

Water and Sustainable Development in Africa:

Regional Stakeholders' Conference for Priority Setting

L'Eau et le Développement Durable en Afrique:

Conférence Régionale des Partenaires pour la Définition des Priorités

Conference Executive Summary and Accra Declaration Rapport de la Conférence et Déclaration d'Accra

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FINAL DRAFT

Africa Water Task Force & Local Organizing Committee



Background

The Accra Water Conference was held against a background of a number of international initiatives in the water sector, such as the adoption of the Dublin and Rio principles in 1992 and the African Water Vision for 2025 during the Second World Water Forum held in The Hague, Netherlands in 2000.

There are two international events on the horizon, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Third World Water Forum requiring a unified African voice and a position on water based on a consensus of water stakeholders.

In September 2001, under the guidance of the African Development Bank, representatives from more than 20 regional and international organizations working with water in Africa met in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The main purpose of this meeting was to encourage collaboration among the different organizations to promote synthesis, coordination and as a result use resources efficiently.

Recognizing the urgent need for action, it was decided to establish an **Africa Water Task Force** (AWTF) to help define and synthesize African positions and programs for the two forthcoming international events. The first step was decided to be a related Stakeholders' Conference.

Following the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) it was decided to use the proposed Conference also as a platform to show how integration of water issues can help achieve NEPAD's goals and mobilize resources for implementation of targets set in the African Water Vision and Framework for Action.

The Conference was held in Accra during April 15-17, 2002, with financial support from the Government of The Netherlands. The African Development Bank played a central role in organizing and coordinating the Conference and in bringing together the key international and regional stakeholders to Accra.

Among other things, it sought to address the following two questions:

- How can development of water resources help eradicate poverty and support a sustainable development in Africa?

- How can we ensure that water-related problems do not prevent sustainable development in Africa and the achievement of NEPAD's goals.

The AWTF remains highly indebted to His Excellency Mr. John A. Kufuor (the President of Ghana) who, apart from officially opening the Conference, shared some thoughts on the sad reality of dangers posed by both excess and scarcity of water.

The Accra Water Conference (AWC) was further privileged with the presence of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of The Netherlands, Prince Willem Alexander, who presented the latest draft of his contribution to the Panel of the UN Secretary-General; "No Water—No Future: A Water Focus for Johannesburg." His Royal Highness emphasized that the world water crisis is one of governance and not one of scarcity.

The AWTF is very grateful to Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim (former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, OAU) for accepting the invitation of the ADB to assist Africa by serving as its Water Ambassador. The technical and political system stands to benefit from the experience and network of Dr Salim. The AWC fully endorsed his role as Water Ambassador and it is confident that the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW) will seize the opportunity to benefit from this distinguished son of Africa to mobilize and support a greater awareness on behalf of the water sector both internationally and within Africa.

PRIMARY GOALS

The main goals of the AWC are the following:

- Increase awareness by Africa's political leaders and development specialists to promote the important role of water in sustainable development.
- Identify how water can contribute positively to achieve NEPAD's goals.
- Agree on priorities for water development in Africa.
- Agree on a concrete Action Program.
- Develop a plan for mobilizing financial resources needed to implement action plans.

PARICIPATION

More than 200 participants from **42 African countries**, including 6 African Ministers responsible for water, participated in the Conference. The participants were, among others; senior government officials, NGOs, universities, river-basin organizations and international research organizations in the water sector, such as International Water Management Institute, Global Water Partnership, World Water Council, FAO, African Development Bank, The World Bank, etc.; bilateral donors

including the Government of The Netherlands, Department for International Development (UK), French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, etc. were also represented at the Conference.

PRINCIPAL OUTCOMES

The primary outcome of the Conference was the **Accra Declaration** based on identified challenges and water issues in Africa, and recommendations for action plans to address these challenges.

A position paper was prepared by the AWTF based on the objectives and targets of the African Water Vision and Framework action, serving as a basis for the discussions during the Conference. The paper highlighted the importance of the potential role of water in achieving NEPAD's objectives. The output is based on six themes, which were clearly identified in the position paper and discussed in the corresponding working groups. The themes are outlined as follows.

Water, food security, environment and trade

There is a strong linkage between water availability and food security, hence the importance of developing programs to ensure water for increased food production. Sustained agricultural water use and production depends on fair world trade order and opening of regional and international markets.

- Efforts must be made to increase productivity of water in agriculture and to strengthen the capacity of research institutions and data and information generation.
- Build partnerships and examine the regional and international trade situation to remove the market constraints and create a fair exchange of agricultural produce, considering comparative advantages.

Climate change and natural disasters

Africa suffers a great deal from water-related disasters aggravated by climatic changes caused by activities outside of Africa. At present there are indications of a trend towards greater variability in the region.

- Capacity building to provide endangered countries with tools to cope with disasters.
- Investments in large storage infrastructure considering increased probability of disasters (floods and droughts) and climate changes, contributing to mitigating the impact of these events (e.g., flood-control functions).

Managing shared waters

Most of Africa's water resources are part of transnational or trans-boundary rivers, lakes or groundwater aquifers. Water should therefore be a source of regional integration rather than a source of conflict. Consequently:

- Development of guidelines to summarize potential options and existing best practices on the development and management of river-basin organizations.
- Member states should consider establishing River Basin organizations in basins where they do not exist. A diagnostic study/institutional audit is recommended for all existing river-basin organizations to identify problems and constraints.

Water, poverty and health

Proportionately, Africa has the lowest percentage in terms of access to water and sanitation services. Equitable access to clean water and sanitation can improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

- Effective investments are required considering that most utilities in Africa have failed to achieve financial viability.
- African governments should take action to encourage autonomy and corporate standards within watermanagement and sanitation services before calling on international support.
- Special attention is needed to empower local communities to make informed choices on water resources development and to manage their own services.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and water wisdom

Water must be considered in a broad sense, including water supply and sanitation, irrigation, energy generation, etc. There is a need to develop a strong awareness of water-related issues.

- Establish dialogue between and within countries.
- Use mass media to disseminate information on IWRM.
- Intensify training of water professionals in IWRM.

Financing water infrastructure

Water is a social good and a fundamental need which should be provided at an affordable cost and at the same time considered an economic good, which should be

properly valued and efficiently managed. Water service providers should aim for financial sustainability, charging the full cost to those who can afford to pay, with transparent subsidy arrangements from public funds and cross-subsidies where the poor cannot afford the full cost.

- African leaders should give strong priority to financing water infrastructure. One important instrument for doing this is the inclusion of water resource development in country poverty reduction strategy papers.
- There is a need to establish an African Water Finance Facility to provide investment support for water resources management and water-service provision in Africa within the framework of NEPAD. The African Development Bank should provide technical support in establishing the facility and be responsible for its management.

NO WATER—NO FUTURE

In preparation for the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the UN Secretary General nominated the Crown Prince of the Netherlands, Prince Willem Alexander, to be one of the eminent persons in his Panel. This provided the Conference with the opportunity to review the draft paper (*No Water—No Future*) by His Royal Highness.

Conference participants were appreciative of the opportunity to comment on the paper. They thanked the Prince for his efforts to ensure that water has been secured prominence during the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg late August 2002.

The Conference participants consider “*No Water—No Future*” a valuable and useful contribution with the potential to significantly increase awareness of water issues at the WSSD and beyond.

In order to ensure that the paper reflects African water priorities, the Conference particularly proposed the inclusion of an “Africa chapter” into the document that highlights the following:

- An introduction based on the Africa Position Paper mentioned above.
- Reference to NEPAD as relating to water and sustainable development.
- Quotations from the Conference.
- Recommendations in line with the outcome of the Conference.

FUTURE DIRECTION

The Conference participants agreed that the African Water Vision for 2025 provides an overarching framework for guiding the development of water resources in Africa and the implementation of its targets should be pursued with urgency. The participants were pleased with the role and achievements of the AWTF and endorsed its continued existence to promote collaboration and partnership on the continent and help define an African agenda for water within the framework of NEPAD. Specifically, the AWTF was mandated to continue coordinating the participation of Africa in the forthcoming world events including the WSSD in Johannesburg and the third World Water Forum.

The AWTF has started working towards the WSSD. It has initiated action in the creation of a Water Dome (www.waterdome.net) for the WSSD with an “African Water Village.” It has also started planning for the Third World Water Forum.

Accra Declaration on Water and Sustainable Development

Water is life ! Without water there can be no future.

Water is the basis of life and development and water use and protection must underpin the rejuvenation of Africa and the achievement of all the goals established by African Heads of State in the Millennium Declaration of 2000. The World Trade Organization's Doha negotiations and the Monterey Consensus at the Finance for Development Conference offer an economic platform on which sustainable development can be built. Yet Africa may still be marginalized in a globalizing world.

Africa's leaders believe that Africa can break free of poverty and overcome the "development traps" that confine it to a vicious circle of underdevelopment, conflict and suffering. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a bold initiative to achieve this. Its success will require the application of all Africa's human, economic, technological and natural resources.

The African Water Vision emerged from global initiatives to promote sustainable development and to implement frameworks for action to develop, manage and protect water. This has provided a foundation from which these challenges can be addressed.

We, as representatives of governments, international, continental and regional organizations as well as members of civil society, professionals from the water sector from 42 African countries together with partners in other continents, met in Accra, Ghana to seek ways to ensure that our management and use of water assist Africa to achieve its sustainable development goals. NEPAD provides an important opportunity for this.

We have considered the role of water in addressing poverty, including food security and health; the challenges posed by climatic change and water-related disasters; and the requirements of integrated water management within national and trans-boundary basins. We have also considered the challenge of financing the interventions required as well as of the current trade and economic context.

Finally, we have reviewed “No Water—No Future,” the draft contribution provided by His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Netherlands whose advice on sustainable development was solicited by the Secretary General of the United Nations. We commented on what we believe is a helpful and valuable contribution to the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, largely consistent with this Declaration.

DECLARATION: Water can make the difference to Africa's development !

We have concluded that water can make an immense difference to Africa's development if it is managed well and used wisely. Given clear policies and strategies and real commitments to implementation, we can use water to help eradicate poverty, reduce water-related diseases and achieve sustainable development in Africa.

This can be achieved through:

- improved access to potable water services and sanitation,
- water use to address food security and income generation,
- integrated water resource management (IWRM) in national and shared water basins,
- water-related disaster prevention, mitigation and management,
- empowerment and capacity building focused on improving equity and gender sensitivity,
- pro-poor water governance and water policies, and all undertaken in a manner designed to protect the natural environment.

Specific action programs are required to address the huge challenge of ensuring that the proportion of Africans without access to basic water supply and sanitation is reduced by 75 percent by 2015 and by 95 percent by 2025, including actions to promote improved hygiene.

Water management can also make a critical contribution to the goal of halving the proportion of malnourished people by 2015. Efficient and sustainable use of limited water resources, effective application of science and technology, and regional investment in irrigated agriculture and aquaculture should focus as much on economic development and income generation as on food self-sufficiency. Local, national and international trade opportunities will encourage and help fund this economic activity if we enhance

- access to local and international markets, removing protective barriers,
- cross-sectoral, integrated approaches, and
- partnerships and networks for funding and learning.

National and international water basins are instruments for regional cooperation, development and integration. The lack of cooperative arrangements in these basins and the institutional and financial weaknesses of the existing ones undermine the potential benefits to the continent. Addressing this is essential for the assessment and integrated management of water resources for the mutual benefit of all water users and their communities.

Africa, particularly its poor, is especially vulnerable to water-related disasters such as droughts, floods and desertification, aggravated by the impact of climatic changes as a consequence of human activities outside Africa. Areas for action include:

- the development of a prevention-based culture, rectifying knowledge gaps and strengthening policy and institutional capacity to assess and monitor climate and water and mitigate the effects of climate change and climatic variability on water resources,
- the adoption of approaches to mitigate the impact of disasters and climate change, and
- strengthening disaster-management capacity and emergency preparedness.

Actions should be undertaken to increase public awareness and strengthen the political will needed for sustainable development and management of water resources. The building of human and institutional capacities is crucial for the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). There is an urgent need to establish or strengthen institutions for research and information sharing.

Mobilising the needed funds

Unless we address the underlying poverty of many African people, it will not be possible to sustain their access to safe water and hygienic sanitation or to create sustainable livelihoods using water. Improved household incomes are essential if cost-recovery-based strategies are to mobilize the funds required.

The linkage between water-based initiatives and broader efforts to promote sustainable development in Africa must therefore be recognized and reinforced. One cannot succeed without the other. Cooperation to create the economic conditions in which Africa can meet its own needs in areas such as trade, direct foreign investment and access to technology will be crucial to generate the household incomes required.

Water is a public good used for social and economic purposes. Water-service providers should aim for financial sustainability, charging the full cost to those who can afford to pay, with transparent subsidy arrangements from public funds and cross-subsidies where the poor cannot afford the full cost. Governments must ensure that resources are mobilized first from internal sources, using public funds for services

for the poor, and from private-sector funds to meet national objectives. As much attention should be paid to environmental sustainability and funding ongoing operations and maintenance costs as to initial investment.

In addition to identifying and promoting self-funded economic activities such as hydropower and commercial agriculture, we should aim to mobilize funding for those essential investments, which cannot be supported using local or private-sector resources. There is a need for an annual investment level of US\$20 billion per year for the development of water infrastructure, as articulated in the African Water Vision for 2025. However, an initial investment target of US\$10 billion per year is suggested to meet urgent water needs. The breakdown is approximately as follows: approximately US\$6 billion will be required annually to meet basic water supply and sanitation targets, US\$2 billion to promote irrigated agriculture and a further US\$2 billion to support the software of institutional development, capacity building, research, education and information management.

While a dedicated water fund for Africa should be established, the establishment of similar funds at national and basin levels should also be considered. Such funds could support integrated water resource management as well as initiatives to encourage cooperation on shared basins.

To mitigate the impact of water-related disasters and climatic change, suitable funding and compensation instruments should be developed reflecting, where appropriate, the “polluter pays” principle, with those countries which have contributed most to the problems contributing to their solutions.

Water is everybody's business

African people and their governments hold the key to their own future. They should set up effective institutional and policy frameworks and ensure the participation of all elements of civil society with governance delegated to the lowest appropriate level.

At a regional and continental level, governments and other stakeholders must cooperate to provide technical assistance to, and support for, local and national initiatives. International water basins are potential instruments for regional cooperation, development and integration. Cooperative arrangements must be established and strengthened to achieve benefits for all riparian countries.

Africa's partners from the international community have a vital role to play if we are to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the sustainable development that we all seek. In view of the scale of the challenges, financial flows will have to be dramatically increased through an appropriate mix of generic development aid, foreign direct investment and support to broad economic development in Africa through enhanced access to markets and other measures.

The achievement of Africa's development goals, as articulated by NEPAD and the African Water Vision, will not be achieved without committed and coordinated action by governments at national, subregional and continental levels with international support. The establishment of the African Ministers' Conference on Water (AMCOW) will mark an important step forward for policy dialogue and coordinated action. We offer our collective support to the Ministers to ensure that this initiative receives the technical and professional support and secretariat services it will require.

Action plans are more likely to succeed if there are effective systems for monitoring, evaluation and accounting. The 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Kyoto Third World Water Forum offer the opportunity to report, evaluate and account in a structured manner on progress made since the Hague World Water Forum in 2000 at which Frameworks for Action were established. We recommend that these events be used to review both global and African progress and to identify and propose actions to bridge any gaps that may appear between commitments, delivery and goals. The African Water Development Report should be used on an ongoing basis to support this process.

Accra
17th April 2002

