



Climate & Sustainable Development Network



A CALL FOR INNOVATIVE FINANCING MECHANISMS TO ACHIEVE A WATER-SECURED NIGERIA

World Water Day, on 22 March every year about focusing attention on the importance of water. 2019 theme, 'Leaving no one behind', adapts the central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that as sustainable development progresses, everyone must benefit.

Water is vital for survival and, alongside sanitation, helps protect public and environmental health. Our bodies, our cities and our industries, our agriculture and our ecosystems all depend on it. Water is a human right. Nobody should be denied access. This World Water Day is about upholding this right for all, leaving no one behind.

NIGERIA presently reels under serious water challenges. Water-based challenges such as widespread shortage, pollution, degradation, flooding and poor water management in cities and rural centers are totemic icons that dot the Nigerian landscape today.

This state of affairs is further compounded as the world gets warmer with the rains growing heavier and oceans rising, making rural inhabitants to migrate to cities in their millions. Nigerian cities are under dual pressure from uncontrolled urbanisation and flooding worsened by climate-induced water stress.



Today, more than 100 million Nigerians live without safe water due to factors such as economic status, gender, ethnicity, religion and age. Many still live without access to safe water in their households, schools, workplaces, farms and factories. Marginalized groups – women, children, internally displaced persons (IDPs), pastoralists, disabled people and many others – are often overlooked, and sometimes face discrimination, as they try to access and manage the safe water they need.

Growing demands, coupled with poor management, have increased water stress in many parts of the country. Climate change is adding dramatically to the pressure. By 2030, an estimated 700 million people worldwide could be displaced by intense water scarcity.

From Lagos in the west to Onitsha in the east, from Kano in the north to Port Harcourt in the south, slum-dwellers, the middle class, and the elite alike are engaged in the water race.

More than half of global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa with Nigeria contributing a substantial portion. Of the additional 2.4 billion people projected to be added to the global population between 2015 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa and the difficulties Nigerian cities currently face in providing sustainable water services will be exacerbated.

It is estimated that Nigeria loses 5% of annual GDP due to poor access to clean drinking water and sanitation; 5-25% to droughts and floods in affected states; and 2% to regular power outages. In addition to the cost of insufficient water security, the cost of climate change in Nigeria is estimated to be 1.5-3% of GDP by 2030, expected to reach 10% by 2100 under a business-as-usual scenario.

The above grim-reality constituted enough recipe for the 2018 declaration of a national emergency on water in Nigeria.

Beyond the mere sloganeering of an emergency declaration, Nigeria needs to prioritise the adoption of innovative mechanisms to manage demand and improve efficiency in the production, supply and utilisation of water in all sectors of our national life; prioritise the implementation of programmes that seek to extend access to water supply and sanitation services and increase the productivity of water used in various sectors; and working to close the gap in Nigeria's water infrastructure deficit, especially by prioritising the implementation of water projects.

Nigeria must ensure that appropriate national spending targets for quality investments in water and sanitation are consistent with national sustainable development strategies; and further prioritising the development of institutional and human resources capacity.

Beyond the November 2018 emergency declaration on water by the Nigerian government, **Climate and Sustainable Development Network (CSDevNet)** believes that the water crisis in Nigeria constitutes an invitation for newer and innovative ways of ensuring water security for all Nigerians. The equitable and sustainable management of all the country's water resources remains a credible key to achieving a prosperous Nigeria as there is no doubt that we are blessed with a blue economy.

It is CSDevNet's belief that the current funding landscape for the water sector is grossly insufficient to meet the financial deficit and, most importantly, achieve SDG 6. This calls for innovative approaches for financing water and sanitation infrastructure as a huge challenge lies in the mobilisation of financial resources to achieve the SDG 6 target of ensuring that everyone has access to potable water and sanitation.

In order to meet the SDG 6 targets, CSDevNet advocates the implementation of new and innovative financing mechanisms by governments, private sector and development organisations. These mechanisms, combined with and supported by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources must also take into account the issue of redressing inequalities in access to water and sanitation.

Equally important is the establishment of a National Blue Fund. The most recent WHO Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS) report shows that financing for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector is still a significant barrier in increasing access to water and sanitation. To address this gap, there is need for new National financing mechanism that will prioritise investments and funding for water and sanitation-related projects across the country

Other opportunities for innovative financing of water and sanitation CSDevNet proposes for application in Nigeria are the establishment of Water Banks, based on domestic resource mobilization (i.e., pension funds, insurance companies) using repayable finance to bridge the financing gap; National Water/WASH Financing Facility, a mechanism for domestic resource



Pregnant Lydia fetching water from the only source of drinking water in Piko community, Shere Ward, Bwari Area Council in Abuja



Access to water in Iddo Sarki: a woman washing clothes in the only stream in the community.

mobilization for the WASH sector with characteristics of pooled investment projects, good governance framework and opportunity for blending private capital with public funding to promote pro-poor policies; blended funding, commercial financing, private equity; and special taxes such as water tax.

Achieving universal access to water in Nigeria calls for intensive capacity building. Development partners will have to support Nigeria's quest to develop its capacities for the implementation of SDG6, especially in the development of bankable water and projects. Governments at all levels must lead efforts and that external agencies must work in a way that supports and builds government capacity to lead and to succeed.

All stakeholders including civil society and faith-based

organisations must commit to work collectively and adhere to key behaviours that strengthen Nigeria's capabilities to deliver permanent and accountable access to water.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 remains unequivocally clear: water should be FOR ALL by 2030! This implies leaving no Nigerian behind in the race for water!

Signed

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