

GUMA DAM PASSES ASSESSMENT TEST

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By Amin Kef Sesay

On Wednesday 16th September, 2020 The Millennium Challenge Coordinating Unit (MCCU) presented its final report on Conditions Assessment of Guma Dam, its Transmission and Reservoirs System and Assessment of Treatment Processes at the Shangri La Conference Room, Lumley Beach Road in Freetown.

The report on the Condition Assessment was jointly prepared by the two Consultants: COBA and CONCEPT.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Millennium Challenge Coordinating Unit (MCCU), Ndeye Koroma said that the assessment came as a result of request made by Guma relating to their needs to improve their operations and have access to provide resources to be able to do a condition assessment of the water treatment, transmission and the reservoirs.

She added that the idea was for an expert to come in and do the assessment on its different assets, and also do a presentation in order to improve its facilities. "We did geotechnical assessment and the expectation is to identify what type of major work needs to be done and their significance to the dam, but the assessment finds out that no major work is needed, but they just need to ensure that there is regular maintenance of dam," she said.

"Any utility needs to be planned and in order to plan you need to understand your hydraulic model of how the water moves round, the point of collection and the treatment system etc. So, this assessment highlights how the system operates and what could be challenging in the system that will undermine the quality of water supplied to citizens. There is no major challenge, but we know that maintenance needs to be continued," she said.

The Managing Director of GWWC, Maada Kpenge said that the facilities are the most important water supply assets they have in the country. He added that the activity will highlight the critical nature of the facilities, and recalled that in 2012-2013, they made an attempt to insure the dam, but the insurance company told them to present an assessment so that they could assess the risk.

"We are today looking at the result of that study. The findings of the study validate a lot of things. When you look at the dam, the location of the dam makes the raw water to be almost pure," he said, and added, "Meaning, we don't have to do a lot of purification". He stated that this is made possible by the environment, adding that the

destruction of the environment will affect the purity of the raw water and that is why they are concerned about the deforestation around the water catchment areas.

The MD explained that Guma is losing a lot of the water it produces through leakages and bursts, "but that since last year, we have done a lot of work to take care of that, though there is more to be done" Mr. Kpenge went on to say that DFID will also help to make the infrastructure more secured and that other projects like the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping project will bring water supply to isolated communities.

The Guma Chief further explained that his organization is also pushing other strategic projects; "recently the Government has provided funds for us to do a feasibility studies for a supplementary reservoir at Number 2, that is why you are hearing about all the land tussle because we need the place so that we can build another reservoir".

In his keynote address, the Minister of Water Resources, Ing. P. K Lansana said, "About 50 % of treated water from the Guma water supply system is unaccounted for mainly due to the poor condition of the water supply infrastructure. Consequently, consumers do not receive adequate and reliable supply of water. Guma valley Water Company is forced to ration to be able to supply water to most areas."

He said that the assessment of the condition of the major water facilities gives GWWC information to plan the rehabilitation, repairs and replacement of the various components of the GUMA water supply system is long overdue.

He hopes that the assessment of the condition will help GUMA to develop or update its assets and execute a comprehensive management plan to maintain the physical and hydraulic integrity of the infrastructure. "In addition, the condition assessment report should be used as a planning tool for improving the delivery of water supply to consumers in the greater Freetown Area."

He expressed happiness about the honesty of the Consultants, who included the limitations of their study. He urged Guma to take note of those limitations and plan for addressing them, noting that it is good to know that Guma Dam does not require any major repairs but only minor interventions and that apart from limited pipe replacements the raw water pipeline does not require any urgent repair work.

He said that the other bulk water supply infrastructure that require immediate attention is catered for in ongoing projects, adding, "However, needing immediate refurbishment are the ten (10) reservoirs at various locations."

He thanked MCC for supporting the Country by providing funds to assess the key components of the Guma Valley Water Supply System. He assured the head of MCC that the Guma Valley Water Company will use the condition assessment report as a working document.
