

More funding required to address water problem in Kenya

By Lancer Wao,

Water is essential for the survival and thriving of humanity. It is a significant component for not only running our daily lives but also sustaining our development. Frankly, there is no life without water.

The importance of water is reflected in Kenya's Vision 2030, which identifies that the prerequisite for development includes water, and the Big Four Agenda, which can only be achieved if there is enough water to support these pillars.

However, Kenya still struggles with water shortage and the problem has contributed to millions of its population being left behind in socio-economic development.

The scarcity of water is connected to the rapid growth of the Kenyan population, increase in the competing needs for water, and climate change problems resulting in prolonged drought, flooding, and unpredictable rainfall. Therefore, time has come to critically assess whether the government of Kenya has



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effectively protected and invested the environment and natural (water) resources, and monitoring and guiding the use of water services.

The water sector in Kenya has seen tremendous changes in the recent past concerning policy and frameworks following the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, which not only introduced the human right to water but also led to a

devolved system with distinct functions between the national and county government.

For example, the national government's mandate in the water sector is to make policies, set national standards, and create a sustainable system for development in the water sector through various ways including resource mobilization. On the other hand, the county governments have the mandate of implementing the formulated national laws and policies in the conservation of water resources and providing water services to county residents.

Moreover, the 2010 constitution led to the introduction of the Water Act (2016), which resulted in all significant changes in institutional mechanisms of implementing laws concerning the water sector. One question that lingers in all the changes in the sector since 2010: Why are taps still running dry?

While change takes time to create positive change, a decade later after the promulgation of the constitution of Kenya, the measures are yet to



lead to equal access to quality and quantity water to all.

Every day, Kenyans still wake up to the news of the pain of lacking access to clean water. With a population of approximately 50 million, it is estimated that only 52 per cent of Kenyans have access to water. This leaves out a whopping 47 per cent Kenyans, mostly in rural areas and urban informal settlements with unknown knowledge on where, when, and how they access water.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has shown us that water is the first defence against contracting the disease. Water ensures high standards of hygiene: washing hands, cleaning surfaces, and body hygiene.

As a result, because of water, families can remain healthy and the national communicable disease burden is reduced. If this is anything to go by, and since cases of Covid-19 have been reported throughout most parts of the country, it means that at least 47 per cent without access to water



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