

# WORLD WATER DAY 2022 CONCEPT NOTE

## Theme: Groundwater – Making the invisible visible

### Introduction

World Water Day is an annual United Nations Observance, started in 1993, focusing on the importance of water, coordinated by UN-Water and led by one or more UN-Water Members and Partners with a related mandate.

World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Water and Sanitation for all by 2030.

This year (2022) the theme is ‘**Groundwater – Making the invisible Visible**’. Groundwater is invisible, but its impact is visible everywhere and is a hidden treasure that enriches our lives. As climate change gets worse, groundwater will become more and more critical. There is a need to work together to sustainably manage this precious resource. Groundwater may be out of sight, but it must not be out of mind.

Globally, 69% of freshwater is captured in the ice /snow/glaciers, while 1% is found in rivers and lakes. Groundwater accounts for 30% of the world’s freshwater resources and has high microbiological quality and virtually requires no treatment in many cases. It is a natural resource, which can often be found close to the final consumers and therefore does not require large investments in terms of infrastructure and treatment.

The most important about using groundwater is to find the right balance between withdrawing and letting the aquifer’s level recover to avoid overexploitation and pollution of this crucial resource. Groundwater offers better insurance against drought compared to surface water because of long lag between changes in recharge and responses in groundwater levels and could offer high reliability in supplies and provides cheap and convenient individual supplies. Groundwater is easily developed and used for Domestic, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural and Agro-processing, Recreational & Aesthetic and Energy.

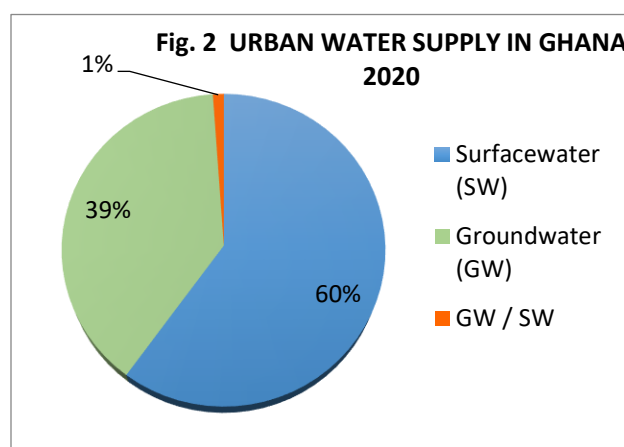
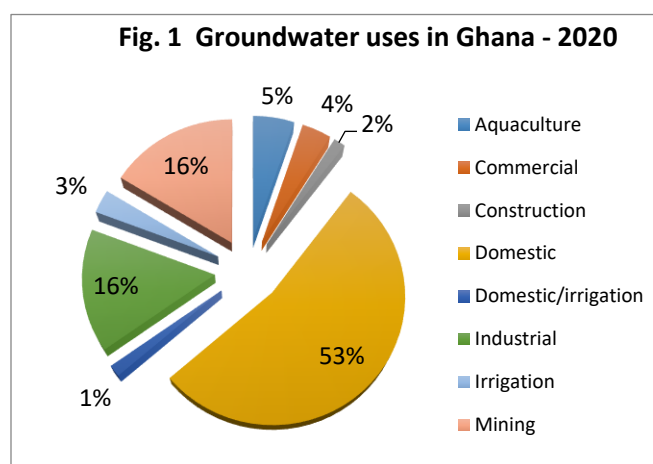
Good groundwater management is needed to achieve most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030. Fifty-three of the SDG’s 169 targets have a link to groundwater. Sustainable groundwater management is needed to achieve SDG target 6.6 to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, and SDG target 15.1 on the conservation of freshwater ecosystems and their services.

In Ghana groundwater plays an important role in the supply of water mainly to the unreached populations in the urban and rural areas. It is estimated that groundwater contributes about 62% of the total water requirement of Ghana. It contributes an average of 67% to Northern Ghana’s domestic water needs (Agyekum and Asare 2016). The quality of groundwater resources in Ghana is generally good except for some cases of localised pollution and areas with high levels of iron, fluoride and other minerals. Salinity in certain groundwater occurrences is also found especially in some coastal aquifers.

The Water Resources Commission (WRC) as part of its regulatory activities in 2020 permitted 310 major water users, 41% of whom use groundwater as the only source (Table 1).

<b>Table 1: Major Water Users in Ghana 2020</b>		
<b>Source used</b>	<b>No. of major users</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Groundwater only	126	41
Groundwater/ Surface Water	14	5
Surface water only	170	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>310</b>	

Groundwater in Ghana is used for many different activities. In 2020 domestic water use comprised 53% of those using groundwater, while 32% were for industrial and mining. The rest of the data is presented in the figures 1 and 2.



Other water use activities that used groundwater as its source, included: mining, irrigation, industrial, construction and aquaculture; One hundred and nine (109) drillers have been licensed under the Drilling Licence And Groundwater Development Regulations, 2006, LI 1892 (WRC Annual Report 2020)

Rural water supply in Ghana is dominated by the use of groundwater in Ghana. The Community Water and Sanitation Agency, which facilitates the provision of domestic water for rural communities and small towns have installed with 28,869 hand pumps serving populations of over five million in the rural areas. The Rural Water Coverage as at December 2021 was 62.47%.

Ghana Water Company (GWCL) manages 90 systems, 35 are boreholes and 54 surfacewater and 1 has borehole and surface. Groundwater represents 39%. (GWCL 2020 Annual Report) as represented in figure 2.

### **Groundwater resources development and management in Ghana.**

The Water Resources Commission established by Act of 1996 (Act 522) is mandated to regulate the utilization of Ghana's water resources. The Water Use Regulations, 2001 (L.I. 1692), provides procedures for allocating water for various water uses. A separate legislation, Groundwater

Development Regulations, 2006, LI 1892, was enacted to regulate groundwater development and to, provide guidance on drilling activities and to collect and collate groundwater data for decision-making.

Challenges associated with the management and developments include: inadequate data uneven distribution of ground water resources in Ghana, Water quality issues Improper drilling of boreholes, Proliferation of water well drilling activities, illegal drilling activities and groundwater abstraction, Limited information available on water well drilling activities for future referencing; Others are Lack of standards in water well drilling activities to ensure maximum protection of groundwater resources and Inadequate reliable groundwater data and information needed for assessment and future planning and effective management of groundwater resources.

### **Key Focus Issues**

This year's World Water Day will be used, to educate and provide strategic steps to appreciate the overall 'strategic groundwater management for sustainability' in the face of climate change and other challenges. The following are some of the key areas to focus on:

- Protecting Groundwater
- Considering Groundwater as a safe source of water
- Use of Groundwater for industrial, economic and domestic benefits
- Sensitizing Groundwater drillers

### **Key Partners**

Identified partners to implement activities of this year's WWD include the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR), Community Water & Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Water Resources Commission, Ghana Water Company Limited, CSIR Water Research Institute, Ghana Meteorological Agency, Irrigation Development Authority, World Vision International, GAMA Sanitation & Water Project, CONIWAS, IRC, Global Communities, Blue Deal, UNICEF, UNESCO

### **Target Stakeholders/ Audience**

While, activities for 2022 WWD is targeted at the general public, the main target audience for this year will be children, policy makers, the media, advocacy groups, water institutions, water managers and practitioners.

### **Approach/ Strategy**

The main approach or strategy will be to undertake publicity activities including the use of media (radio, television and print) to raise public awareness on the need to be strategic in the management of groundwater

Proposed Activities for the National Celebration:

- Sensitization for the water sector actors
- Media briefing / Policy dialogue /Public forum
- Climax of the celebrations will be at a selected community, preferably in the Greater Accra with issues pertaining to groundwater.

- Training of Drillers
- Launch of UN World Water Report 2022 on WWD
- Dissemination of UN World Water Report 2022 on WWD
- Nationwide Media Activities will include:
  - Social Media campaign (Facebook, twitter, etc.)
  - Talk shows Radio and TV talk shows (WASH HOUR etc),
  - Radio commentary
  - Feature articles in newspapers, editorials
  - Development of messages
  - Development of thematic based synopsis for discussions
  - Advertisements
- Branded materials (T-shirts etc)

### **Expected Results**

Heighten media focus and reportage on groundwater and water related issues at least within the period of March 2022 nationwide.