



HE. Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma delivering the keynote address at the WASH Conference

“Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 is a MUST for every Sierra Leonean” said President Ernest Bai Koroma at the opening of the 2017 national Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Conference held in Freetown from the 22nd to 23rd November, 2017. He made the pronouncement while delivering his keynote speech on the theme: “Achieving the SDGs on Water and Sanitation”.

This year’s national WASH Conference is the 3rd edition organized by the Ministry of Water Resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The event attracted participants in the WASH sector across the country and members of the donor community

including the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), DFID, UNICEF, AfDB etc.

President Koroma further noted in his keynote speech that Sierra Leone has made substantial progress in the WASH sector but there is still a long way to go and challenges ahead. He urged all stakeholders to remain committed to the sector and provide the leadership and vision that will ensure the effective management, regulation and delivery of service. He also emphasized that his government will insist on sector coordination and harmonization to avoid duplication in order to ensure effective use of Government and donor funds going to the sector.

Giving an update on progress made in the sector since the 2014 national conference, the Minister of Water Resources, Momodu Maligie said despite the challenges faced by the sector in achieving the SDGs, the government and stakeholders have over the years worked very hard to achieve the following:

- Enactment of the three Water Bills which is consistent with the recommendations of the 2010 National WASH Policy.
- Development of a National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy and Investment Plan- a fifteen year program developed to address how WASH will be implemented and Financed in rural communities.
- Development of a robust Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- Provision of leadership and oversight of implemented projects.
- The re-establishment of hydrological monitoring through the Water Security Project.

The conference is in line with the objectives of Millennium Challenge Coordinating Unit's (MCCU) Threshold program as it creates a platform

for the political leadership, sector professionals, stakeholders and partners to discuss opportunities and challenges to achieving water security for Sierra Leone's socioeconomic development. It also takes stock of the achievements made on SDG 6 and reviews other key outcomes and challenges in a bid to propose actions for accelerating the achievement of the SDG targets.

In his statement, the Country Director for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Matthew Langhenry congratulated President Koroma, the Minister of Water Resources and stakeholders in the water sector for signing into law the three Water bills. He said clean water is critical to life but also enables better prevention and control of infection and disease. The Country Director further emphasized that the US Government views water delivery as a catalyst for economic growth which has over the years prompted investment by the US Government into the Sierra Leone Water Sector through its USAID and MCC programs. The MCC is currently partnering with the Government of Sierra Leone on a \$44.4 million Threshold Program which covers the Water and Energy sectors. This he said will improve overall water sector governance and accountability by building the capacity of utilities like the Guma Valley Water Company to enhance service delivery.

The MCC Country Director concluded by saying:

“It is my hope that you all will rise up to the challenge of SDG 6, take advantage of this conference and come up with actionable proposals for the improvement of the sector”.