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Partnership launched to convene International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa - AMCOW

Abuja, 18 August 2021 - The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), along with the United Nations Development Programme UNDP, United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), African Development Bank, Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA), and Global Water Partnership (GWP) established a partnership to mobilize international commitment for water investments and SDGs in Africa.

The partners adopted a resolution to convene an International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa on 12 August 2021.

The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa will drive global political mobilization and international engagement to narrow the water investment gap in Africa and meet the social-economic needs for water on the continent. Its goal is to improve the investment outlook for climate resilient gender transformative water security and sustainable sanitation and address the twin challenge of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Panel will support the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) goal of leveraging US\$ 30 billion annually in climate-resilient water investments by 2030.

"The call for the establishment of the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa originated at the Africa Regional Forum-Water Dialogue for Results convened by AMCOW, and the Governments of Germany, South Africa, and Senegal, and supported by GWP Africa, on 26 May 2021," said Mr. Thomas Banda, Acting Executive Secretary of AMCOW.

Africa's call for the Panel was reiterated at the High-Level Ministerial Conference in Bonn on 1 July 2021, which is part of the official UN preparatory process for the Mid-term Review of the UN Water Action Decade in 2023.

Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of GCA, welcomed the partnership and said: "The GCA will leverage the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program that was recently jointly launched with the AfDB and which commits to mobilize US\$ 25 billion in climate finance by 2025, of which at least 50% (US\$ 12.5 billion) will support climate adaptation and resilience building."

"The urgency of the compounded COVID-19 and climate crises requires accelerated momentum to mobilize water investments in Africa's climate adaptation efforts," added Prof. Verkooijen.

Urgent action to narrow water investment gap in Africa required

"The water investment gap is largest in Africa, with Sub-Saharan Africa requiring most urgent action, as delivery of water investments is lagging behind economic and social needs to meet the 2025 Africa Water Vision of Water Security for All, the 2030 SDG 6 on water and sanitation, and related targets," Mr. Banda added.

Current water and sanitation sector investment in Africa stands at between US\$ 10 billion – US\$ 19 billion, according to the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa. The African Development Bank estimates that US\$ 64 billion should be invested annually to meet the 2025 Africa Water Vision.

“AMCOW’s Governance Council recognized the critical water security challenge Africa faces when it adopted a Decision for transformation of Africa’s water investment outlook through increased partnerships and implementation of an African Water Investment Programme (AIP) in February 2019,” said Mr. Banda.

The Panel will develop a high-level report and investment plan for the United Nations and African Union Heads of States with recommendations for countries to mobilise US\$ 30 billion worth of investments each year towards the water infrastructure gap and requirements of US\$ 64 billion per year to meet the Africa Water Vision 2025 and contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Panel will serve for a duration of 12 months and will be made up of fifteen representatives drawn from the current and former Heads of States of Africa as well as internationally, captains of industry, foundation leaders, and other influential personalities.

The Panel is expected to be launched in the final quarter of 2021.

Partners confirmed commitment to Panel

Dr. Kelly Ann Naylor, Director for WASH at UNICEF, confirmed UNICEF’s readiness to convene the panel and emphasized the importance of scaling up investments for climate resilient WASH with a particular focus on fragile countries and adaptation programmes in the WASH sector.

Dr. Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Director of Global Environmental Finance at UNDP affirmed the organization’s commitment to the panel and readiness to explore global finance mechanisms that would support implementation of the recommendations of the panel to mobilise investments.

Dr. Towela Nyirenda-Jere, Head of Economic Integration at AUDA-NEPAD said “The panel’s work will contribute to and elevate ongoing efforts by AUDA-NEPAD to accelerate the implementation of transboundary water projects under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).”

The AIP was adopted by African Union Heads of State as part of Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)’s second Priority Action Plan in February 2021.

Mr. Boniface Aleobua of the African Development Bank said that the panel would need to look into ways to unlock bottlenecks that obstruct countries from accelerating preparation of bankable projects and credible pipelines for water investments.

Mr. Dario Soto Abril, CEO of GWP, welcomed the resolution for a partnership to convene the panel.

“The panel’s goal aligns to GWP’s strategy of mobilising for a water secure world, which aims to influence more than €10 billion in water-related investments over the next six years and significantly advance the water-related SDGs,” Mr. Soto Abril said

The Panel’s work will be supported by a joint virtual secretariat, hosted by the AIP Technical Support Unit hosted by GWP Africa Coordination office in Pretoria, South Africa and will include focal points comprised from the convenors: AMCOW, UNDP, UNICEF, GWP Africa, GCA, AfDB, and AUDA-NEPAD.

Alex Simalabwi, Head of the Joint Secretariat for the Panel and Executive Secretary of GWP Africa Coordination Unit that supported AMCOW in facilitating the virtual meeting to adopt the resolution for the panel establishment, confirmed that the budget for the panel's work had been mobilised with contributions from the convenors saying, "The adoption of the resolution paves the way for the founding convenors to proceed with establishment of the panel."

Call for support to international community

In their resolution, the convening partners called upon UN agencies, development finance institutions, heads of government, international organisations, private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders in Africa and globally to support the partnership for the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa.

Notes to Editors

About the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)

The African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) is an intergovernmental, Pan-African, non-budgetary institution. AMCOW has been designated as a delivery mechanism on water and sanitation for the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union. AMCOW works in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union (AU). AMCOW provides political leadership, policy direction, and advocacy on water management and provision of sanitation services. As part of our mandate, we have the responsibility to effectively and efficiently coordinate actions of key water and sanitation players, facilitate the strengthening of regional cooperation and transboundary water resources management and development as well as build the capacity of relevant institutions and agencies. AMCOW is mandated to provide political leadership in the implementation of the African Water Vision 2025 and water components of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

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