

**Statement of African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW)  
at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South  
Africa, August 2002**

*“Water is Life – Without water there can be no future”*

We, the Ministers responsible for water in African countries, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria on 29-30 April 2002 on the occasion of the inauguration of the African Ministerial Conference on Water – AMCOW, having adopted the Abuja Declaration;

Noting:

The continuing process of improving the management and care for water resources through a series of international events including :

Governmental processes-

- The adoption of the Rio Principles in 1992;
- The adoption, by the African Heads of State and Government of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in 2001;
- The statement by the Ministers responsible for Water Resources from African Countries attending the International Conference on Freshwater (Bonn, December 2001);
- The priorities for the development of the African Continent held by the African Union, 2001.

Broad stakeholder processes (not all the contents of which are accepted by all African countries)-

- The adoption of the Dublin Principles in 1992;
- The adoption of the African Water Vision for 2025 during the Second World Water Forum held in the Hague, Netherlands in 2000;
- The Accra Declaration of the Regional Stakeholders’ Conference for Priority Setting, “Water and Sustainable Development in Africa”, April 2002;

Express concern that:

- Although water is abundant in Africa on a regional scale, it is unevenly distributed by nature. While a few African countries have high annual averages of rainfall, many already or soon will face water-stress or scarcity conditions where the population cannot be sustained with available water resources.

- Over 400 million people are expected to be living in at least 17 water-scarce African countries by the year 2010. Their lack of adequate water will severely constrain food production, ecosystem protection and socio-economic development.
- Due to climate variability, the potential impacts of climate change on water resources, recurring droughts leading to chronic water shortages, and floods in many parts of Africa, many African countries and people are becoming increasingly vulnerable to water related crises.
- Over 300 million people in Africa still do not have reasonable access to safe drinking water. An even greater number of people lack adequate sanitation.
- Almost half the people of the African continent suffer from water-related diseases.
- Aquatic species, habitats and ecosystems are at risk. With increasing water demand throughout Africa to provide for greater food demands, industrial expansion, rural and urban growth, less water is available for maintaining aquatic ecosystems.
- More than 50 major watersheds, river basins and lakes in Africa, are shared by two or more countries. Most of them are without any agreements on equitable use and/or environmental protection. Few have effective institutional arrangements for consultation and cooperation. Procedures for avoiding or resolving international disputes over water are largely lacking.

Recognise that:

- **Integrated Water Resources Management is a priority**  
The integrated management, utilization, development and protection of water resources, which recognizes social, economic and environmental needs, is a national and regional priority for all the member countries of the African Ministerial Conference on Water.
- **Water, food security, environment and access to international markets are inter-related**  
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 security. Partnerships should be built and the regional and international trade situation examined to remove trade barriers restricting the trade of African produce and to create a fair exchange of agricultural produce.
- **Many countries and peoples in Africa are vulnerable to climate variability and change**  
With per capita water storage in Africa 100 times lower than in Europe and North America and with higher climate variability, Africa, particularly its poor,

is especially vulnerable to water-related disasters such as droughts, floods and desertification.

- **Most of Africa's water resources (watersheds, river basins, lakes and aquifers) are shared between two or more countries**

National and international shared water resources 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.

- **Inadequate water supply and sanitation continue to contribute to poverty and ill health**

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

- **Water infrastructure requires adequate financing**

There is a need for an annual investment level of US\$20 billion for the development of water infrastructure, as articulated in the African Water Vision for 2025. Initial investment of US\$10 billion per year is required to meet urgent water needs – [US\$6 billion to meet basic water supply and sanitation targets, US\$2 billion to promote irrigated agriculture and US\$2 billion to support institutional development, capacity building, research, education and information management.]

Therefore, in the spirit of international cooperation and in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities,

Resolve :

to accord the highest priority to address the issues noted above and, to this end

- 1) Promote action which will translate into reality the goals of AMCOW;
- 2) Develop a regional programme of action on water to provide a framework for concrete actions in addressing key water-related concerns;

Call upon :

the developed countries to exert their best efforts to meet the agreed United Nations target for official development assistance of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to developing countries.

The African Ministers responsible for Water

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