

3rd World Water Forum Session Report

Gender Mainstreaming and Mobilizing a
People's Movement for Water in Africa.

AFRICA DAY

Room J, Kyoto International Conference Hall, 16th March 2003

Introduction.

As part of its contributions to the Africa Day programme at the 3rd World Water Forum, The Africa Water Task Force organized a session in Gender Mainstreaming and Mobilizing a People's Movement for Water in Africa. The main objective of the session was to highlight what Africa had done to make water everyone's business since the 2nd World Water Forum at The Hague, 2000. The main focus of the session, convened and chaired by Mrs. Tabeth Matiza Chiuta of IUCN Regional Office for Southern Africa (a member of the Africa Water Task Force), was on highlighting the various networks created in Africa, their programmes and activities, as well as the challenges they are facing in championing the cause of water resources management in the continent. The session, which was attended by about 50 to 60 participants, ran from 12:30 to 15:15hrs. A total of 10 short presentations were made by representatives of various networks. A facilitated discussion on key challenges and recommendations concluded the session.

Summary of Presentations.

The session was opened with a brief presentation from Mr. Junior Potlani from the Department of Water and Forestry of South Africa. Mr. Potlani highlighted how a political movement for water has been created in form of the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW). The formation of AMCOW was a direct response to the need of having a coordinated political voice for Africa on water. Mr. Potlani traced the process that led to the establishment of AMCOW starting with interest highlighted at The Hague where the Africa Water Vision was adopted, caucusing at the Bonn conference, and its inaugural meeting at the WaterDome in September 2002. AMCOW illustrate Africa's Political commitment, especially to Water and Sanitation. The challenge faced by AMCOW is to reduce the number of people without access to water and sanitation within the continent.

Mr. Shehu Yahaya from the African Development Bank made a presentation on the NEPAD Water Strategy. This presentation highlighted how the African leadership at the AU/presidential levels is prioritizing water. The presentation highlighted the objectives, themes, activities and implementation arrangements. Some of the key issues highlighted included infrastructure development, capacity building, financing and generating water wisdom.

Dr. Steve Donkor from the UNECA presented a paper on "Mobilizing Political Will: The Role of the UN Efforts". This presentation highlighted how the UN in Africa has organized themselves to contribute to addressing the water challenges of Africa. The presentation highlighted that there is high level commitment to water resources management within the UN system. Due to the profile given to water, various agencies that often operated independent of each other agreed to coordinate their efforts in the continent. The key areas of

UN intervention and the products that in the pipeline, e.g. Africa Water Development Report to be produced soon. Monitoring and reporting on the state of the region's water resources is viewed as key issue by the UN agencies. The challenges faced by the continent, as viewed by the UN agencies include the need to ensure the adequate knowledge base, governing water wisely and meeting basin needs. The presentation concluded by announcing the planned Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water to be held in Addis Ababa in December 2003.

Professor Albert Wright, the chairman of the Africa Water Task Force (AWTF) gave a short presentation of the AWTF. The presentation chronicled the evolution of the network, the focus of its work and what it has achieved so far. In terms of achievements, the AWTF (working in collaboration with UNECA and OAU) successfully coordinated the development of the Africa Vision and Framework for Action that highlighted the challenges that the African region is currently tackling. The AWTF also successfully organized a regional stakeholder workshop (April 2002), the WaterDome event and the contribution of the African continent to the 3rd World Water Forum. The efforts of the AWTF highlighted how Africa has and is organizing itself to build awareness and consensus on key water issues.

The presentation on the Africa Water Forum (AWF) was made by Eng. Mustapha Bukar, the chairmen of the Forum. The presentation highlighted the history of the Forum, its objectives, programme focus and activities, the organization and structure of the Forum. The presentation highlighted an example of a network that is striving to rally water professionals for action. Despite a clearly defined programme and structure, the Forum is facing the challenge of funding and is appealing for more membership.

Gender and Youth are critical dimensions in the People's Movement for Water in Africa. A presentation by Astrid Choongo Banda (Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company) on Water Services for Low Income Communities, highlighted how communities (including both women and men) can be mobilized to improve water services coverage. The case study on one of the satellite areas of Lusaka under the JICA Grand Aid highlighted the role of the private sector in water provision, the benefits and challenges faced in community involvement in water services provision and the importance of international partnerships.

Mr. Andrew Takawira of GWP Southern Africa made a presentation on behalf of the youth, highlighting the progress that has been made in Southern Africa in mobilizing the youth for IWRM implementation. His presentation on Southern Africa Youth Water Action Team highlighted the goal, objectives and activities being carried out by the network. The presentation highlighted that despite the notable progress made by this sub regional network, a number of challenges inclusive of limited capacity, limited awareness and participation of the youth in regional networks (such AWTF, AWF, etc.), challenges of mainstreaming

gender, and limited funding and the absence of a continent-wide network. The representation concluded by calling for political support for the youth, improvement in capacity building, increasing participation of youth in regional networks and events, providing long term sustainable support to the efforts of the youth, and making the youth visible in the People's Movement for Water in Africa.

The last part of the session's presentation focused on highlighting the efforts of GWP in Africa in mobilizing IWRM movements in the various sub regions. Mr. Jean Boroto of GWP Southern Africa highlighted how the sub regional network is rallying Southern Africa's water stakeholders around the regional Framework for Action. The representation highlighted the progress made so far and the focus of the process in addressing the Millennium Development Goals, targeting the countries and mainstreaming gender and environmental issues. Mr. Dam Mogbante, from GWP West Africa highlighted the work that the sub regional network has done in creating a regional water partnership and various country water partnerships in a number of countries. The presentation also highlighted the activities that the network has embarked on to improve the operations of the network. These included capacity building for gender issues, dialogue on Water and Climate, water governance, etc. The GWP Central Africa presentation was made by Jean Michael Ossete (GWP Central Africa). Although the sub regional network is still in its infancy, considerable progress has been made in securing political will and interest for the network and increasing awareness of IWRM issues in the sub region. Mr. Ossete highlighted that the sub region is going to launch its sub regional network soon. The last presentation of the session was made by Dr. Ahmad Wagdy (UNDP and member of the GWP Mediterranean Network). In his presentation, Dr. Wagdy highlighted the differences that exist between this sub regional network and other GWP networks on the continent. The North Africa network (which is part of the GWP-Mediterranean) is a network of networks. The presentation highlighted the achievements of the network, its 2003 programme and activities. Some of the unique activities carried out by the network include groundwater management, water demand management, irrigation related activities and establishment of functioning country water partnerships such as the Egypt Water Partnership.

Key Issues

The various presentations highlighted that the People's Movement for Water in Africa comprise of various components/or networks. These can be classified under political, professional, sub regional, youth, women's groups and UN Agencies. Each network is facing its own problems and challenges. The following are the generic issues identified by the session:

- Absence of a coordination mechanism among these various networks in order to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice, e.g. GWP has sub

- regional networks in the continent, but there is not mechanism of coordinating and networking these sub regional networks.
- The need to engage and define the role of the private sector (both national and international) in the movement in the context of the level of development in Africa.
 - Fundamental absence of stakeholder (especially civil society, vulnerable groups, labour unions, etc.) representation in the networks.
 - Absence of effective gender mainstreaming in the movement.
 - Need for capacity building, especially the youth.
 - Need to effectively engage and involve the youth.
 - Africa needs to be cautious in creating more institutions.

Recommended Actions

Based on the session's deliberations, the following actions were recommended,

- The People's Movement for Water in Africa should work towards promoting the linkage between water and poverty and encourage the inclusion of water in Poverty Strategy Action Plans.
- Work towards establishing a mechanism for networking and sharing information and experiences. It was recommended that Africa should build this mechanism around the new initiative of Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water being organized by UN-Water, AMCOW, Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources and the Africa Water Task Force.
- Gender issues should be mainstreamed in all the networks as a matter of urgency and mechanisms for engaging women should be developed and implemented.
- Strengthen the mobilization of political will, especially at the sub regional level.
- Push the current political will into action through the AU.
- Broaden the participation and representation in the networks, by involving all those with a stake in water resources, i.e. trade unions, private sector, vulnerable groups, etc.
- Institutionalize the engagement and involvement of the youth at all levels and promote the creation of an Africa wide youth network on Water resources.
- Continue and strive to improve the current efforts of building consensus and coordinating Africa's efforts in water resources development and management.
