

Stakeholders canvass creation of Lagos water regulatory agency, ministry

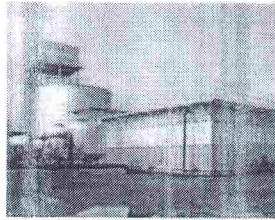
MONDAY, 17 JANUARY 2011 00:00 BY TUNDE ALAO PROPERTY - PROPERTY



User Rating: / 0

Poor Best

A FRESH move to overhaul the Lagos State water policy and drive efficient water supply and controlled sanitary condition in the metropolis is in the offing.



The new development is part of a one-day forum organised by the Lagos State Water Corporation (LSWC), in conjunction with some stakeholders, including civil society groups. The expected policy, if adopted, will give rise to an institution that would pilot water and sanitation issues in the state.

The stakeholders agreed to the creation of Ministry of Water Resources that would effectively coordinate and act as a body for the water supply in Lagos, creation of Lagos Water Supply Regulatory Commission to regulate provision of water supply and sanitation services, and creation of Lagos State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in the Ministry of Rural Development.

Other recommendations include the creation of a State Steering Committee on Water Sanitation to coordinate efforts of state agencies on basic sanitation policy formulation and programming, that the Ministry of Health should be responsible for drinking water quality surveillance and shall lead institution enforcing Nigerian standard for drinking quality water; creation of a desk office on climate change in the proposed ministry of water resources to study the likely effects of climate change on water supply and come up with mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Earlier, Group Managing Director, LSWC, Mr. Shayo Holloway, an engineer, noted that there was need for new policy that would act as a compass that would direct the sector for efficient performance

According to Holloway, government-owned companies were short of working capitals. "Opportunity to become viable corporate entities capable of meeting very high demand growth, large financial obligations, satisfying legitimate concerns from labour unions, protecting the poor from dramatic price rise, among other challenges, are the main reasons for drafting this policy," he said.

He added that the overall objective of the policy framework was to develop appropriate water supply and sanitation legal instruments that would enhance sustainable water supply and sanitation services in the state, including the establishment of State Regulatory Authority.

Speaking on the proposed institutions, Mr. Babatope Babalobi, who is one of the facilitators of the forum listed the service providers to include the Lagos Water Corporation, Lagos Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board, Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Local Government Development Areas and Private Water Service Providers and Wastewater Managers.

Besides, he also listed Ministry of Environment, the proposed Ministry of Water Resources and LGDAs as policy formulation bodies, while support services institutions are to include the Ministries of Health, Education, Women Affairs, Physical Planning and Urban Development and NGOs, among others. According to Babalobi, while LSWC was to manage the provision of water supply services as well as wastewater in the metropolis as "autonomous and quasi-commercial body", the new Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RWSSA) was to handle service provisions in the rural areas, based on community management and demand responsive approach. The organised private sector service providers and informal providers for public places and other areas not covered by these bodies should also be encouraged.

Chairman, Technical Committee, West Africa Water Partnership, Professor Lekan Oyebande, who spoke on "Essence of Water Supply and Sanitation Policy", noted that a new approach to water supply was necessary if the dream of a quality and quantity of water needs of the people would be materialised. According to Oyebande, "Water Supply oriented approach" could not meet the target, except there was a change to "demand oriented approach". The professor noted that though, water was supply in large quantity, but regretted that the volumes were not properly put into use, thus, creating room for enormous wastage.

Addressing the gathering on the "Overview of the Process of Developing the Lagos Water Supply and Sanitation Policy", Mrs. A.K. Aina, Reform Officer, Lagos Water Corporation reeled out reforms that had taken place in the water sector. These included the policy, legal and regulatory on environments, formation of water supply and sanitation policy committee and the different drafts put forward by these committees.

2 of 2

07/02/2011 13:48