

Water and Sanitation Reforms

The Problem

Nigeria is endowed with abundant water resources to support sustainable provision of water supply and adequate sanitation. The Niger River basin including its tributaries has about 165.8 billion cubic metres of water. Surface water potential is estimated at 263.7 billion cubic metres, and ground water potential is estimated at 51.9 billion cubic metres. The irrigation potential is about 3.14 million hectares.

Yet, only 0.02% of this water supply is currently used for irrigation purposes. Impounded water potential is 31 billion cubic metres in about 200 dams, but only 18% is effectively utilised. Unfortunately, these enormous potentials remain largely untapped due to uncoordinated and haphazard implementation of policies and programmes. In the light of these shortcomings, the government of President Jonathan decided that the sector needed significant reform.

Some of the issues that need to be addressed in the water sector reform included, but were not limited, to:

1. Ascertaining the nature and level of investment required in the sector
2. Exploring opportunities for possible private sector participation in the water resources management in the sector
3. Ensuring that the supply and utilisation of water in the country meets acceptable quality and standards
4. Establishing the means to acquire, collate, manage, and disseminate hydrological, hydro-meteorological, and hydro-geological information for each of the river basins in Nigeria
5. Harnessing the power generation potentials of dams across the country

Reform Actions

Federal Ministry of Water Resources: In order to accord priority to water resources development and management, President Jonathan re-established the Federal Ministry of Water Resources in April 2010. With this re-birth, an emergency meeting of the National Council on Water Resources was held to review critical issues affecting the sector with a view to developing appropriate strategies for water sector transformation in the country.

Presidential Retreat: In 2013, the administration organised a presidential retreat on water to seek more effective ways of preserving national water and making it available to Nigerians.

Strengthening of Policy and Strategies: Under the Jonathan administration the review of the national policy and strategies on water resources and the sub-sectoral policies was undertaken. They include:

1. National Water Resources Policy
2. National Water Resources Master Plan
3. Water Supply and Sanitation Policy

4. Irrigation and Drainage Policy
5. Dam Operation and Maintenance Policy
6. Water Resources Infrastructure Operation and Maintenance Policy
7. National Water Resources Law
8. Amendment of the River Basin Act
9. Integrated Water Resources Management Policy
10. Strategies for Alternative Sourcing of Funds for the Water Sector

Strengthening of Water Sector Profile: The government has improved water profile through the activities of the Ministry in the following areas:

Water Sector Road Map: In order to actualise the developmental objectives of the water sector under the present administration, Mr President launched the Water Sector Road Map January 2011. The document is designed to provide direction in the sector from 2011 to 2025.

Engagement of stakeholders: The government is actively engaging with local and international development partners (IDPs) like JICA, EU, World Bank, AfDB, UNICEF, DFID, Islamic Development Bank, French Development Agency, and the Chinese government. The Ministry has attracted over US\$1 billion investment into the water sector under the present administration. The funds are at different stages of processing for utilisation for water supply, sanitation, and irrigation.

Water Sector Reform and PPP: A water sector reform and public private partnership (PPP) unit has been established to enhance corporate financing of the sector amongst the three tiers of government as well as facilitating and attracting private sector and development partners expertise, investment, and participation. Areas of investment opportunities have been identified to facilitate the effective participation of both local and foreign investors.

Communication strategy: To achieve the reform objectives, a communications strategy was developed that included several media-related awareness activities such as radio and TV documentaries and engagement with the print media and publications. In addition, there was direct engagement with the local communities hosting major water projects. For staff, there was a seminar on effective communication within the sector.

Annual Flood Outlook: To check the menace of flooding and prevent a repeat of the flood disaster experienced in 2012, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources recently released the 2013 Annual Flood Outlook for Nigeria. The document evaluated the flood scenario in 2012 and analysed the most likely areas to experience flood in 2013. It has also offered suggestions to all stakeholders and the general public on how to reduce the anticipated flooding as a result of expected increase in rainfall this year.

River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs): The Jonathan administration has revitalised the 12 River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) nationwide.

Dams and Irrigation: Nine dams were completed by the end of 2012, with about 125,000 jobs created in the process. With respect to irrigation, the government deployed 10 irrigation projects for the 2012 crop production. Four other irrigation projects have been completed and are ready for commissioning.

Water Projects: The government has substantially completed the following water projects amongst other on-going water projects: Northern Ishan Water Supply projects in Edo State; Mangu Water Treatment Plant in Plateau State; Greater Makurdi Water Supply Scheme in collaboration with Benue State; and rehabilitation of 1,000 dysfunctional hand pumps in 18 states. There are on-going construction of water supply schemes in federal institutions at Ahmadu Bello University; Zaria; Kaduna State; Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto;

Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State; University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State; and Fed University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The government has also delivered 545 hand pumps and 885 motorised/solar powered boreholes across the country.

Main Achievements

Access to Water: Under the current administration, access to potable water has improved from 58% to 65% coverage, while access to improved sanitation facilities has risen from 32% to 41%. The completion of the additional dams boosted the achievements. Considerable investment from international donor organisations like the World Bank, European Union, African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported this success.

Food Supply: With an increase in the hectareage under irrigation by more than 31,000 hectares, food production has also increased, thereby enhancing food security. The River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) have helped to boost food production through resuscitation of equipment and rehabilitation of production units such as processing of rice milling, palm oil, fisheries, palm oil, bottled water, etc. They have also helped in redistribution and redeployment of idle equipment and the improvement of water management within basin catchment (e.g., the Chad and Hadejia-Jamare basins, where the Ministry of Water Resources repaired the Challawa Gates for release of water downstream).

Key Challenges

1. 60% of water in urban areas is unaccounted for.
2. Nigeria has the highest rate of public defecation in Africa and one of the highest rates in the world. The trend has worsened from 23 million people practicing open defecation in 1990, rising to 39 million in 2012.
3. Many rural water initiatives have failed and often produce no water beyond the date of commissioning.
4. Low investment level in operation and maintenance, which accounts for frequent breakdown of distribution facilities.
5. Epileptic power supply.
6. The failure of water schemes in the past due to non-involvement of the intended beneficiaries, either at the point of initiation/conception of the schemes or in their funding, execution, and monitoring.
7. Inappropriate pricing and tariff collection mechanisms for water supply and sanitation services.
8. Inadequate public awareness about water conservation and management for effective sanitation and public health hygiene.
9. Poor data collection, collation, and archiving, making effective planning, implementation and evaluation very difficult.
10. Lack of appropriate water supply and sanitation facilities/infrastructure in the country.
11. Ever-increasing rate of urbanisation resulting in shortages of water supply and sanitation services in urban and semi-urban areas.

Assessment of Reform Initiative

Judged against the 10 assessment criteria, reform in the water and sanitation making steady progress but the tasks ahead are still enormous.

S/No	Assessment Criteria	Result of Assessment
1	Have the reforms improved the quality and quantity of the public services delivered?	Only marginally, as access to potable water has improved from 58% to 65% coverage, while access to improved sanitation facilities has risen from 32% to 41%
2	Do more people now have access to services, including disadvantaged groups such as women, young persons, and people with disabilities?	Yes, but very marginally.
3	Have the reforms reduced the cost of governance?	Water has been provided mainly as a service, and reforms have been gradual towards full commercialisation that would have reduced cost of providing water by the government. However, development partners have been collaborating with the government in the provision of water, thereby helping reduce cost on government.
4	Have the reforms made the service more affordable for citizens?	To some extent where water is provided, as the cost is not very high.
5	Have the reforms reduced corruption?	No direct link is established.
6	Have the reforms reduced unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape?	Not Applicable
7	Is the reform initiative likely to lead to improved development outcomes?	Definitely yes, as reforms in the sector have direct impact on quality of life in the areas of irrigation services and boosting of food production, etc.
8	Are things improving, staying the same, or getting worse?	Things are improving very marginally.
9	Where things are improving, will those improvements endure?	Not likely without the institutionalisation of policy, legal and regulatory framework guiding the provision of water.
10	Where things are not improving, what should be done?	Address the key challenges facing the sector.

Proposed Next Steps

1. Urgent steps should be taken to tackle open defecation, learning from improvements in Bangladesh and Vietnam.

2. The policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional framework around the water sector should be streamlined and consolidated. Almost every policy is in draft form.
3. Put in place a comprehensive programme to reduce rate of unaccounted for water.
4. Policy issues surrounding the unregulated and uncoordinated nature of boreholes should be addressed.
5. High population growth, which results in an ever-increasing demand for water supply and sanitation services against a diminishing trend in supply, should be factored into plans for water provision.
6. Poor community and private sector participation (OPS, PPP, CBOs, NGOs CSOs, end users) in water supply and sanitation services.
7. Weak managerial and executive capacity and lack of coordination at the states and local government levels.