars has been invested. This sustained investment increased rural water coverage consistently until after 2015 when we declined from almost 65% to the current 62.47% from the

provider's perspective. This compares with 74.4% of households with basic drinking water services captured in the 2021 Population and Housing Census. For him much of the difference comes from self-supply. Other submissions of the CWSA Chief Executive included the following:

- The decline in access to safe drinking water in rural and small towns is attributable to factors such as:
 - ✓ High non-revenue water
 - ✓ Various water quality challenges
 - ✓ Challenges with electricity supply and bills
 - ✓ Deficit in skills (less than 1% of skilled personnel work in community management of water facilities).
 - ✓ Population increase unmatched by increased investments
 - ✓ Frequency of facility breakdowns and the length of the down time.
 - ✓ Technology – most of the technologies and equipment in use are rather obsolete and need to be upgraded. Such outdated technologies and equipment also result in increased down time

- In order to address the challenges confronting the delivery of safe drinking water in rural communities, i.e. high non-revenue water, water quality issues, non-payment of electricity bills, skills deficiency and outdated technology, government is support the Community Water and Sanitation Agency to design and implement some reforms.
- Middle level personnel from the Polytechnics and Technical Universities are being recruited to bridge the skills gap. This ensures that requisite skills required for the efficient delivery of services are available.
- The reforms also come with the capacity building of Area Mechanics and supporting them to deal with the operation and maintenance of point sources.
- While using the reforms to address the various challenges associated with rural water delivery and introduce professionalism into service delivery, it is also important to prioritize and increase investments in order to reach unserved communities.



Ing. Harold Esseku, Senior WASH Advisor, World Bank

When he took his turn to discuss urban water and sanitation delivery, Ing. Harold Esseku made the following submissions:

- Some work has been done in the area of urban water delivery and there is currently work ongoing. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. What the sector needs to do is to continue to build on the successes so far to improve the situation. Ninety-seven percent access to safe water in urban areas is huge in spite of wide regional disparities, water quality challenges and other issues.
 - Disparities in urban sanitation are much worse, and the biggest challenges are in the hard to reach areas.
 - The 17.7% of Ghana's population who practice open defecation is more than 5 million people. This means that there is still a lot of work to be done. Unfortunately, the challenge with the people who do not have access to basic services is that they fall into the lower income bracket.
 - What we need to do is to undertake a Sanitation Mapping exercise where we introduce the stick approach in high income communities versus the carrot approach in low income communities. People in high income communities should be able to provide sanitation facilities by themselves without any external support.
 - For medium income communities, the carrot to be provided may be less but there should still be a mechanism to provide targeted support aimed at accelerating access to household toilet facilities and other relevant sanitation facilities.
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Mr. Kweku Quansah, Deputy Director of Sanitation, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources

Focusing largely on rural sanitation, Mr. Kweku Quansah's submissions centered on the following:

- The gradual interest being shown in the WASH sector by bankers and other non-traditional professionals was a source of great joy and hope.
- The sector is doing a number of things right. We have excelled in the development of relevant policies, costed strategies and plans. Unfortunately, we do not seem to have got implementation right to achieve sustainable results. Other countries come to learn from our best practices, implementing them and achieving good results.
- One of the things we have not focused adequate attention on is the issue around funding. This needs to be discussed objectively. For example, according to the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) 2021, Ghana is doing around 0.08% of GDP in terms of investments in sanitation, while next door neighbor Cote D'Ivoire is doing 0.38% of GDP. Therefore, even though a lot is being invested in the sanitation sub-sector, the level of investment has not been able to catch up with the financing gap that exists. Can the sector begin to look at cost recovery?
- The deficiencies with the institutional arrangements also need to be addressed. Until this is fixed, we may not be able to get things right and achieve desired results. Even though the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources is the technical arm in sanitation services delivery, we still need to look at the lower structures that are supposed to do the implementation.
- Happy to observe that government and the Ministry of Sanitation are working around the clock to establish the National Sanitation Authority (NSA) which is expected to come with the National Sanitation Fund. This is a possible game changer because the NSA will be positioned to:
 - ✓ regulate the system effectively
 - ✓ coordinate the functions of various players
 - ✓ crack the whip to ensure all service providers and stakeholders fall in line
- The haphazard implementation of programs and activities across board is another major issue which has not helped matters over the years. As a sector, we need to begin doing holistic and comprehensive service delivery especially at the implementation level.
 - ✓ For instance, in the Community-Led Total Sanitation approach, government, development partners, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders are all supporting communities to become Open-Defecation Free (ODF) but we don't seem to have succeeded in achieving results. It has been difficult to convert communities to ODF,

while the few that attain ODF status often decline and begin practicing open defecation again.

- Overall, data shows that we have made moderate gains in respect of improved sanitation. For example, in 2018, access to basic sanitation (improved toilets) stood at 21% (MICS 2017/18) but access to basic sanitation is now 25.3% (PHC 2021).
- Unfortunately, the moment we benchmark our performance against safely managed sanitation, then we fall flat. This tells us that we should not only be interested in containment, but rather look at the extreme end of the sanitation value chain. This calls for increased investments to get things done and achieve sustainable results.



Mr. Patrick Apoya, Chief Executive Officer, Skyfox Limited.

Discussing issues of general sector performance, Mr. Patrick Apoya's submissions were captured as follows:

- Inability to push innovations through to scale for replication. As soon as a sector players tests a model and it is proven to work, it ends there. Also, perhaps because of the sense of competition among development actors, it is difficult to promote innovations in the sector.
 - It is very difficult for a non-traditional actor to find its feet in the sector. Acceptance into the sector is perceived to be dependent on how much a new actor brings to the table. But until we accommodate newcomers, non-traditional actors and even the private sector practitioners who are pushing small innovative solutions, there is no way we can push forward.
 - The questionable nature of our culture when it comes to certain behaviours is also another weak point. Ours seems to be a culture that just accepts that I can live without a decent toilet facility. This is not a social norm, it is a social dilemma. We cannot continue to consider sanitation as only an engineering problem, or a BCC problem. We need to engage psychologists, people who specialize in behaviour science and anthropologists in dealing with our attitude to environmental sanitation.
 - It is important to pay attention to the market in order to deliver equitable WASH solutions that last. There is just no way that a country like Ghana can solve its WASH challenges by only humanitarian development approaches. Unfortunately, we are still struggling with the role of the private sector and the market in rolling out time-tested solutions.
 - Even in respect of paying for sanitation, we don't seem to be clear on the way forward. We know a lot of people cannot pay so we segmented the urban poor, used the GAMA SWP approach and it has worked. But the approach can cover up to a certain extent. There is another segment that may be fine with a loan because they can pay. Unfortunately, we are not seeing how to exploit that to get the market to also play a role.
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- As a country, we have local governments that are not viable and that cannot plan anything on their own. They make it seem as if it is somebody's problem and they can only act when the money is available. So until our Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, become viable and are able to provide solutions, inclusive WASH services delivery will continue to face the threat of scale and sustainability.
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5 KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key Issues

The following key issues and recommendations were made during the opening remarks, PowerPoint presentation, panel discussion and inputs from participants:

- The country has made very slow progress in Sanitation and Waste management compared to progress made in safe water delivery.
 - ✓ Water 87.7%; Sanitation 25.3% (17.7% Practice Open Defecation)
 - ✓ Disparities, inequalities and inequities are significant
- WASH In Schools (WInS) – 26% of public basic schools in Ghana lack access to toilets
- Financial resources available by Government is improving but well below set targets of 0-5% of GDP. (Currently at 0.08% of GDP).
- Process to establish National Sanitation Authority (NSA) is underway and ready for cabinet approval.
- There are little or no competences available for community management of rural water systems.
- Successful WASH Implementation models by various partners are not replicated and taken to scale.
- Local Government Authorities are not sufficiently resourced to plan and implement WASH, especially sanitation in communities.
- There is no comprehensively designed and sustained behavior change strategies and initiatives for WASH in Ghana.
- There is a disjoint between MSWR (WASH policy), MLGDRD, OHLGS and District Assemblies (implementers).
- It is reported that there has been increased investments in the sector but there seem to be questions around the outcomes and quality of the investments.
- GWCL to produce and supply water to CWSA to distribute to some rural communities.

5.2 Recommendations

- The National Sanitation Authority (NSA) should have capacity to harmonize, integrate efforts and actions in the sector.
 - Let's regulate and enforce the building code as well as WASH and environmental sanitation laws and by-laws.
 - Effective planning must lead to population adjusted progress in the delivery of WASH services.
 - Adopt technology to improve WASH services (Examples, smart taps and solar power) with a focus on the poor in society
 - There is need to plan the delivery of targeted solutions to address WASH for the poor and deprived communities / settlements.
 - There is need for increase resilience and adaptation to the impact of climate change
 - Anticipated progress should be based on active collaboration with all partners including NGOs and the Private sector.
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- High levels of non-revenue water needs urgent attention – Is it due to water theft / illegal connection, wastage or white collar collusion?
 - ✓ Significant improvement noticed in recent times from 54% to 43%
 - Sector financing and other issues need further discussion so it is important to keep talking as sector stakeholders.
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6 SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

6.1 *Technological Innovation*

- Technology is key in WASH services delivery.
- Need to keep with and focus on technologies targeting the poor in society, and addressing efficiency in delivery, monitoring of services and facilities, conservation (reduction in losses), etc.
- Push through and scale up existing technological innovations that are so far limited to specific actors in WASH services delivery.

6.2 *Capacity Development*

- Management and technological skills should be addressed especially for the operation and management of rural/small town systems and sanitation facilities. For instance, target technicians in the communities and the private sector.
- Institutional capacity (both public and private) is also of relevance to support WASH services delivery.

6.3 *Water Quality*

- The state of water sources is key in WASH services delivery.
- Improving the quality of raw water sources for WASH services should be of priority concern.
- The water quality affects both surface water and groundwater (e.g. about 30% of groundwater sources for community water supply have quality issues).

6.4 *Improving the WASH Delivery Chain*

The WASH Delivery chain from the source to the final consumer should be improved with respect to the following:

- Non-traditional actors should be brought on board as part of the delivery system.
- Treat water as an interdisciplinary matter by including social values and economic elements, and linking technology to the communities.
- The market system at the national and local levels should not be ignored.

6.5 *Public and Private Sector Nexus*

- Public sector benefits to create opportunities or support the private sector. For instance, the financial support from the CSWA community water supply systems being used to support the private sector in sanitation services.
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6.6 *Addressing Disparities*

- Employ city-wide and District-wide plans/models and interventions to deliberately address the regional, urban and rural disparities.

6.7 *Institutional Arrangements*

- Establishment of the National Sanitation Authority (NSA) should be supported by all stakeholders.
 - The NSA should have capacity to regulate and manage sanitation and to coordinate all policies and actions in the sector.
 - The establishment and realization of its mandate should be viewed as a process and therefore expectations should be managed (e.g. issues including the legal process for its set-up, organizational manpower, adoption of regulations and strategies to actualize the Act setting up the NSA etc. may take time).
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7 CONCLUSION

The world's children have a right to safe water and environmental sanitation, and to the health and wellbeing that these sustain. To a large extent, sustained progress in health, food security and nutrition, education and poverty reduction depends upon improvements in water and sanitation. The beneficial effect of fully immunizing a child is entirely lost, for example, if that child dies preventable diseases such as diarrhoea.

The relatively slow progress in sanitation when compared with that for water indicates an urgent need to pick up the pace. There is widespread acceptance that sanitation services are critical to improving health and to preserving the gains made in various sectors and a growing recognition that hygiene behaviour change is key to saving children's lives.

Progress towards the SDGs needs to be strengthened in these critical areas:

- Marshalling political will at all levels and prioritizing WASH services delivery;
- Increasing investments over time for sustainable service delivery;
- Ensuring adequate capacity for effective operation and maintenance and sustainability;
- Deploying appropriate technology to promote the delivery and monitoring of services;
- Addressing disparities and promoting gender, equity and inclusion;
- Strengthening the institutional arrangements to ensure effective coordination and performance management;
- Accelerating sustainable services, and improving the quality of services.

Going forward, it is important to ensure that our approaches are more inter-sectoral in order for interventions to make a significant difference and have more impact.

PARTICIPANTS

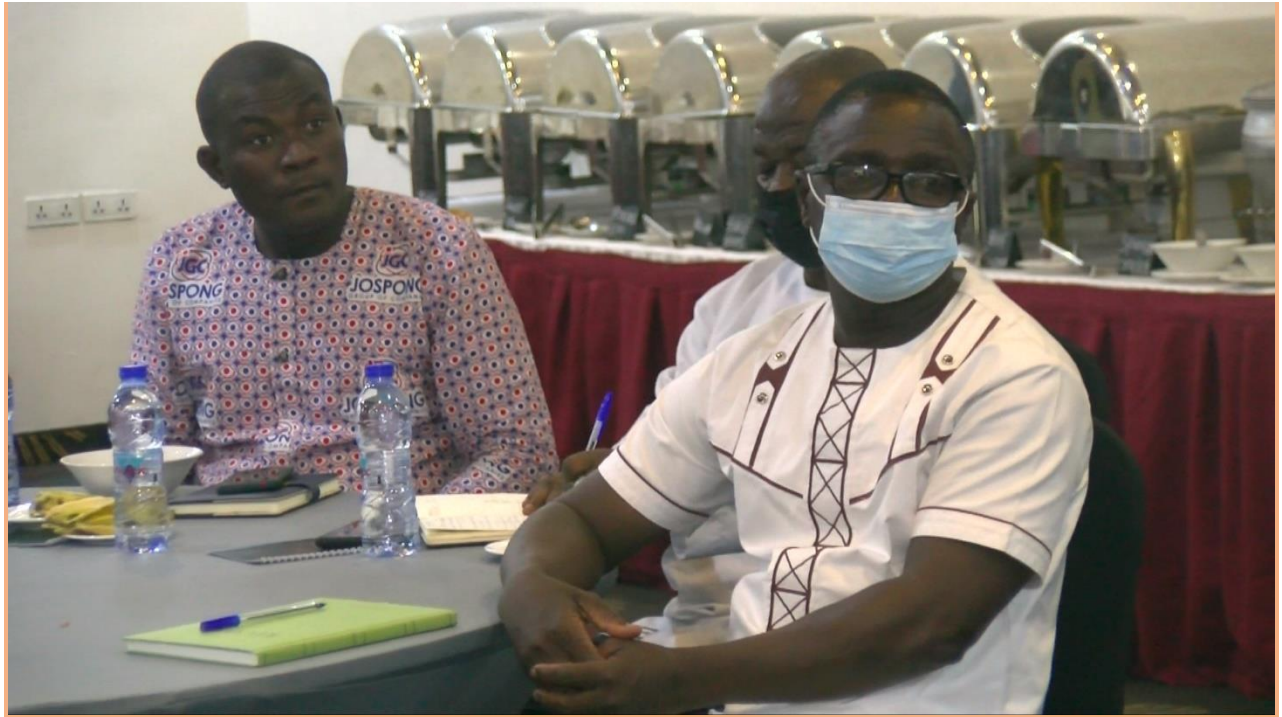
















The Moderator

WORLD VISION is a Christian humanitarian organisation dedicated to working with children, families and their communities to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender.

World Vision has been working in all regions of Ghana for the past 42 years. For more information on our work, please visit www.wvi.org/ghana or follow us on Twitter @WorldVisionGH

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