

WaterAid Ghana & Ghana Youth Environment Movement Joint Position Paper on Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Based Climate Adaptation Strategies

The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) is Ghana's policy response to climate change, providing a vision and guiding framework for an integrated response to climate change which is linked to the national sustainable development priorities. The NCCP prioritises five strategic themes: (1) agriculture and food security, (2) disaster preparedness and response, (3) natural resource management, (4) equitable social development and (5) energy, industrial and infrastructural development.

Recognize WASH as a Climate Adaptation Strategy

WaterAid Ghana (WAG) urges the Government of Ghana, and the agencies and institutions responsible for implementing the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NACCAS) as well as developing partners to recognize the realization of the rights to WASH as a climate adaptation strategy. This is especially true when WASH is appropriately targeted to benefit marginalized people (e.g. people living with HIV/AIDS, people living with disabilities, and people with low incomes).

The NACCAS mentions the overwhelming effect of climate change on water availability. It also recognizes the effects of climate change on precipitation and domestic water availability—stating the already existing gap in domestic water availability.

Additionally, Ghana's NCCAS realizes that the health and sanitation sectors have already been affected by climate change and acknowledge that the sector will experience further stress in the future.

Climate change poses potential risks to human health which include, water and food insecurity increased prevalence of waterborne and vector-borne diseases, malnutrition and higher rates of respiratory and heat-related illness.

Develop and Implement Robust WASH Based Climate Adaptation Strategies

The NCCAS lists challenges which need to be addressed in relation to WASH such as flooding: improper disposal of solid waste that could choke drains and exacerbate flooding conditions, absence of proper flood management systems, etc., drought: deforestation, long dry season and scanty rainfall, inadequate water harvesting systems, amongst others.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

In the light of this, we call on the implementing bodies of the programme of actions to develop, implement and promote sustainable WASH based climate adaptation strategies such as rain harvesting technologies, waste management infrastructure, tree planting programs, water resources management systems and the provision of adequate sanitation facilities.

Decentralize WASH Based Climate Adaptation Strategies

The NCCP tasks implementing ministries such as Ministry of Water, Works and Housing to formulate and coordinate policies and programmes for the systematic development of Ghana's infrastructure requirements with respect to water supply and management, sanitation and hydrology.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

WAG calls on implementing institutions to mainstream WASH based climate adaptation strategies at the local government level and commit to supporting participation in programs at the metropolitan, municipal, and district levels. This can be done by providing capacity building and technical support to officers and officials of all MMDAs.

Strengthen Efforts to Achieve Full WASH Coverage by 2025

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDAII) indicate that one of its priority areas for policy intervention is “increased access to adequate, safe and affordable water and improved environmental sanitation and hygiene education”.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

Implementing bodies of WASH and climate adaptation strategies should work towards achieving a full WASH coverage for all by 2025. This can be done by robust implementation of all the WASH based climate adaptation strategies outlined in the NCAAS and the GH-INDC document. The scope of the NCAAS is from 2010-2020 while the implementation of the INDCs programme of actions runs till 2030.

Provide Sustainable Finance for Full and Effective Implementation of WASH Based Climate Adaptation Strategies to Reduce Inequalities

The GSGDA recognizes the role that sustainable and equitable finance plays in full WASH and climate adaptation coverage. It indicates the need to improve the capacity of finance and administrative staff of MMDAs.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

The Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Unit (NRECC) of the Ministry of Finance should coordinate and track the flow of funds from both domestic and international sources for the implementation of WASH and climate adaptation strategies and make sustainable funding available from the national level down to the local level. NRECC should work closed with the lead and supervisory institution for the NCCAS— the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation (MESTI), which is assisted by National Climate Change Committee at the national level.

To this end, a conscious link should be created and strengthened between the Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development (MLGRD), the Local Government Service and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to ensure that funding are made available at the local levels.

Parliamentary Oversight on WASH and Climate Adaptation Finance Delivery

The NCCP acknowledges the Ministry of Finance to be responsible for the coordination of climate finance and that “Ghana is well placed to make good use of climate finance, given its credible Public Financial Management system and its experience on how best to blend support from donors with national resources to address national priorities”.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

WAG calls for the formation and strengthening of a parliamentary select committee on climate to develop measures to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability in finance delivery for WASH based climate adaptation strategies while ensuring equity in accessibility.

Civil Society Engagement in WASH and Climate Adaptation Program of Actions

The NCCP recognizes that the “success of the implementation of the National Climate Change Policy will not be the singular responsibility of central government but would depend to a large extent on the involvement and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, NGOs and civil society organisations”.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

We call on Government and all implementing bodies to engage civil society and non-governmental organizations in implementing all WASH based climate adaptation strategies. This can be done through stakeholder consultations that will ultimately ensure the rapid scale up of these strategies on the national scale through robust civil society advocacy and action.

Implementing bodies should also offer civil society opportunities in capacity building to carry out their duties.

Additionally, full involvement of civil society groups will ensure a bottom-up approach in implementing programmes of action. Through indigenous groups, existing traditional knowledge regarding WASH based adaptation can be integrated into western scientific knowledge and methods. More so, this will encourage social inclusion in the implementation stages if grassroots organizations are engaged.

Acknowledge the Role and Support Youth Involvement in Decision Making on WASH and Climate Change Adaptation

The NCCP sees the youth as very vulnerable to climate change and hence must be a major stakeholder in policy formulation and implementation. The GSGDA on the other hand outlines key policy objectives to be pursued to ensure effective participation of the youth in national development.

WaterAid Ghana and GYEM Proposal:

WAG calls on implementing bodies to involve youth in all activities intended to promote or implement WASH and climate adaptation strategies. This can be done by actively engaging the National Youth Authority (NYA) in all decision-making processes and programme of actions.

Implementing bodies should use youth friendly outlets like social media, entertainment, and education as key sectors during implementation while acknowledging and providing resource/support for individuals and groups working to promote and contribute to the implementation of the programme of actions.

Representatives from the NYA to this end must serve on the National Climate Change Committee to make the concerns of youth to the attention of the lead and supervisory institution of the NCCAS the concerns of youth.

NYA needs to create youth hubs in local communities, build their capacity, and have qualified and experienced individuals as ambassadors or volunteers in implementing WASH based adaptation to expand knowledge on WASH and climate change. In a long term, skills gained through these hubs and volunteering opportunities will increase the employability of these youth. More so, upon receiving training to contribute to the implementation strategies, young people will have the opportunity to realize their training into social enterprises while providing solutions to climate change to tackle its effects on local communities.
