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FLOODS ARE BECOMING WATER CRISES: AFRICAN YOUTH WATER FORUM CALLS FOR CLIMATE-RESILIENT WATER SYSTEMS AS GHANA, TOGO AND NIGERIA FACE GROWING FLOOD EMERGENCIES

The African Youth Water Forum (AYWF) is calling on governments, development partners and communities across Africa to urgently strengthen climate-resilient water and sanitation systems following devastating floods that have affected thousands of people in Ghana, Togo and Nigeria.

Recent flood disasters across West Africa have once again exposed the vulnerability of drinking water sources, sanitation facilities and public infrastructure to extreme weather events. Beyond the immediate destruction of homes and roads, floods continue to contaminate wells, boreholes and public toilets, placing millions of people at risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever and diarrhoeal infections.

These are not isolated emergencies. They are clear warnings of the growing impacts of climate change on Africa's water security.

A Growing Humanitarian Crisis

In Ghana: Recent torrential rains triggered severe flooding in Accra, claiming at least 13 lives, displacing families, damaging homes, businesses and critical infrastructure, and contaminating drinking water sources. The Government of Ghana, through NADMO, the Ghana National Fire Service, the Ghana Armed Forces, the Ghana Police Service, the National Ambulance Service and local authorities, led extensive rescue and relief operations. To support recovery, President John Dramani Mahama directed the release of GH¢300 million from the Contingency Fund, followed by the government's approval of GH¢350 million under the National Emergency Flood Response Programme, with GH¢200 million allocated for emergency relief and GH¢150 million for flood mitigation. The African Youth Water Forum commends these efforts while calling for sustained investment in climate-resilient water infrastructure, improved drainage systems and disaster risk reduction to protect lives and ensure safe water access.

Togo: Heavy rainfall that struck Greater Lomé on 29–30 June 2026 affected 23,747 people across 13 municipalities. Official assessments reported 5 deaths, 37 injuries, 683 homes destroyed, 390 houses with roofs torn off, and damage to schools and churches. Humanitarian assistance needs have been estimated at 304.86 million CFA francs, with emergency food assistance and essential household items identified as immediate priorities.

Nigeria: Flooding remains one of the country's most recurrent climate disasters. According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the 2025 flood season affected 459,995 people across 27 states and 128 Local Government Areas, claimed 241 lives, and damaged thousands of homes and critical infrastructure. As Nigeria enters another rainy season, authorities continue to emphasize preparedness and coordinated action to reduce flood risks and protect vulnerable communities.

The urgency of protecting water infrastructure is even greater because more than 411 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa still lack access to safely managed drinking water services, according to the **WHO/UNICEF** Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP). When floods contaminate already limited water sources, communities become significantly more vulnerable to cholera, typhoid and other waterborne diseases.

While the African Youth Water Forum commends governments, emergency responders, humanitarian agencies and volunteers for their swift response to affected communities, the Forum believes that Africa must move beyond emergency response toward long-term investment in climate-resilient water, sanitation and drainage infrastructure. Protecting water sources before disasters occur is one of the most effective ways to safeguard lives, public health and sustainable development.

"Floods should never become a death sentence or a public health emergency simply because communities lack resilient water systems. Every flood that contaminates a well or borehole reminds us that climate resilience begins with safe water. Africa must shift from reacting to disasters to investing in prevention before the next flood arrives."

Mr. Joseph Tettey Afangbe

Convener, African Youth Water Forum

A Continental Wake-Up Call

While recent flooding has affected **Ghana, Togo and Nigeria**, similar climate-related disasters are becoming increasingly frequent across Africa.

Communities from **East Africa to Southern Africa** face growing risks as extreme rainfall overwhelms ageing drainage systems, poorly protected boreholes, shallow wells and sanitation infrastructure that were never designed to withstand today's changing climate.

What happened in Accra, Lomé and communities across Nigeria could happen anywhere on the continent.

The African Youth Water Forum believes that protecting safe water must become a central pillar of climate adaptation and disaster preparedness.

The African Youth Water Forum Calls on African Governments to:

- Map and assess wells, boreholes and sanitation facilities located in flood-prone communities before every rainy season.
- Invest in climate-resilient water infrastructure, including raised well platforms, protected boreholes, improved drainage systems and flood-resistant sanitation facilities.
- Establish emergency safe-water response plans capable of supplying clean drinking water immediately after floods.
- Integrate water safety into national flood early-warning systems.
- Increase investment in community education on household water treatment, hygiene and flood preparedness.

The Forum Calls on Development Partners and Regional Institutions to:

- Increase financing for climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure across Africa.
- Support cross-border collaboration on flood preparedness and water security.

- Strengthen data collection and early-warning systems for climate-related water emergencies.
- Invest in youth-led innovation, research and community action that builds long-term resilience.
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Water Justice Cannot Wait

Africa cannot continue rebuilding the same vulnerable water systems after every flood.

The continent must move from emergency response to prevention by investing in infrastructure capable of protecting safe drinking water before disasters strike.

The African Youth Water Forum urges governments, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, development partners, civil society and the private sector to treat recent floods as a warning and to act decisively before future climate disasters place even more lives at risk.

Protecting safe water today means protecting health, education, livelihoods and dignity tomorrow.

About the African Youth Water Forum (AYWF)

The African Youth Water Forum is a continental youth-led forum committed to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by promoting water justice, climate resilience, youth leadership and sustainable water governance across Africa. The Forum works with governments, civil society, development partners and local communities to strengthen access to safe water and sanitation while empowering young people to lead solutions for Africa's water future.

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