

ACCRA DECLARATION ON WATER AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Accra

17th April 2002

Final Draft – Africa Water Task Force

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.

Mobilizing 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.

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Water and Sustainable Development in Africa: Regional Stakeholders' Conference for Priority Setting