



## CONCEPT NOTE ON FOLLOW UP OF AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON MIDTERM REVIEW - WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Background:

In December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution [“International Decade \(2018–2028\) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development”](#) to help put a greater focus on water during the ten years ahead.

Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger, UN Member States expressed deep concern over the lack of access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and over water related disasters, scarcity and pollution being exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought and climate change.

*Deeply concerned that lack of access to a safe drinking water source, basic sanitation and sound hygiene, water-related disasters, water scarcity and water pollution will be further exacerbated by urbanization, population growth, desertification, drought and other extreme weather events and climate change, as well as by the lack of capacity to ensure integrated water resource management*

The Decade focuses on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives and on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects. It is also to scale up cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is important as the water crisis is classified as one of the top 3 of global risks for the third consecutive year by the World Economic Forum. . Failing to respond effectively to these challenges will have devastating global effects.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its [resolution 73/226](#), decided to convene, in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, the United Nations Conference on the “*Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Sustainable Development’, 2018—2028*” (United Nations 2023 Water Conference). This Conference in 2023 is to be preceded by Global and Regional Consultations to review progress and challenges faced at the midpoint of the Decade. The outcomes of the Regional Consultations will feed into the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) held in July 2022.

The Africa Regional Consultations took place from 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and due to limited resource for physical meeting, the event was organized in a hybrid format to provide opportunity for participation virtually. Consultation were both in plenary sessions and parallel sessions focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environment. This event provided a platform for key continental water stakeholders including river/Lake basin organizations(L/RBOs), Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and civil society organizations active in water and sanitation, to deliberate , take stock and reaffirm their commitment to solving Africa’s water crisis and to collectively implement the actions envisaged in the African Water Vision, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030) on water (SDG 6) and the AU Agenda 2063. The meeting also provided opportunity to harmonize a common approach to the Mid-Term Review Conference and set out a Road Map for effective preparations. The Meeting was convened by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union Commission AUC, the African Ministers' Council on Water(AMCOW) and the African Development Bank(AfDB) as co-chairs.

The main theme of the regional consultations reflected the main objectives of the Mid-Term Decade, 2023 Conference, which are:

*“a greater focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of social, economic and environmental objectives, the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects, as well as on the furtherance of cooperation and partnerships at all levels, in order to help to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. (A/RES/73/226, OP4)*

*The African regional consultations also consider the overarching needs of water in Africa as postulated in the Africa Water Vision 2025 and Agenda 2063.*

*Member States, relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant partners, including the private sector, to contribute to the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028, Encourage building on the momentum gained during the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005 —2015, in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018—2028, UNGA, A/RES/71/222, New York, 2017)*

## **2. Outcomes of the First Round of Regional Consultations**

### **Opening plenary**

- a) The member states should put in place systems and mechanisms to improve the water sector performance and efficiency to attract more finance to the sector to ensure water for life, food security, livelihoods, and agriculture, as well as sustainable development and regional economic and social integration.
- b) The member states, Development Partners (DPs) and private sector should increase investments in climate-smart water management interventions for enhancing resilience of member states to climate change to alleviate poverty and preserve ecosystems;
- c) The DPs and private sector should strengthen capacities of member states in the preparation of bankable programs and projects; and
- d) Governments and Heads of State support and promote the African Water Facility through investments.

The meeting also agreed to have targeted messages to the member states, Development Partners and private as follows:

### **UN member countries**

- a) Facilitate and diversify mobilization of domestic finance.
- b) Mobilize public and concessional funds into the water sector and target those funds to accelerate the achievement of the sustainable development Goals and Targets.
- c) Encourage the most productive uses of water resources while taking into account their effective and cooperative management to accelerate regional integration.
- d) Create an enabling environment for public private partnership in water sector – legislation and regulation to promote the human right to water is effected for all segments of society.

### **Development Partners**

- a) Orient support toward improving efficiency and creditworthiness and mobilizing domestic finance.
- b) Deploy use of guarantees and other instruments to crowd commercial finance into the sector.
- c) Facilitate blended finance; and
- d) Support the development of bankable and sustainable programs and projects.

### **Private Sector**

- a) Partner with the public sector toward improving capital & operating efficiency.
- b) Reach out to the public sector to explore potential and viable financing relationships and transactions.

## **Social**

### **Water Resources Engagement, Ecosystem Conservation and Climate**

As an outcome of the session, the following conclusions and recommendations were provided for **Sub-topic 1: Water Resources Management and Ecosystem Conservation and Climate:**

- Need to strengthen the enabling environment, Institutions and participation, Management instruments and Financing mechanisms for African member states and R/L/A Basin Organizations to implement IWRM at all levels including through source to sea approach
- Strengthening Legal frameworks based on strengthening RECs and RBOs in driving transboundary water governance and IWRM that takes into account all regional priorities and protects the ecosystem for future generations.
- Need to develop IWRM action plans: Regional/Transboundary/National/Sub-National IWRM Investment Plans.
- Strengthen IWRM coordination mechanisms and further need to be multi-sectoral for example the WEF Nexus and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) – Water Security
- Need for an improved accounting: consolidation/analysis of data on investments and to mobilize finance for example the new opportunity of the Continental Africa Water Investment Program (AIP), adopting new/innovative financing mechanisms—blending, climate finance.
- Utilise the new opportunity: International High-Level Panel on Water Investment in Africa launched by the AU Chairperson- H.E Macky Sall, President of Senegal during the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.
- Support the Water and Climate Leaders' initiative to launch an Africa-wide Water Information System, which will provide freely accessible climatological ,hydrological and socio-economic data, paving the way for better water-climate adaptation.
- A need for transparency, anti-corruption and accountability
- Coordinated financing for efficient use of resources
- Need to support decision-makers to increase Advocacy increased funding for water in national budgets
- Private sector action and a need for an increase of Public-Private Partnerships not just for finance, but for the industry to be an implementation partner.
- Revenue raising with focus on domestic resource mobilization including capacity for regulation and enforcement.
- A need to mobilize and access other funding sources, for example, climate financing, COVID-19 recovery packages
- Practical implementation and evidence of IWRM as a priority and need to be accelerated
- Need for an increase in data for IWRM decision support and translation. For example, accessing and increasing HYCOS to improve regional cooperation, in the fields of water resources information, flood and drought management across the continent

## Water in Urban Settings

The key issues of WASH in Urban Setting is illustrated in the figure below:

### Water and Urbanization: Key Issues



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### Key recommendations

1. Encourage inter-governmental (national and subnational/municipalities/cities authorities) coordination. SDG 6 has several indicators that are multi-sectoral in nature both at the national and sub-national levels which calls for strengthened coordination,
2. Need for development of more robust monitoring systems to support longer term data collection and management. 1) for cities where this data does exist, we need clear mechanisms to feed this into national government processes, and @) where data is absent there is need to identify mechanisms to build capacity, mainstream it across sectors such as collection of data through climate risk and vulnerability assessments and funding for effective monitoring and data management. Also linked to mechanisms to improving data management and access is the need to **localize the SDGs and their targets** – while a great deal of work has been done on this there is not a continent level push to localize the SDG targets and to harness urban centres contributions to these national and global targets and to formally identify mechanisms and road-maps for subnational governments to actively contribute.
3. Cities are **incubators and catalysts of action at scale** if we build the capacity of cities to actively contribute to these targets, we could accelerate progress across international agreements and targets.
4. Need for out of the **box solutions** including harnessing nature-based solutions and decentralized approaches to addressing water and sanitation challenges and building local resilience and enhancing water management at the local level.

5. Promote initiatives that provide networks of partnerships critical in addressing urban water and sanitation resilience in Africa

## Water and Knowledge and Technology, Education

In terms of **Sub-topic 2: Water Knowledge and Technology, Education**, the following was concluded with key recommendations:

- Monitor and evaluate: Global Indicator on water education – indicator number of water professionals by sex by total inhabitants (/per million) (UNESCO)
- Accelerate support for existing African Research and Capacity Development platforms and Networks, such as AUDA-NEPAD Centres of Excellence in Water Sciences (AMCOW/AMCOST Mandated), UNESCO Research Chairs, and Research Networks in Disaster Risk Reduction (PERIPERI-U) to support research and capacity development initiatives across the continent
- Mobilise African researchers to develop African WASH Research and Capacity Development Agendas and identification of priorities, which involve broad stakeholder engagements
- Strengthening Universities and Research Institutions to support member states in the provision of indicator data for AMCOW Monitoring Platform (WASSMO)
- Increase science for policy utilization and strengthen the capacity of researchers and policy-makers to utilize research to the benefit of society
- Increase in capacity development at a Technical Vocational level (TVET)
- Increase education and research opportunities for youth and emerging scholars by developing specific programmes to address national and regional challenges and priorities. Here, considerations related to gender equality and vulnerable communities should be a priority
- Strengthen AMCOW Knowledge Management and Information sharing Platform as a source of WASH research and technical reports for better science-informed decision-making
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## Economic

### a) Water and Agriculture and Water-Energy-Food

The recommendations and key messages from the discussions that followed are summarized below:

#### **Enhancing the knowledge base on the water resources base:**

- I. Most of the African countries do not have complete knowledge on the available water resources, including groundwater, in their respective countries. Therefore, there is a need to invest in expanding surface and groundwater monitoring infrastructure.
- II. There is a need for raising awareness on water both surface and groundwater conservation together with promoting its use. This should be reflected in the strategies, policies, programmes, and management practices.
- III. Science is critical to achieving the SDGs. In parallel to scaling of known solutions, expand Research and Development to develop new ways of providing food and nutrition security, and to deal with Climate Change.

#### **Infrastructure for climate resilience: de-risking agriculture across rainfed – irrigation spectrum:**

- I. Accelerate and sustainably manage small-scale irrigation.
- II. Invest in enhancing productivity and climate resilience of small-scale food producers across the rainfed-irrigation spectrum
- III. There is a need to strengthen irrigation planning Quality Management systems for sustainable irrigation development and management.
- IV. There is also need to strengthen planning, operation and Quality Management of rural water infrastructure to ensure their climate resilience and enhance their sustainability.
- V. Groundwater is essential for irrigation as well as it is for domestic water supply. Therefore, there is the need to further streamline groundwater policies and strategies into agricultural



policies, and poverty reduction strategies for the crucial role water plays in Africa's rural areas.

- VI. Sustainably expand the use of solar irrigation pump systems to strengthen small-scale irrigation
- VII. Concerted efforts are needed to speedup covid-19 recovery and progress toward the SDGs

**Enhance awareness and capacity to mainstream nexus approach:**

- I. Nexus issues are context-specific. Therefore, Africa needs to define and work on its own nexus agenda to help it progress toward the SDGs.
- II. Expand actionable WEF (research to inform planning and management of water, energy, food systems while preserving ecosystems.
- III. Expand and nurture science – policy – practice dialogue on critical water – energy – food and ecosystem nexus challenges.
- IV. Closer linkages (at policy and implementation levels) between water resources and other natural resources management sectors are needed to provide water for life, energy , livelihoods and food security.
- V. Invest in and adopt nexus assessment frameworks, tools, and innovative data infrastructure for assessing inter-sector trade-offs, enhancing synergies and ensure sustainable SDG outcomes across multiple interrelated targets.
- VI. Mainstream WEF Nexus issues in curricula of higher educational institutions

**b) Finance, Investments and Infrastructure**

Closing the financing gap is not a matter of spending more, but also spending with greater quality and efficiency. considering competing national goals and the characteristics of water infrastructure that make its financing challenging.

The meeting in Addis explored several actions in order to close the financing gap and agreed on the following key messages:

- I. The member states should put in place systems and mechanisms to improve the water sector performance and efficiency to attract more finance to the sector;
- II. The member states, Development Partners (DPs) and private sector should increase investments in climate-smart water management interventions for enhancing resilience and preserving the ecosystems taking into account climate change and its impacts;
- III. The DPs and private sector should strengthen capacities of member states in the preparation of viable and bankable programs and projects; and
- IV. Governments and Heads of State should support and promote the African Water Facility through investments.

The meeting also agreed to have targeted messages to the member states, DPs and private as follows:

*UN member countries*

- I. Facilitate and diversify mobilization of domestic finance;
- II. Mobilize public and concessional funds into the water sector and target those funds to the most productive uses;
- III. Encourage capital efficiency in the water sector; and
- IV. Create an enabling environment for public private partnership in water sector – legislation and regulation.

#### *Development Partners*

- I. Orient support toward improving efficiency and creditworthiness and mobilizing domestic finance.
- II. Deploy use of guarantees and other instruments to crowd commercial finance into the sector;
- III. Facilitate blended finance; and
- IV. Support the development of bankable programs and projects.

#### *Private Sector*

- I. Partner with the public sector toward improving capital & operating efficiency;
- II. Reach out to the public sector to explore potential and viable financing relationships and transactions.

#### **c) Groundwater**

AT the end the following recommendations were suggested:

- I. AMCOW to play a pivotal role in political commitment and institutionalization of Groundwater Governance by MS, which is critical for the sustainable development of the continent
- II. Use the Groundwater Summit 2022 as an opportunity to bridge the science-policy gap and to convey a strong message to the mid-term review of the water decade.
- III. Sustainable and effective development and management of transboundary groundwater resources requires coordinated actions and information exchanges among the countries sharing them.
- IV. Support existing structures like AMCOW's Pan-African Groundwater Program (APAGroP) to enhance information, data and knowledge base for effective groundwater management and governance in Member States.
- V. Support actionable research that will lead to science-based decision making
- VI. Invest in human resources at all levels and strengthen professional knowledge and capacities.
- VII. accelerate gender equality and women/girls empowerment through their participation in ground water governance and management, in scientific education and capacity, and through dedicated gender funding.
- VIII. Development and maintenance of open source, open access databases, hydrogeological maps and regular monitoring of all water resources especially groundwater levels and quality Explore mechanisms on how public and private investments can be deployed for groundwater resources development in Africa.

### **3. Objectives of 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Regional Consultative Meeting**

The specific objectives of the Regional Consultations are:

- a) Review the report of 1st round of mid-term review consultation and outcome statement
- b) Identify gaps that exists in the first report and proposals strengthening the report.
- c) Address issues of gender equity and the critical role of the youth in post 2023 - accelerated actions to achieve the objectives of the decade.
- d) Consolidate options for enhanced investments in water, closer cooperation, and strengthen partnership at subregional, regional, and international levels to accelerate the decade action.
- e) Review and consolidate the developed Plan of Action to support countries lagging targets to redouble their efforts to catch up in the second half of the decade.
- f) To ensure that a harmonized approach is adopted in presenting Africa's inputs to the Mid-Term Review of International Water Decade; "Water for Sustainable Development" in March, 2023.

#### **4. Structure of the Consultations**

The thematic sessions will be dedicated to the review of the report of the 1<sup>st</sup> consultations on 13 - 14 June 2022, filling the gaps, consolidating actions for accelerations to achieve the decade objectives by 2028, and options to enhanced partnerships to accelerate actions post March 2023.

#### **5. Expected Outputs**

- a) Synthesis of Regional Progress, Key Constraints and content for Africa in put to the midterm review consultations March 2023
- b) Key recommendations for accelerated actions to achieve the decade objectives.
- c) Key recommendations for enhanced partnership for accelerated actions post March 2023
- d) Road Map of Activities to Mid-Term Review, March 2023

#### **6. Working Languages**

- a) English
- b) French

#### **7. Date and Venue : TBC**