



AU-SARO – UNECA-SAO

IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

28 – 29 November 2008

**Theme: Water and Sanitation in Southern Africa Development:
Innovative Approaches for Policy Implementation**

Aide Memoir:

It has been acknowledged that water supply and sanitation are prerequisites for Africa's human capital development. Water is vital to sustainable development in Africa and has assumed a prominent position in the development agenda of African countries. This notwithstanding however, it is an area where achievements have remained largely unsatisfactory in many countries in Africa, including those in Southern Africa. For example, over the period 1990-2004, the number of people without access to safe drinking water increased by 23% and the number of people without sanitation increased by over 30%.

It has been noted that improving access to water could be difficult because responsibility for water resource management is usually spread across many different parts of the government in developing countries, including those in Africa. It therefore follows that no single government department takes the lead as there are conflicting views among them. For example, Agricultural Departments are

usually more interested in promoting irrigation and food production while other ministries could be more interested in improving the supply of drinking water and sanitation. Thus, improved access to water and sanitation would, among other things, require better coordination by relevant government departments and institutions.

The Heads of State and Government of the African Union at the 11th Ordinary Session in Sharm El-Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, 30 June to 1 July 2008, underscored the importance of water and sanitation for social, economic and environmental development of our continent. It was noted that there was an urgent need to develop water and sanitation infrastructure and institutions in order to provide sufficient and sustainable quantity and quality for all types of services and provide acceptable level of protection from risks of water related disasters and impact of climate change as key for the transformation and socio-economic development.

This was against the background of the commitment of the continent to the African Water Vision 2025, the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water in Africa; the Declaration on Climate Change in Africa; and the Millennium Development Goal on water supply and sanitation. It was also in the understanding that the Summit occurred mid way to the 2015 water, sanitation and other MDGs targets and aware that not much progress has been made in Africa, compared to the rest of the world, to achieve the MDGs target, and that based on the current trends, Africa needs to accelerate its efforts. There have been actions taken at national and regional levels but the results of these actions are mixed from country to country and region to region, including Southern Africa. Many countries still have difficulties in surmounting the obstacles in achieving the goals in water and sanitation.

As it is today, there are growing concerns about the underutilization and uneven sharing of water resources in Africa. In addition, there is also the challenge in the achievement of food and energy securities. There are challenges of water and sanitation infrastructure financing, water conservation and equitable distribution, closing the sanitation gap, breaking the silence on sanitation and hygiene, adapting to climate change, integrated management of national and transboundary surface and ground water, investing in information, knowledge and monitoring and institutional development as well as capacity building. In other words, there is an urgent need to overcome these difficulties in order to improve the standard of living of African peoples and build the basis for sustainable economic growth and development.

(a) Purpose of the Seminar

In view of the priority that the AU Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh and the importance that the United Nations attached to water and sanitation in Africa's development, the main purpose of this seminar is to re-sensitize Southern African countries to the critical issues in water and sanitation and to shed light on ways to overcome them in the region. Both the AU-SARO and UNECA-SAO will hold this seminar jointly under their respective mandates to promote integration and support economic development process in Southern Africa. The collaboration of the University of Zambia and other institutions would be beneficial given their studies and strong support for the improvement in water and sanitation.

The seminar will aim at increasing the awareness of the peoples in the urban and rural areas in Southern Africa on water and sanitation as important levers for sustainable development. The seminar will build on the existing knowledge in water

and sanitation in Southern Africa. The seminar will examine existing policy frameworks on water and sanitation. It will seek to ensure that human needs in water and sanitation are satisfactorily met as stipulated in global and regional goals. The seminar will seek to provide explanations on institutional and resources capacity including decentralization at local level for program implementation. It will address related financial issues; increasing domestic financial resources allocated to national and regional water and sanitation development activities, development of local financial instruments and markets for investments in water and sanitation sector, the development of relevant investment plans and the mobilization of local and external financial resources to finance water and sanitation.

(b) Expected Results

- Recommendations to regional governments for rapid attainment of the goals on water and sanitation.
- Development of public-private partnership to fast track actions for the attainment of MDG on water and sanitation
- Rapid attainment of the global, regional and national goals in water and sanitation.
- Improvement of the humanitarian needs in water and sanitation in Southern Africa.
- Publication of the recommendations for wider circulation.

Concept Paper: The concept paper would be prepared by an outstanding expert or consultant in the field of water and sanitation. He/she would be selected by AU-SARO or UNECA-SAO. The concept paper should be a well researched paper deriving from existing knowledge on water and sanitation in Southern Africa.

The paper should also embody concrete proposals on the way forward to attain the United Nations MDG and other regional and national goals on water and sanitation.

Seminar Program: The draft Seminar Program to be jointly prepared by AU and UNECA SAO should preferably be ready not later than **10 September 2008**.

Venue: University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia. It is assumed that the University of Zambia has a large conference hall. This could be the contribution of the University as one of the cosponsors to the seminar. The alternative to this would be COMESA Hall where interpretation facilities could be provided.

Date: Two Days (**28 - 29 November 2008**). The first day would be devoted for presentation and debate papers. The second day of the seminar would be devoted to further presentation of papers and adoption of recommendations for governments.

Participants: The participants for the seminar would be drawn from the governments, Regional Communities (COMESA, SADC, SACU, NEPAD, etc), Private Sector, Civil Society, and Media (print and electronic) in Southern Africa.

Resource Persons: These should be drawn from the academics, research institutes, governments (including local governments), intergovernmental organizations, private sector and civil society and largely from within Zambia to reduce transportation and accommodation costs. The Resource Persons should be informed and agreement secured on their participation latest by 15 September 2008. The papers from the resource persons should be forwarded to the UNECA-SAO two weeks before the seminar to facilitate duplication.

Cost Estimates:

- (a) Venue
- (b) Concept paper, resource persons
- (c) Transportation
- (d) Accommodation
- (e) Per diem
- (f) Conference Materials (papers, folders, duplication of papers etc)
- (g) Lunch
- (h) Reception

Modalities for the coordination of Seminar

- The assignment of functions to both institutions.
- Sharing of costs.

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