

PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE ON WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

Fellow members of the National Water Resources & Sanitation Board, I am pleased to chair this very important Board Meeting. As a way of putting us in the frame of discussions that will continue throughout the life of the Board, I wish to use a small portion of our sitting time to bring forward a reflection that has brought us to this conclusion.

1. During the International Decade of the Water Supply and Sanitation (IDWSSD, 1980), the creation of a National Water and Sanitation Board was conceived as an ultimate solution to healing the fragmentation on governance, implementation, monitoring and sustainable management and operation of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion infrastructures.
2. Twenty-seven (27) years ago and during our Administration, we felt an obligation to re-ignite the conversation of improving the living standards of the Liberian people to the extent of this healing. This we considered could be done by beginning a process of reviewing existing documents supporting the IDWSSD.
3. As a result the following major documents have been approved and signed on the advice of the Liberian Cabinet, of which some of the current members of this Board are a part of as follows:

Table 1: Historical References

<i>Reference Material/Document</i>	<i>Validated/ Approved by</i>	<i>Summary of Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>
Integrated Water Resources Management Policy (2007)	Cabinet/Dr. Eugene H. Shannon, Minister of Lands, Mines & Energy	NWRSB, CWRSB, DWRSB Comm. NWRSB, Village/Community WATSAN Committees	No appointments and no entities created; sector not affected by recommended changes
Water Supply, Sanitation & Hygiene Policy (April 2009)	Cabinet/Dr. Eugene H. Shannon, Minister of Lands, Mines & Energy	NWRSB, NWSHPC (Policy setters); WSSC (regulator); RWSSB, LWSC & DCMHyP (as service providers)*	No appointments and no entities created; sector not affected by recommended changes
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Sector Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017)	Cabinet/Dr. Roosevelt G. Jayjay, Minister of Lands, Mines & Energy	NWRSB, NWHPC, (Policy setters); WSSC (regulator); LWSC, DCMHyP, RWSSB (as services providers)	No appointments and no entities created; sector not affected by recommended changes
Liberia WASH Compact	Cabinet/President Ellen	NWRSB, NWSHPC (Policy	Executive Order to create

(May 2011)	Johnson Sirleaf	setters); WSSC (regulator); RWSSB, LWSC & DCMHyP (as service providers)	Board and Commission revised and Board appointed**
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*The RWSSB and the DCMHyB were recommended to be elevated as Bureaus

**Although the Board was mentioned in many official speeches by the President, no actual appointment or Terms of Reference has been made. The appointment of the Board is considered as an addition to the official functions of Ministries and Agencies with no Board fees but sitting fees.

4. Reading these documents very closely, one must not skip the series of steps needed to solve the single governance problems within the Sector.
 - a. There is clearly **one Board**: The recommended IWRM Board, which covers all aspects of water: demand and supply, including wastewater and water quality. There has however been two separate Secretariats – one recommended by the IWRM (which has not functioned since and the WASH Secretariat which is fully functional) and headed by the Ministry of Public Works.
 - b. As noted, these documents recommend that as a first step, two important Ministries (Ministries of Health and Public Works) must advance steps to raise the National Rural Water Program (MPW) to the status of a **Bureau** and the Ministry of Health (MoH) likewise the Division of Environmental & Occupational Health to a **Directorate. Legislative implications???**
 - c. The Water & Sanitation Commission (WSSC): An independent regulatory body empowered to set tariffs, monitor and exercise authority on enforcement. Because of the current structure and mandates of entities responsible for water, sanitation and hygiene promotion a full and an independent authority can only fully function in the presence of a delegation of some functions of existing Government of Liberia entities. **Legislative implications?????**
 - d. **Final outcome of the Board's Recommendation** – Ministry of Water & Environment. Coordination of the works of various technical expertise in various entities handling water, sanitation and hygiene affairs has been difficult more than the lack of expertise and knowledge. There is strong external support for this action.

5. **Funding** at various level of the process has slowed our actions in the last part of implementation of various policies and policy instruments. Interestingly, we are not short of funding for this process. There will be Board transportation re-imbursments, lodging accommodation, if necessary, supported by our partners for the period on one year. The Board Secretariat has been and will continue to receive support from external as well as internal funding.

6. ***The Ministry of Water & Environment (MWE):***