



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

Statement to the 2012 World Water Conference

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President

Event: World Water Conference

Marseille, France

14 March 2012

Twelve years ago, under the umbrella of the Africa Water Vision, we committed to the objective of water for all by the year 2025. We are here to renew our commitment to the water sector and strengthen our partnership.

I would like to especially thank Mr. Camdessus for the very special support and personal commitment to the water sector over the years.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, at the African Development Bank, are wholeheartedly committed to redoubling our efforts. Since 2003, the Bank has increased its focus on financing water supply and sanitation, as well as the achievement of food and energy security.

This has been attained through the promotion of major regional water initiatives developed with the support of the African Ministers Council on Water and development partners, many of whom are present here today.

The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative – RWSSI – and the African Water Facility have been our major flagships.

RWSSI

At the First International Conference on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa, held in Paris in 2005, the RWSSI was launched with the goal of providing full access to basic water supply and sanitation services by 2025 to the rural areas, with intermediate coverage targets of 80% by 2015. That conference led to the establishment of a RWSSI Trust Fund. I thank the Governments of France and Denmark for providing seed money later joined by Canada, The Netherlands and Switzerland.

Admittedly, RWSSI had timid beginnings. However, it has since grown into a sound instrument providing water in 23 African countries to 33 million people and improved sanitation to about 21 million.

The Bank contributed 1.3 billion dollars, supplemented by investments from African Governments and development partners to the tune of 3.5 billion dollars. While the achievements are encouraging there remains a long way to go. Going forward four issues are critical.

First: greater African ownership of the initiative. This demand-led approach will not only ensure greater execution but will also have a strong leveraging capacity for other donors.

Second: strengthen overall governance at the strategic and operational levels for more inclusiveness. Patrons have expressed an interest in having a greater voice – and it is the right thing to do.

Third: effective communication to enhance the visibility, advocacy and outreach.

Fourth: integrating the RWSSI into a broader climate resilience agenda.

The RWSSI Strategic Business plan incorporates these four elements.

African Water Facility

Turning now to the African Water Facility – an AMCOW initiative – I am pleased to report that over the past six years it has developed into a successful financial leveraging instrument making a real difference in the development and management of water resources in Africa. It has supported activities which are catalytic to major investments with a leveraging ratio of 1:40, far exceeding everyone's expectations.

The facility's portfolio speaks of a rich diversity of activities, including high quality national and trans-boundary water projects. The facility has strengthened water governance through enabling sector policies, strategies and plans in 30 countries and six water basin organizations. The facility will continue to support enhanced governance and the harnessing of knowledge to improve the quality of investments and optimise benefits for citizens.

We estimate that the facility requires 200 million dollars to successfully implement its new strategic plan over the next five years.

Links to climate change and green growth

The African Development Bank perceives accelerated, strong, sustainable and inclusive growth as an essential part of its long term strategy.

This encapsulates water resources management in a green growth development framework and resilience vis-a-vis climate change and other contemporary challenges such as population growth, urbanization and natural resource scarcity.

The water sector requires the convergence of a multi-pronged approach in a clearly oriented strategy. Environmental degradation, excessive abstraction of water resources, and discharges of untreated pollutants are threatening ecosystem goods and services upon which many livelihoods and economic activities depend.

Mainstreaming climate risks into water resources management plans will require additional funding.

Conclusion

The water initiatives administered by the Bank with support from the wider stakeholders, notably RWSSI and AWF, have proven to be effective vehicles for achieving water security as well as key building blocks for greening development in an inclusive framework.

I welcome your continued support to the RWSSI and the African Water Facility. The contribution of these two instruments bolstered by your own bilateral water sector programmes will build the much-needed synergies.

Thank you.