

FINAL

Launch of the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW)

**The Abuja Ministerial Declaration on Water -
A Key to Sustainable Development
in Africa**

**Abuja, Nigeria
29-30 April 2002**

Preamble :

1. We, the African Ministers responsible for water meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, from 29 - 30 April 2002, adopt the "Abuja **Ministerial** Declaration on Water - a key to Sustainable Development in Africa";
2. We are fully conscious of the challenges and obligations in the Treaty establishing the African Union
3. We have, in adopting the Declaration, critically examined the global water situation and its implication for Africa.
4. We have, in this regard, duly noted that:
 - (a) the need of humanity for adequate supplies of freshwater, both for survival and social and economic development, will remain a major national, regional and international priority in the years to come. An adequate supply of freshwater is the most important prerequisite for sustaining human life, for maintaining ecosystems that support all life, and for achieving sustainable development;
 - (b) the inescapable reality is that, without adequate supplies of clean, safe water and sanitation people are dying suffering and many are dying prematurely, ecosystems will cease to perform their human-sustaining functions and the potential for social and economic development will be drastically reduced; the plight of Africa's children in terms of their lack of adequate safe drinking water. Water quantity, quality and sanitation are the key factors in determining whether a child survives.
 - (c) ironically, freshwater is abundant throughout the world on a regional basis. It is, at the same time, however, unevenly distributed by nature and human kind;
 - (d) while some countries have high per capita water availability, many others are now facing, or will soon face, a situation of water scarcity and unacceptable pollution levels in which their populations and their social and economic development cannot be sustained with the available water resources in many regions, while in others, it is already at a critical stage;
 - (e) many hundreds of millions of people already do not have access to adequate supplies of clean water and adequate sanitation

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- (f) in addition to these challenges, practices in many areas are aggravating the problems with the prevailing - and incorrect view that water will be perpetually available in quality and quantity.
 - (g) Traditional coping strategies such as migration and pastoralism are becoming less and less viable.
5. We have also taken stock of the lessons learnt, notably, the issues of concern to Africa and reaffirm the position stated in our Declaration to the International Conference on Fresh Water, in Bonn on 7th December 2001. In that Declaration, we drew attention, **to** the fact that a decade after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), more Africans lack access to safe water and sanitation. Almost half the people of the African continent, particularly women and children suffer from water-related diseases. The result is economically crippling, and from a humanitarian standpoint, simply degrading.
6. We are determined to respond to the new and emerging challenges in Africa:
- (a) In the Treaty establishing the African Union and in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our Heads of State and Government, have clearly indicated that the destiny of our continent is in the hands of our peoples. We also recognize that the primary responsibility for ensuring the sustainable and equitable management of water resources, in Africa, rests with our governments and peoples. The Ministers responsible for water resources, in this regard, have a special role to play.
 - (b) A growing number of our countries have put in place arrangements for the management of water resources at all levels. We shall strengthen institutional arrangements for the water and sanitation sector in Africa. We have already embarked on a series of water sector reforms. We continue to rely on our major partners, including the private sector, which have increasingly been joining hands with our governments and are contributing to bringing water and sanitation services to our peoples.
 - (c) We realize that much more needs to be done to encourage riparian states to co-operate on all matters relating to shared waters.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE AFRICAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER

A Mandate

- (a) **Welcoming** the adoption, by our Continent's Heads of State and Government of the decision establishing the African Union;
- (b) **Further welcoming** the recent launch of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with the overall objective of encouraging new approaches to Africa's sustainable development challenges;
- (c) **Taking note** of Africa's assessment of water and sanitation related issues before the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD);
- (d) **Fully aware** of the challenges posed by the Millennium Declaration and the regional intergovernmental responses essential to translating the Millennium Development goals into reality in Africa;

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- (e) **Recognising**, the commitments undertaken in the Declaration of African Ministers Responsible for Water at the International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn, Germany on 7th December 2001;
- (f) **Raising the profile of sanitation**, the much neglected partner of water supply and its links with the water sector.

1. **Decide** to establish the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW).
2. **Also decide** that AMCOW's mission will be based on the vision outlined in the instruments establishing the African Union.
3. **Further decide**, that AMCOW shall strive to:
 - (a) Strengthen intergovernmental co-operation in order to halt and reverse the water crisis and sanitation problems in Africa;
 - (b) monitor progress in the implementation of major regional and global water resources and water supply and sanitation initiatives
 - (c) review progress in the implementation of the commitments set forth in key international arrangements for the provision of financial resources and technology transfer in support of water sector reforms in Africa. Our review will take into account progress made globally, in the achievement of the water-related goals in both the Millennium and the Malmö Ministerial Declarations,
 - (d) receive and analyze, on a regular basis, reports or information, on the adequacy of financial and technological investments in the water and sanitation sector in Africa;
 - (e) consider information provided by African Ministers responsible for Water, for example during the regular sessions of AMCOW, regarding best practices in policy reforms in the water and sanitation sector at the country level;
 - (f) enhance and solidify intergovernmental and regional co-operation in the management of shared waters, including surface and ground water ;
 - (g) consider, where appropriate, information regarding progress made or needed in the implementation of intergovernmental agreements on surface and ground water resources;
 - (h) assess and where appropriate adopt best practices in global and regional programmes dealing with water and sanitation
 - (i) engage in dialogue and consultations with regional economic groupings and with regional and global financial institutions on issues relevant to the water and sanitation sector in Africa.
4. **Also decide** that AMCOW shall support measures which:
 - (a) encourage stronger and better performing institutional arrangements for the water sector;
 - (b) strengthen the monitoring and assessment of available water resources.
 - (c) ensure sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure development and services delivery and the transfer of water to drought-prone areas for the poor majority in our region;
 - (d) promote policies for the appropriate allocation of water for domestic use and food security and other competing demands;

- (e) support regional intergovernmental dialogue on the implementation of Chapter 18 (Freshwater) of Agenda 21 for the purpose of recommending measures needed to strengthen implementation.

B. Institutional Arrangements

- 5. **AMCOW decides** to establish a Steering Committee as an interim measure composed of Nigeria (chair) and representatives from the five sub-regions to finalize institutional arrangements which shall include:
 - (a) A Bureau whose membership shall consist of a President and Vice-Presidents in accordance with equitable geographical distribution;
 - (b) A Secretariat to be entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of its decisions, noting President Obasanjo's gracious offer ;
 - (c) Terms of reference and rules of procedure for the Bureau and Secretariat;
 - (d) Proposals for financing arrangements;
 - (e) The above should be finalized for consideration by AMCOW at its next session which will take place in Johannesburg in August 25-26, 2002 immediately prior to the commencement of WSSD.
- 6. **The Steering Committee** will work in close cooperation with the African Water Task Force and the cooperating partners and will consider their respective roles in relation to AMCOW.

C. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - Freshwater-related components.

- 7. **Expresses its resolve to promote the** goals of the water-related components of NEPAD.

D. International Cooperation and Support

- 8. **We Call on all cooperating partners** and other relevant UN agencies, the African Development Bank, our region's co-operation partners and donors, to support AMCOW's efforts in the implementation of the measures outlined in this Declaration. We particularly welcome the European Union's commitment and offer of assistance made during the AMCOW launching ceremony.
- 9. **We request the African Union** to provide political and other forms of support to AMCOW

E. Upcoming Global Events

- 10. **We adopt** the "Statement of the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW) at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)" and present it as an African contribution in the water sector to Bali, Johannesburg and Kyoto

F. Notes of Appreciation

- 11. **We Express** our profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Nigeria for the efforts made in convening and hosting the launch of AMCOW.

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- 12. We acknowledge** the gracious offer extended by His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to provide a fully equipped Secretariat which will be supported by the Nigerian Government to provide all the services required to ensure the effectiveness of AMCOW, the African Region and its contribution to the success of the objective of NEPAD.

- 13. In addition, we express** our appreciation for the commendable efforts of all the cooperating Partners including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Secretariat of the United Nations System-wide Initiative for Africa (UNSI), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Bank and the Institute for Public-Private Partnerships (IP3).

- 14. We also express** our deep appreciation to Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim (former Secretary General of the Organization for African Unity OAU) who has agreed to be the African Water Ambassador for his commendable efforts to promote the cause of water in Africa.

Abuja, 30 April 2002

The African Ministers responsible for Water