

**CSD-13 INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY
MEETING**

Statement by

Hon. Maria Mutagamba
Chair of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)
And Minister of State for Water - Uganda

New York
28th February 2005

Your Excellencies, Heads of delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I thank the UN system and its staff for the warm welcome accorded to me since my arrival. I wish also to thank H.E. Dr. Ashe, the CSD-13 Chair, and his staff for organizing this meeting.

I have the honour to present to you today, on behalf of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW), our perspective of the policy options and possible actions, necessary for expediting implementation of water and sanitation programmes on the continent.

But first; what is AMCOW?

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) is an institution that was formed by Ministers responsible for Water in the African continent primarily to promote cooperation, security, social-economic development and poverty eradication of member states through the management of water resources and provision of water supply services. The main purpose of AMCOW is to act as a regional mechanism for cooperation on the critical water policy challenges in Africa. It provides a forum for regional and international cooperation for the achievement of the water-related components of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Summit targets by acting as a catalyst and monitor. It encourages strategic partnerships and regional policy dialogue and cooperation aimed at achieving the targets set by the Johannesburg Summit.

Africa is facing a water and sanitation crisis. With only 64 per cent of the population with access to improved water supply, Africa has the lowest proportional coverage of any region of the world. The situation is much worse in rural areas, where coverage is 50 per cent, compared with 86 per cent in urban areas. Sanitation coverage in Africa is also poor.

Currently only 60 per cent of the African population has sanitation coverage. Ten countries have less than 50 per cent coverage for both their current national water supply and sanitation coverage. The African population is expected to increase by 65 per cent over the next 25 years, with the greatest increases in urban areas. Meeting the 2015 MDG targets of halving the number of people without safe water and improved sanitation will require tripling the rate at which additional people gained access to water between 1990 and 2000 and quadrupling the rate at which they gained improved sanitation.

Other major water challenges in Africa include:

- Closing the sanitation gap of the urban poor
- Reducing high water -related diseases and deaths
- Preventing water pollution in cities
- Raising food security
- Expanding irrigation for agriculture
- Doubling hydropower generation and services
- Reducing costs of water- related disasters
- Sharing transboundary water among sectors and countries

AMCOW is aware of the above challenges and is galvanising efforts to find credible solutions to them.

The 5th AMCOW General Council Meeting, held November 2004 in Entebbe Uganda agreed on a number of policy options and actions aimed at addressing the Water and Sanitation Crisis in Africa.

1. The 5th AMCOW Council agreed on a 2005-2007 work program whose main objective is to assist African States, sub-regional organizations and river basin organizations to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Summit targets with respect to water.

2. AMCOW recognises that funding is a major constraint when it comes to Infrastructure development in the water and sanitation sector. Few African countries, if any, have the adequate financial capacity needed to meet the new targets and goals and together provide improved water supply to an average 36 million people a year, or improved sanitation to an average of 22 million per year, on the continent. In order to address this, AMCOW working together with cooperation development partners established the African Water Facility with a targeted funding of over \$600 million for medium term projects in the water and sanitation sector. The African Development Bank has put in place the necessary arrangements for the sound management of the facility under the policy direction of the AMCOW and in partnership with development cooperation partners as well as the NEPAD and United Nations system in Africa (UN-water/Africa).

3. In addition to mobilising financial resources, AMCOW recognises that there is still a need to build technical capacity in Africa to better harness the water resources of the continent. In recognition of this need, AMCOW endorsed German Transboundary Water Initiative within the framework of the G8-NEPAD action plan for Africa relating to water. The objective of the initiative is to strengthen Africa's capacity for water management through cooperation among River Basin organizations. The development objective of the initiative is to improve governance of water resources, and the focus is on strengthening AMCOW and sub-regional structures, widen

funding and focusing on transboundary water infrastructure projects for poverty reduction. Furthermore, the initiative aims to ensure that AMCOW meets all the necessary requirements to become an organ of the African Union.

4. AMCOW has entered into a strategic partnership with the European Union. This has culminated into programme support in the following areas: five river/lake basins (IWRM component) with a budget of 10 million euros; water supply and sanitation in ten pilot countries; finance; research and monitoring. The EU is expected to facilitate the exchange of experiences between the 10 pilot countries within the EU Water Initiative framework. The EU will also consider the possibility of appointing a roving EUWI ambassador to improve communication with selected countries. The government of the Netherlands will be doubling its support for the water and sanitation programme to approximately 12 million euros. The Netherlands also intends to make a contribution to the newly established AMCOW Trust Fund. In addition, the EU has launched the 500 million euro water facility for the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries. AMCOW has formally submitted its application to the facility in response to the recently concluded first call of Proposals.

5. AMCOW recognises that women have an important and critical role to play in promoting a new attitude towards the use of water resources. In furtherance of MDG-3 on gender equality and empowerment, AMCOW will steer the formulation and implementation of a cross-cutting gender strategy for all AMCOW activities. The strategy will include elements of organisational capacity building and change management which will help to mainstream gender. Under this theme, best practices in gender mainstreaming in programmes and activities relating to water, sanitation and good hygiene will be documented and disseminated. Credible sex-aggregated

data and gender-analytical information on water, sanitation and hygiene will be assembled and made available to those who need it to formulate gender-sensitive water resources developments projects and programmes in Africa.

6. AMCOW welcomes the active and creative participation of civil society partners and is taking the necessary measures to strengthen their role in the implementation of its work programme. We must not ignore the key and central role of civil society, from the margins to the centre stage of efforts aimed at the achievement of the targets and goals of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).
7. AMCOW appreciates the ongoing multi-lateral initiatives aimed at expediting the achievement of MDGs in our region. These include
 - The Water African Cities program, being coordinated by UN-HABITAT which has now entered its second phase,
 - The new innovative Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative by the African Development Bank.
 - The WASH campaign under the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

AMCOW endorses the above programmes with the firm belief that they will make a solid contribution to the achievement of JPOI targets.

8. AMCOW, through its organs, has embarked on a process of assessing the status of actions with respect to the 2005 target for the development of Integrated Water Resources Management Plans (IWRM). Stock-taking of the status of IWRM in West and Southern Africa has already been done and similar exercise will be carried out in the rest of the continent. National political commitment to new IWRM processes is a

crucial precondition for success to achieving this WSSD target. Most of the African governments have already expressed their commitment to IWRM policies at the WSSD, which will benefit IWRM efforts at the regional and national levels. The MDG supply targets for 2005 – 2015 can not be achieved in a vacuum and must become an integral and central part of larger and integrated water resources management (IWRM) policies which are needed to incorporate and reconcile competing industrial, agricultural, environmental and other demands for available water.

Those of you who profess the Christian faith could have come across the following verse in the Book of St. Luke, (Chapter 10, from Verse 25), *'Behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested him saying that "Master, what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?"* Jesus answered him *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and thy neighbour as you love yourself"*. He pointed out to the questioner that these two were the greatest laws of God. All others came from those.

Similarly, this meeting needs to ask itself "What policy options and actions are required for mankind to enter the Kingdom of Sustainable Development for all where ALL would have access to adequate water and sanitation and decent shelter?" I have shared with you what AMCOW is doing to answer this question. And I would be happy to learn from you your perspective on tackling this enormous challenge.

I thank you.

**SHORT HALF-PARAGRAPH ARTICLE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE
FRENCH WATER ACADEMY**

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) is an institution that was formed by Ministers responsible for Water in the African continent primarily to promote cooperation, security, social-economic development and poverty eradication of member states through the management of water resources and provision of water supply services. The main purpose of AMCOW is to act as a regional mechanism for cooperation on the critical water policy challenges in Africa. It provides a forum for regional and international cooperation for the achievement of the water-related components of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Summit targets by acting as a catalyst and monitor. It encourages strategic partnerships and regional policy dialogue and cooperation aimed at achieving the targets set by the Johannesburg Summit.

AMCOW has made significant strides in the relatively short time since its establishment through the resolve and commitment of the African Water Ministers, assisted by a combination of political, technical and financial support from development partners such as France, Canada, Germany etc. These achievements have significantly enhanced Africa's collective endeavour to achieve all the MDGs particularly those relating to water, poverty eradication, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

AMCOW has now firmly put Water high up on Africa's political agenda and ensured its inclusion in the priorities requiring immediate intervention. Furthermore due to AMCOW's strategic outlook, the plan of implementation to achieve continental water and sanitation coverage is now becoming more coherent. AMCOW is also leading the drive to mobilise the necessary financial resources required in order to achieve the Water related MDG's on the continent.