



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAN-AFRICAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE ON WATER: MONDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2003

The Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water (PANAFCON) opened at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Delegates met in a morning Plenary session to hear opening statements. In the afternoon, delegates convened in thematic sessions to discuss: water, sanitation and human settlements; water for food security; protecting ecosystems and livelihoods; water and climate; financing water infrastructure; integrated water resources management; water allocation; water wisdom; and water governance.

OPENING SESSION

Halifa Omar Drammen, PANAFCON Steering Committee Chair, welcomed delegates to the Conference and introduced the speakers. Kewai Amoako, ECA Executive Secretary, stressed the need to move from planning to implementing water-related goals and called for new partnerships. Alhaji Mukhari Shagari, Nigerian Water Resources Minister and Chair of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), stressed the need to review integrated water resource management strategies addressing the continent's water and sanitation problems, and to effectively implement the goals set by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Water Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Shiferaw Jarso, Ethiopian Water Resources Minister, noted that WSSD goals can only be achieved with the support of multilateral, bilateral and government agencies. Anna Tibaijuka, UN-HABITAT Executive Director, announced the launch of the second phase of UN-HABITAT's Water for African Cities Programme.

Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, Egyptian Water Resources Minister, underlined the low proportion of irrigated lands and the lack of joint river management in Africa, and suggested that action should be taken in a number of areas, including: experience exchange, financial and technical support, joint river basin management and capacity building. Wiseman Nkuhlu, NEPAD Steering Committee Chair, called for the creation of a common African agenda and increased contributions to the African Water Facility (AWF).

Philibert Afrika, African Development Bank Director (ADB), stressed the importance of private sector investments and cooperation between all stakeholders, noting a strategic study on agricultural water use done in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank. Michel Jarraud, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General, noted the lack of infrastructure and capacity to assess water needs and resources in Africa, and WMO's efforts regarding

surveillance and planning, and encouraging regional cooperation. Per Engebak, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), called for renewed commitment to water resources and sanitation. Werner Burkhart, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Deputy Director-General, noted the agency's contribution to water resource management through technical projects, and stressed the importance of institutional capacity and local ownership of IAEA activities. Marie-Elise Gbedo, Network of African Women for Development, outlined the Network's recent activities.

Through a video message, Børge Brende, Norwegian Minister of Environment and Chair of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), stressed the role of regional conferences to reach WSSD targets and the importance of addressing the three areas of the current CSD cycle – water, sanitation and human settlement. Albert Diphooorn, on behalf of Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, underlined the Dutch commitment to global water issues through, *inter alia*, the Netherlands Water Partnership.

Dawit Johannes, Speaker of the Ethiopian House of Parliament, expressed the belief that reaching the MDGs and WSSD targets on water will help eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development in Africa. He then declared the conference officially open.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

WATER, SANITATION AND SETTLEMENT: Albert Wright, Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation Coordinator, chaired the session on meeting basic needs such as water, sanitation and human settlements. He noted the MDG time-bound targets, particularly the target on reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015.

Ronnie Kasrils, South African Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry, stressed the need to strengthen partnerships and leadership in meeting the MDGs, particularly at the local government level. He also stressed the need to invest in capacity building, human resources and infrastructure.

Philibert Afrika, ADB, noted that the Bank has invested US\$3 billion in water and sanitation projects, but that partnerships among donors, stakeholders and governments are essential in meeting the MDGs on water and sanitation.

Piers Cross, World Bank Water and Sanitation Programme, stressed the importance of working with African governments to improve leadership in the water and sanitation sector, and the need to promote small-scale entrepreneurship. He added that governance, capacity building and investment are essential to meeting the MDGs.

Kalyan Ray, UN-HABITAT, said that global goals can only be reached through local action, and that governments need to shift from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach in improving water security for the poor. He added that more investment will be necessary to meet the MDGs.

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Per Engebak, UNICEF, noted the agency's long commitment to water and sanitation, with special attention given to improving children's health. He stressed the need for cost-effective technology at the community level and support to maintain local systems.

In an ensuing discussion, several delegates called for African countries to develop water policies and institutions based on self-reliance, with high priority given to drinking water supplies. One delegate noted that human settlement is a key part of the integrated approach to water and sanitation, while another recommended the need to push the water agenda in other fora, such as in the health, education, and industrial sectors. On capacity building at the community level, one delegate stressed the need to include youth and women.

PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS AND LIVELIHOODS:

Maria Mutagamba, Ugandan Minister of Water Resources, chaired the session.

Richard Robarts, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), presented on improving water quality monitoring. Noting that the worldwide decrease of freshwater quality is insufficiently recognized, he highlighted transboundary pollution from human and industrial wastes and agricultural activities, and identified the need to: assess the current status and trends in freshwater quality; develop legislation and international agreements and assess their effectiveness; apply the "polluter pays" principle; build technical, institutional and intellectual capacity; and develop low-cost approaches for data collection.

Holger Hoff, Global Water System (GWS) Project, provided a scientific background on the vulnerability of African water resources. He noted that: the vulnerability results from global change and human-related pressures; water and land management in Africa affect the GWS; and food and water security are closely linked. He elaborated on human modifications of the GWS, including water transfers and withdrawals, and dams and other engineering works. Highlighting the goods and services provided by natural ecosystems and the virtual international trade of the water resources used for food production, he advocated water management through bottom-up and top-down approaches.

Margarita Pacheco-Montes, International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance, stressed that RH can contribute to sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem conservation. Mesfin Shenkut, Ethiopian Rainwater Harvesting Association, elaborated on RH methods, including: contour ridges on mountain slopes; harvesting in ponds; roof water catchments; fog harvesting; and groundwater tapping through underground dams. He stressed the need to include RH technologies in learning institutions' curricula and raise awareness among decision makers, development partners and local communities.

Presenting on the vulnerability of water resources to environmental change, Hans Beekman, UNEP, said that vulnerability assessments should include water quality, climate variability, pollution, urbanization, competition for water, data availability and knowledge gaps. He stressed the importance of considering the river/lake basin perspective, the complete hydrological cycle, and all integrated components of water management, including equity, efficiency and sustainability. He added that adaptation and mitigation require: an institutional and legislative framework; capacity building; data collection and monitoring; and technology development.

Bruce Banoeng and Daniel Nkhuwa, UNEP, presented an early warning network for urban groundwater pollution. Noting that many African cities rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply, they said that population growth poses threats due to increasing on-site sanitation, industrial pollution and lack of organized domestic waste disposal. Highlighting cooperation between UNEP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT and the ECA in establishing an early warning network, they stressed the need to assess ground-

water vulnerability, identify pollution hotspots and major threats for each city, and disseminate results through an Early Warning Bulletin.

FINANCING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE: Salif Diallo, Burkina Faso Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, chaired the session. Shebu Yahaya, ADB, presented on the AWF, which he said increases access to funding for water projects, and improves efficiency in the use of financing through capacity building and technical assistance. He outlined the AWF's medium-term Action Plan until 2008, which requires US\$615.5 million to implement, and focuses on providing grants to support strategic water infrastructure programmes. Delegates discussed future funding and key areas for the Facility's projects and programmes.

David Grey, World Bank, presented on water resources in relation to Africa's economic performance. He stressed that the key challenges are Africa's severe climate variability and the management of transboundary rivers. He emphasized the link between rainfall and gross domestic product (GDP) and noted that extreme climate events lead to rational risk-adverse behavior that reduces investment. Highlighting the high number of shared rivers, Grey stressed the benefits of international cooperation. He noted that investment in infrastructure should ensure a minimum platform for water security. Following his presentation, delegates discussed alternative livelihoods, the relationship between rainfall and GDP, and long-term river basin planning, including dams.

Bill Cosgrove, World Water Council, presented on follow-up actions to recommendations of the Camdessus Panel Report on Financing for the Water Sector, particularly for Africa. He stated that the international financial institutions were requested to put water higher on their agenda, and that consequently the Group of Eight Industrialized Countries (G-8) requested the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to examine how to provide improved water funding. He also stressed the importance of financial sustainability of water sector funding and noted that Africans must be involved at all levels to ensure the AWF's success. Following the presentation, delegates discussed access to ADB funds, the importance of local involvement in financial decisions, and countries' financial self-sufficiency.

John Wasielewski, United States Agency for International Aid (USAID), presented on USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA), which aims to mobilize private capital to finance development initiatives, and to demonstrate the economic viability of investments in the local banking sector and other private capital sources. He noted that the guarantee programme provides financial institutions with up to 50% coverage on the loan amount extended. Delegates discussed lack of access to funds, the importance of involving national and local governments in decisions regarding loan provisions, and accessing locally available money.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

THEMATIC SESSIONS: The thematic sessions will continue their deliberations from 9:00 am to 10:30 am.

PLENARY: Plenary will meet from 11:00 am to 12:20 pm to consider draft thematic recommendations.

PARALLEL SESSION A: This session on sub-regional water management challenges will convene at 2:00 pm. The North African region will meet in Caucus Room 7; West African in Caucus Room 8; Central African in Caucus Room 10; East African in Caucus Room 9; and Southern African in Caucus Room 6.

PARALLEL SESSION B: This session on river and lake basin organizations will convene at 2:00 pm in Conference Room 3.

AMCOW: The fourth ordinary session of AMCOW will convene in Conference Room 4 from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm.