

# Water resources management vital to policy initiatives

Story: Caroline Boateng

**T**HE Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Mr Albert Abongo, has said water resources and their proper management is fundamental to the attainment of other development policy initiatives of the country.

At a five-day international workshop on Climate Change Adaptations, he said the progress that the country had gained so far in developing river basin plans were commendable, but said more needed to be done to derive and sustain optimum benefit from the country's water resources.

The international workshop is being organised by the ADAPTS project, a Dutch govern-

ment-funded project that is being implemented in Ethiopia, Vietnam, Botswana, Peru, Brazil and Ghana.

The project aims at making developing countries better placed to derive optimum benefit from their water resources while sustainably managing them by integrating climate change and adaptation considerations in water policies, local planning and investment decisions.

These are achieved through civil society organisations, already working with communities in the areas of environment and climate change.

In Ghana, The Development Institute is the implementing agency for the project that will be for a three year-period, and the effort will be undertaken in collaboration with the Water

Resources Commission (WRC).

Mr Abongo said the country's National Water Policy identified integrated water resource management, climate variability and change, water for food security, planning and research as some of the key focus areas.

In line with that, ensuring equitable and sustainable exploitation, utilisation and management of water resources while maintaining biodiversity and the quality of the environment for future generations were goals to be achieved in meeting the challenge for an integrated water resource management.

The acting Executive Secretary of the WRC, Mr Ben Ampomah, enumerating some initiatives of the WRC over the past 10 years of its opera-

tions, said various aspects of climate change impacts were being mainstreamed into the plans and programmes of integrated water resources management to future strengthen the ability of communities to adapt to water resource availability at the basin and community levels.

It said the WRC had begun work in selected communities in the northern regions of the country to help communities lessen their risk to climate change by adapting to measures and coping with strategies for water resource use and management.

In a presentation on ADAPTS, Dr Ralph Lasage said local actions and initiatives in water resource management under changing climate was key in the ADAPTS project.

He said under ADAPTS, several communities in Botswana, Brazil and Ethiopia, had developed local initiatives like small water harvesting structures that had boosted agriculture and other domestic activities.

Prof. Jeroen Aerts of the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), VU University, Amsterdam, making a presentation on "Adaptation as the common denominator in the ADAPTS Programme," explained that the whole idea behind the project was for enhanced measures to cope with added risks and challenges of climate change.