



Can Uganda achieve SDG 6 on Water and Sanitation?

Overview

During the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, Uganda and 192 other United Nations (UN) member states unanimously agreed to the new global development framework: *'Transforming our world - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'*. This Agenda is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. Resolutions were made to “end poverty in all its forms”, to take bold and transformative steps to “shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path” and to ensure that “no one will be left behind”.

The 2030 Agenda established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 global targets, relating to development outcomes and means of implementation, for the period 2015-2030. Each UN member state is expected to localize the global targets by designing a development agenda and policies that will accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. The existing national frameworks for implementing the SDGs in Uganda are: Vision 2040, second National Development Plan (NDP II), and Sector Development Plans among others.

The SDG 6 - *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*, reflects the increased attention on water and sanitation issues in the global political agenda. The 2030 Agenda lists rising inequalities, natural resource depletion, environmental degradation and climate change among the greatest challenges of our time. It recognizes that social development and economic prosperity depend on the sustainable management of freshwater resources and ecosystems and it highlights the integrated nature of SDGs.

This policy brief reviews the performance of some indicators of the water and sanitation sub-sector by end of June 2018 in reference to SDG 6.

Key Issues

- ✚ Although the sector financing has been increasing moderately, it is still below the required levels of funding. However, the sector has absorption problems as it has unspent balances annually.
- ✚ The sector has continued to set low performance indicator targets e.g. 50% for sanitation management.
- ✚ At current performance levels, the sector will not attain SDG 6, with the sanitation component performing worst.

Introduction

The Water and Sanitation strategic objectives¹ for policy implementation are: a) to increase water supply coverage in rural areas while ensuring equity by providing at least each village with one safe and clean water source, and where technically feasible a piped water option considered; b) to promote improved sanitation services in rural and urban areas including the promotion of hand-washing with soap; c) to increase water supplies and sewerage services in small towns, large towns, municipalities and cities focusing on the areas earmarked for industrial parks; d) to improve water resources management to ensure adequate quantity and quality for the various uses focusing on compliance to existing laws and regulations on the use of the resources at all levels.

¹ MPS 2018



Sector Financing

Over the last five years, sector financing has increased moderately (Table 1), while maintaining a 3% share of the National Budget on average.

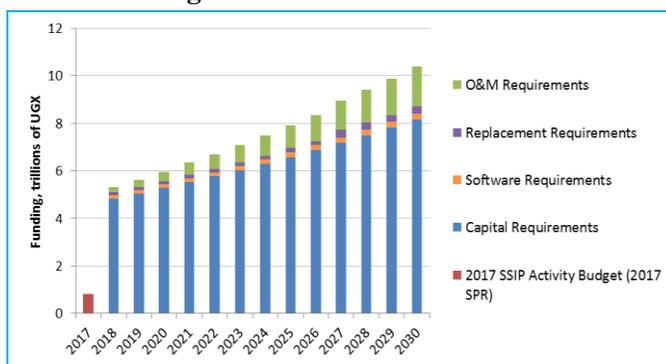
Table 1: Financial Performance of Water and Environment Sector (Billion, Uganda Shillings)

Financial Year	Approved Budget	Release	Spent
2013/14	404.445	337.919	294.184
2014/15	340.742	245.029	229.133
2015/16	462.386	310.965	309.895
2016/17	736.324	466.142	429.209
2017/18	678.402	696.426	647.628

Source: MFPE Annual Budget Performance Reports

The Sector Strategic Investment Plan (SSIP) estimates that the sector needs an average annual budget of Ug shs 7.6 trillion up to 2030, which is about nine times the current funding allocation (Figure 1). The SSIP further states that given the population growth and if the sector continues to receive funding at the prevailing rate, the 2030 targets will not be realized, and many indicators will remain far from achieving their targets.

Figure 1: Annual Sector Budget Requirements to reach 2030 targets



Source: Water and Environment Sector Investment Plan 2018

The capital investments make up the bigger part of funding requirements. However, there is a

growing budgetary need for Operation and Maintenance (O&M), and replacement to keep up the functionality of a growing and aging capital stock. By 2030, O&M and replacement are estimated to be about 16% of the total sector budget.

Performance of Sector Indicators

In order to ably monitor the SDG indicators, the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) developed a new set of Sector Performance Indicators (SPIs) in FY 2017/18 which replaced the golden and platinum indicators. The Sector Performance Report 2018 highlights the performance of some indicators by end of June 2018.

• Basic Water

The government is committed to ensure universal access to an improved drinking water source. This has been done through several interventions including: construction of mini solar powered water schemes countrywide, and large gravity flow schemes that cover several sub-counties. The Presidential Directive of ‘one water source per village’ also addresses the same cause especially in the local governments. The percentage of population using an improved drinking water source was good in both rural and the urban areas (70% and 77% respectively).

• Drinking Water Quality

The percentage of collected water samples that complied with national standards in rural areas was fair (64%), good (89%) in small towns, and very good (99.3%) in towns managed by the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC). The water quality rating implies that the rural populace is more likely to suffer from water borne diseases like typhoid, cholera, bilharzia, and dysentery etc.



• Functionality of Water Sources

The functionality of water facilities ranged between: good (85% in rural) and very good (93% in small towns). Functionality of water systems has a positive bearing on access and availability of water supplies.

• Management

Proper management of a water facility is very crucial in ensuring availability of water supply. Management of water facilities in the rural areas was good (89%). However, there was no data to qualify management in urban areas. Efforts being made to improve urban water management include: i) hand over of more towns to NWSC. The corporation is currently managing 238 town water and sanitation systems. ii) The six umbrella organizations were gazetted as Water Authorities to manage 259 piped water supply

and sanitation systems in small towns by end of June 2018.

• Basic Sanitation

There was poor sanitation in urban areas. A dismal 36.3% of the population used an improved sanitation facility, and only 26% of human excreta was safely managed. There was no data to qualify the rural aspect. Open defecation was practiced by 8% rural population, and 12.6% of people in urban areas. In addition, the sector target for safely managed sanitation is low (50%).

• Hand Washing

Hand washing with soap and water performed poorly in rural areas (36.5%), urban areas (39.6%) and in schools (40%).

Estimated Gaps to Achieve the 2030 Targets

The additional unit for each indicator was calculated above the baseline (2017 performance figures) coverage to meet 2030 targets (Table 2). External factors and the projected population of 2030 were considered.

Table 2: Unit Gaps to Achieve 2030 Targets

Sector Performance Indicators	WES Targets by 2030 (%)	Estimated Target Achieved by 2030 (%)	Gap	Units
Basic water: Percentage of population using an improved drinking water source	100	71	28,780,503	No. of people
Safely managed water: Percentage of population using safely managed drinking water services located on premises	100	10	52,272,805	No. of people
Percentage of villages with a source of safe water supply	100	90	47,349	No. of villages
Functionality - Rural: % of water sources functional at time of spot-check	100	88	68,785	No. of rural water sources
Functionality - Urban: % piped water service availability	100	99	10,448	No. of urban water sources
Drinking water quality: % of water samples taken that comply with national standards (Point water sources / Piped schemes)	90	73	643	Samples
Basic sanitation: Percentage of population using an improved sanitation facility not shared with other households	100	50	47,595,980	No. of people



Safely managed sanitation: Percentage of population using safely managed sanitation services	50	13	51,151,465	No. of people
Hand washing: Percentage of population with hand washing facilities with soap and water at home	90	38	35,532,276	No. of people
Hand Washing in schools: Percentage of pupils enrolled in schools with basic hand washing facilities	90	53	12,296,652	No. of students

Source: *Water and Environment Sector Investment Plan 2018*

It is noted that targets for all the indicators above shall not be achieved by 2030, while others shall suffer a declining trend if the current funding scenario is unchanged. Sanitation and hygiene shall perform poorly notwithstanding the fact that ‘the costs of poor sanitation in Uganda are inequitably distributed with the highest economic burden falling disproportionately on the poorest (Mutano et al. 2015).

The sector has set a low target of 50% for safely managed sanitation by 2030. Poor excreta disposal and treatment poses health risks to the population.

Sanitation and hygiene improvement is a joint effort across a number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies like Ministries of Water and Environment; Health; and Education and Sports, Kampala Capital City Authority, and Local Governments, therefore interagency coordination is key to its success.

Conclusion

The Water and Environment Sector formulated a new set of Sector Performance Indicators and targets in FY 2017/18 as a means of tracking progress towards achieving the SGD Goal 6.

Although the sector financing has been moderately increasing, it is still below the required levels of

funding, however, the sector has absorption problems.

An analysis of the sector performance based on the current financing trend indicates that all the targets for the performance indicators shall not be achieved by 2030. Sanitation and hand washing shall perform poorest.

Recommendations

- ❖ The MWE should resolve problems of poor funds absorption, and then advocate for increased sector financing as stipulated in the Sector Strategic Investment Plan.
- ❖ The MWE, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education and Sports should strengthen their coordination efforts in order to address sanitation and hygiene issues.

References

- Strategic Investment Plan for the Water and Environment Sector, Uganda (2018-2030)
- A Synopsis of SDG Implementation in Uganda. Civil Society Report 2018
- Ministry of Water and Environment, Sector Performance Report 2018
- Ministry of Water and Environment, Ministerial Policy Statement FY 2017/18