

'Clean Water' Song Hits Ghana's Airwaves on World Water Day

By Allison Hickling

In a fitting contribution to World Water Day – designed to draw attention to the water crisis affecting countless families across the globe – two of Ghana's most popular musicians have released 'Clean Water', a brand new track that urges communities to consume safe water.

Rocky Dawuni and Samini (formerly known as 'Batman') produced the song in collaboration with UNICEF, on the heels of a three-day field trip to the Northern Region of Ghana last month. Joined by other local musicians, the two rising stars visited a number of communities that struggle with severe shortages of clean drinking water and basic sanitation facilities.

Through word and song, the musicians appealed to chiefs, elders and community members to boil or filter their water before consuming it, to drink water from protected sources and to practice safe and proper hygiene.

The track 'Clean Water' uses an infectious rhythmic beat and striking vocals to reinforce key messages that UNICEF and partners emphasize in their work to educate communities on the dangers of consuming contaminated water. The song hits local radio airwaves today, where it could begin to have a far-reaching impact on communities across Ghana.

The consumption of unsafe water and poor sanitation/hygiene practices in Ghana continue to result in diarrhea, worm infestation and other water-and sanitation-related diseases that can lead to death and disability. Children are usually the first to get sick and die from these diseases.

Diarrhoea is responsible for 18 per cent of under-five childhood deaths in Ghana – some 15,000 children whose lives could be saved by simple preventive steps, such as washing hands with soap. Guinea worm, largely attributable to drinking unsafe water, continues to plague the country – Ghana is the second-most Guinea worm endemic country in the world, next only to war-torn Sudan.

Over 30 per cent of the rural population in Ghana does not have access to safe drinking water. Nationally, 22 per cent of the population still lack access to safe water.

UNICEF and partners have focused their interventions in the rural and remote communities in the north of Ghana where the water, sanitation and hygiene problems are most acute. These efforts include the installation and repair of boreholes and other systems to provide safe water supply, provision of latrines and hand washing facilities and the training of community health workers in hygiene promotion and in the early detection, treatment and reporting of Guinea worm cases.

To bolster these interventions, hygiene and sanitation education aimed at changing behaviour is continuously undertaken in affected schools and communities.

* * *