

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE FIRST AFRICAN WATER WEEK (AWW-1)

March 26-28, 2008

“Accelerating Water Security for Socio-economic Development of Africa”

1 BACKGROUND

The Origin of the African Water Week

- 1.1 The African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW), provides political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable socio-economic development and maintenance of African ecosystems in Africa. AMCOW regularly reviews the state of Africa’s water and has promoted various initiatives and actions of common African interest. AMCOW has also facilitated regional and international cooperation through the coordination of African countries’ policies and actions on water resources. In this respect, AMCOW in its Sixth Ordinary Session held in Congo Brazzaville from 28th to 31st May 2007, decided to institutionalize an African Water Week and requested the African Development Bank to host the First African Water Week (AWW 1) in Tunis.
- 1.2 The African Development Bank Group organized a successful Bank Water Week in Tunis from 1st to 3rd July 2004. The Bank Water Week was organized on the theme ‘Building Partnerships for Water in Africa’ and aimed at engaging the stakeholders in the African water sector to forge partnerships around the Bank’s major initiatives as well as galvanize broad support from the stakeholders for concerted action to advance sustainable water resources management and development in Africa. In the light of this experience and the decision by AMCOW to institutionalize an African Water Week, the Bank has accepted the request to co-organize with AMCOW and host the 1st African Water Week.
- 1.3 The Bank accepted the request from AMCOW and prepared a Concept Note that was submitted for consideration by AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Executive Committee (EXCO) during their meeting of November 20-24, 2007 held in Nairobi Kenya. Both TAC and EXCO endorsed the main theme of the AWW-1 as well as the proposed date of March 26-28, 2007.

The Emerging Regional Water Issue and Events

- 1.4 The African Water Vision, launched at the 2nd World Water Forum in 2000 at the Hague, is concerned with the equitable and sustainable use of Africa's water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, and regional integration. It seeks to address the water paradox of the continent (floods and droughts, water scarcity and under-exploited water resources). The Vision also seeks to address the sustainable supply of water to meet the requirements of

food and energy security and improved access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

- 1.5 By 2025, it is expected that 25 African countries will be subject to water scarcity or water stress situation. In addition, the region is characterized by extreme variability of precipitation, exposing it to extreme floods and droughts taking a big toll on the countries' economies. The emerging challenges of climate change as a result of global warming is expected to have a compounding impact on Africa's water resources.
- 1.6 Even though the region has a huge potential for irrigated agriculture, due to heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture the region is a net importer of food and agricultural products. The technically feasible hydropower potential of the region is estimated to be about 1.4 million GWh/year. However, access to electricity in most African countries is less than 200 KWh/person/year and in some countries it is less than 30 Kwh/person/year. In Africa, about 300 million people lack access to adequate water supply and about 313 million people lack access to adequate sanitation. Low access to sanitation and water supply are the root causes of many diseases that affect Africa.
- 1.7 The General Assembly of the United Nations through its Resolution on 4th December 2006 declared 2008 as an International Year of Sanitation (IYS). The resolution expressed concern on the slow and insufficient progress made in achieving the global sanitation target, and recognized that progress can be made through active commitment and action by all stakeholders. During the IYS, focus will be given to raising awareness, encouraging Governments and partners to promote and implement policies and actions for meeting the sanitation target and mobilizing communities towards changing sanitation and hygiene practices through sanitation-health-education campaigns.
- 1.8 Recognizing that water is the catalyst for growth and development, the Heads of States and Governments of Africa in their Sirte Declaration on 27th February 2004 identified achieving water security as a priority undertaking through significant investments in infrastructure such as storage dams, water harvesting, irrigation and hydropower structures. AMCOW also in its Mexico Ministerial Declaration On Water in March 17th 2006, emphasized the same notion of achieving water security by stating that “...*to improve water security, African countries need to invest in water infrastructure up to the level where they can, in order to achieve a self- sustaining auto-induced growth to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.*”
- 1.9 Following the UNSGAB Africa Dialogue meeting held in December 2006 in Tunis, a series of meetings are planned to be organized by UNSGAB, AU and other African Stakeholders culminating in a proposed summit of Head of States and Governments of African countries in 2008 in order to bring the African Water Agenda to the center stage of African politics to accelerate African water security.
- 1.10 The 2008 International Year of sanitation and the proposed 2008 African Summit of Head of States and Governments on water and sanitation will be followed by the 5th World Water Forum in March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey. The world Water Forum serves as a stepping-stone towards global collaboration on water problems. The Forum is a unique platform where the water

community and policy and decision- makers from all regions of the world can link together, debate and attempt to find solutions to achieve water security.

OBJECTIVE

1.11 The main objectives of the First African Water Week (AWW-1) are to:

- i. Create a forum for African water sector professionals, stakeholders and partners to discuss the opportunities and challenges of achieving water security for the socio-economic development of Africa and formulate concrete policies, strategies and actions to accelerate water resources development and provision of services taking cognizance of the challenges and impact of climate change and variability;
- ii. Take stock of the status of achievement of the MDG in Africa, review the key achievements and challenges and propose strategies and actions for accelerating achievement of the water and sanitation targets.
- iii. Build consensus and provide recommendations for consideration at the proposed 2008 Regional Summit on water and sanitation and inputs for the 5th World Water Forum which will take place in March 2009 in Istanbul Turkey.

2 THEME OF THE 1ST AFRICAN WATER WEEK

2.1 The over arching theme for the AWW-1 is “**Accelerating Water Security for Socio-Economic Development of Africa**”. Water security is the capacity to provide sufficient and sustainable quantity and quality of water for all types of water services (drinking, sanitation and health, food production, energy, industry, ecosystem protection) and protect society and the environment from water-related disasters. This is of crucial importance as the world is already facing severe water shortages in many parts of the developing world and the problem will only become more widespread in the years ahead with climate change.

2.2 The AWW-1 will ponder on the challenges and actions Africa has to undertake to accelerate the attainment of sustainable water security for its social and economic development and environmental well-being. The analysis and formulation of actions will consider the transboundary nature of Africa’s main water systems and the need for cooperation on development and management. The main deliberations of the AWW-1 will be on :

- i. Lessons of world experiences on achieving water security;
- ii. Water security challenges and the sanitation gap;
- iii. Infrastructure investment requirement to achieve desired water security;
- iv. Investing in water information & knowledge in Africa;
- v. The challenges of environmental and social impacts for water infrastructure;

- vi. The roles of main stakeholders and the development of appropriate partnerships;

3 TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF AWW-1

- 3.1 The AWW-1 will span a period 3 days. The first day will focus on the opening sessions dealing with the generic challenges, issues and actions to be followed by thematic discussions to be held in parallel sessions in the ensuing days. The closing session will be held on the third day which will also focus on key conclusions and next steps. In parallel with the technical sessions, exposition of innovative technologies, fairs and side events sponsored by stakeholders can be considered.

Opening Sessions

- 3.2 The opening sessions will be high level plenary panel sessions, where AMCOW executive members, distinguished experts, and representatives of UN agencies and major stakeholders will address the participants on the Week's theme to set the stage for discussion for the rest of the Week.

Parallel Sessions

- 3.3 Half a day will be devoted for each of the thematic areas. Depending on the number of presentations, two to three breakaway parallel sessions will be conducted. Some of the topics which can be considered under each them are as follows:

- i. **Water security and Socio-Economic Development: Global and Regional experience**

- Case study outside the continent: USA, Europe, Asia;
- Africa experience (positive and negative);
- Impact of climate change and variability on Africa's water resources;

- ii. **Water security challenges and the Sanitation Gap**

- Managing water security;
- Result of the Africasan conference in Durban, SA;
- Strategies to close the sanitation gap;

- iii. **Investing in water Information & knowledge in Africa**

- Status of water resource information & knowledge in Africa (Overview, examples of some countries);
- Main indicators for water knowledge;

- Accelerating Information and knowledge for development-application of new techniques and technologies including Earth Observation Systems;
- Assisting African countries and RBOs to build their water information & knowledge (surface and underground) and management;

iv. Investing in infrastructure for water security

- Building Africa's water storage capacity: Ensuring water security for underpinning socio-economic development;
- Mitigation and adaptation to water related disasters and climate changes;
- The NEPAD Water and Sanitation Programme and key regional infrastructure for the regional integration;
- Mobilizing public and private sector finance for building Africa's water infrastructure;

v. The challenges of environmental and social impacts for water infrastructure

- Lessons from past experience, environmental, cultural and social safeguards;
- Advocacy for water infrastructure in Africa;
- International Partnership and Coordination towards an African water security agenda;

vi. The roles of main stakeholders and the development of appropriate partnerships, the way forward

- AU, NEPAD, and AMCOW;
- Governments, Local Governments, Municipalities and Communities;
- DFIs (Regional, multilateral and bilateral);
- National and international private sector;
- UN Water Group;
- NGO and Civil Society;

Closing Sessions

- 3.4** The final day will feature two plenary sessions. The first plenary session will be devoted to the AWW-1 Synthesis Panel discussion on the presentations made in the various parallel sessions, interventions made by the audience and the conclusions reached in the parallel and plenary sessions. The second plenary session will be closing remarks by AMCOW executive members, invited guests and distinguished experts.

Exposition of Innovative Technologies

- 3.5** Parallel to the technical sessions, expositions of innovative technologies and fairs could take place. As this activity will be undertaken by the private sector and large organizations, it will be demand-driven.

Side Events

- 3.6** Side events will also be organized by interested participants during the Water Week. This will be done in order to strengthen partnership and promote discuss on specific topics.

4 EXPECTED OUTPUT

- i. Papers on selected African water security issues prepared and deliberated by various stakeholders including the AfDB;
- ii. Opportunity created to forge partnerships around the major water initiatives and individual participants and organizations;
- iii. African water security issues popularized through the participation of media personnel and publications of pamphlets, leaflets and brochures;
- iv. Strategies and actions for accelerating water security proposed;
- v. Strategy for combating climate change and variability in Africa drawn;
- vi. Proceedings of the 1st African Water Week as well as recommendations to the 2008 Regional Summit on Water and Sanitation and the 5th World Water Forum prepared.

5 ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP

5.1 The First African Water Week basically is an all-African event sponsored by the African Development Bank. Hence, AMCOW and major regional actors will be involved in providing overall guidance and coordination while the Bank undertakes the actual preparation of the Water Week. Taking into consideration the weight of the gathering, the following structure is proposed:

- The steering committee will be composed of representatives of the following organizations and will be chaired by an AMCOW representative and may include AU, AMCOW, UN Water Africa, World Bank, EU, RECs, RBOs, ANEW and other key stakeholders. The Steering Committee shall establish a technical committee which shall follow up a specific assignment such as funds mobilization.

6 THE AWW-I DATE

Taking into consideration the time required to undertake the various activities listed above and other major events taking place in the region in the near future, the AWW-I will take place from 26th to 28th March 2008.

7 PARTICIPATION

The AWW-1 will be co-organized by AMCOW and the Bank in partnership with other Regional organizations and stakeholders. The AWW-1 is expected to attract over 200 participants from the region as well other countries.