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Successful HUBER Seminar in Africa

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Workshop 'Advanced Solutions for Wastewater Treatment and Reuse in Africa' organized by HUBER in Accra, Ghana received with great interest

1.4 billion people worldwide do not have access to clean drinking water. According to UN prognoses, the number of people suffering from water shortage will multiply from now 700 million to 3 billion by 2025.

Twice as high is the number of people who have to live without sanitation. Forty percent of the world population (2.6 billion) do not have toilets and are not connected to any wastewater disposal system.

Ninety percent of the wastewaters worldwide are still discharged untreated into rivers and lakes. This is an intolerable situation in view of the fact that people use exactly these waters as their drinking water source.

Concerning drinking water and sanitation shortage, the African continent certainly is a special focus point and represents an enormous challenge at the same time.

That is why HUBER SE organized a two-day workshop on 'Advanced Solutions for Wastewater Treatment and Reuse in Africa' in Accra, Ghana for 9 and 10 February 2010.

More than 100 experts from Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Burkina-Faso and Senegal attended the seminar.

In his opening speech, Dr.-Ing. E.h. Hans Huber addressed the subject of drinking water shortage in Africa and the prevailing wastewater problems that need to be solved with existing but also new and innovative technologies adapted to suit the specific local requirements. Hans Huber issued a call for dialogue and underlined his willingness to cooperate with African countries.

Representatives from various African states followed with presentations of the problematic situation and approaches from their point of view.

Mr. Antwi, President of GGEA (German Ghanaian Economic Association), called it a great pleasure for him and his organisation to assist in conducting such an event. Wastewater is a highly explosive issue in Ghana. The state, municipalities and private industries join efforts to improve the wastewater disposal situation. Mr. Antwi explained also the health problems that are caused by untreated wastewater being discharged into receiving water bodies.

The Minister for the Environment and Housing thanked HUBER SE for having organized the seminar and described the wastewater disposal situation in Ghana. Only 10% of the population there are connected to a sewage treatment plant so that there is an enormous demand for adapted technologies including the respective after-sales service. The minister pointed out that the government in Accra is working at full speed on solving the country's wastewater problems.

In the following discussion, it was dealt with the issues of financing, maintenance & repair of treatment systems and the integration of the population in the planning phase of wastewater projects. The availability of water is definitely varying regionally. Some African countries can resort to sufficient water resources while other arid regions have a high interest in projects for wastewater reuse.

All in all, it were very interesting and informative two days for all parties involved. On the part of HUBER, it was recognized that the necessity for adapted wastewater treatment technologies is very high in Africa and the solutions presented by HUBER are met with great interest.

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