

# **Mainstreaming and Implementing the Water-Energy Nexus for Sustainable Development in the African Region**

4-6 September 2018, Conference Room 3, UNECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

## **Workshop Summary and Recommendations**

### **Purpose of the Workshop**

This workshop was intended to achieve three interrelated outputs;

- 1) developing the capacity of governmental institutions and relevant stakeholders in the African region to effectively manage the water-energy nexus and interlinkages with other SDGs for sustainable development to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level;
- 2) enhancing knowledge management and sharing of best practices on the water-energy nexus and inter-linkages with other SDGs;
- 3) strengthening advocacy and outreach in the areas of energy and water and their interlinkages.

The workshop sessions were organized in three formats - keynote presentation by resources persons and panel discussions, presentations on country specific and regional experience and group discussions. The workshop addressed many issues related to the water-energy nexus, the importance of nexus approach for social, economic and environmental sustainability. Additionally, gaps and SDG interlinkages, innovative solutions and the way forward to the continent were discussed.

### **Status of Water and Energy in Africa**

1. The participants underlined that water and energy access is a challenge and sometimes a dream to many parts of rural Africa and that the continent needed to seize the opportunity of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 and the nexus approach.
2. The rate of water and energy service provision is undermined by a rapid population growth, urbanization, economic growth and climate change.
3. The data and information scarcity in the continent undermined evidence/knowledge-based policy making.
4. The lack of geopolitical dialogue and cross boundary resources development and management, lack of regional data collection and sharing mechanism undermines regional harmonization of policies and implementation strategies.
5. The mainstreaming and implementation of water and energy using the nexus approach is at the beginning stage due to limitation of capacity, finance and information.

### **Key Recommendations from the Workshop**

1. Water and energy nexus needs to incorporate the food, gender, climate, poverty, education and health in implementing the water and energy nexus approach and the SDGs.
2. Strong political action, continuous and targeted capacity building are needed to mainstream and implement the nexus approach for effective water and energy development in the continent.

3. The water-energy nexus needs to be viewed as an *entry point* to trigger the SDG achievement and not as *priority area* of development, not to lose sight into the interlinkages of the SDGs.
4. Countries and regional blocks need to take actions in harmonizing policy and legislation in line with the requirement of water-energy nexus for efficient and cost-effective implementation of the water and energy development in the continent. The importance of developing enforcement mechanism at regional and national level was also emphasized. The experience of Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union was mentioned as effective regional organizations with an effective enforcement mechanism of regional strategies. In addition, the importance of modeling tools for driving knowledge-based policy reform were underlined.
5. The workshop underlined the need for immediate domestication of SDGs (mainstreaming action) into their national plans and develop monitoring mechanisms. Some African countries have already taken initiative towards implementing and mainstreaming the water-energy nexus, but the process still need substantial support, which needs to be addressed.
6. Finance needs to be available to support the implementation of water and energy nexus across the continent, and with the support of appropriate incentives private sectors need to be encouraged to participate in financing and co-development.
7. Coordination, partnerships and building alliances need to be enhanced and communication platforms established for knowledge and experience sharing.
8. The water-energy nexus must also take into account interlinkages including with food, gender, climate, poverty, education and health.
9. Across the continent, there is need for appropriate and effective urban planning taking into account the nexus approach.
10. Small scale multipurpose infrastructure development experiences for agriculture, energy, water supply for livestock and human consumption should be shared.