PRESS STATEMENT

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Liberia President Sirleaf Chairs Post 2015 High Level Water Thematic Consultations, Makes Economic Case for Water and Sanitation

Africa’s Goodwill Ambassador for Water and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the Post 2015 High Level Thematic Consultations on Water in Monrovia, has attributed global economic losses of up to 260 billion US dollars to the issues directly emanating from poor water and sanitation access.

President Sirleaf, a co-Chair of the UN Eminent Persons Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda warned that failure to seriously address issues of poverty reduction and water security may pose threats to international security and peace. “260 billion in economic losses annually is a directly linked to inadequate water supply and sanitation around the world. We must take this issue more seriously. All too often access to adequate sanitation in particular is seen as an outcome of development, rather than a driver of economic development and poverty reduction. South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore in the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated the potential for boosting economic development by addressing sanitation.”

Speaking at the event, Wednesday, January 30th 2013, African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) President, Dr Mohamed Bahaa El-Din Ahmed reiterated the necessity of holding such consultations saying that they ensure that the formulation and implementation of development framework is owned by the people the goals target. Represented by the AMCOW Vice President West Africa and Minister for Water Resources, Nigeria, Hon. Sarah Reng Ochekpe, the AMCOW President said the voices of the ordinary citizens matter in evolving development agendas that are meant to improve such the peoples wellbeing. “This time, we want to hear not only the voices of the policy makers and analysts, the experts and development workers but more importantly, the voices of the women, especially the rural dwellers who bear the most brunt of the consequences of lack of access to fresh waters, the farmers, the youth, and the children. Their voices matter and if we can constellate all the ideas they bring and turn them into strategic actions, we would by so doing bring all hands on deck and make our world beyond 2015 a more purposeful, motivating and satisfying one.”

The AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime informed the gathering that the African Union Heads of State and Governments had mandated the African Union Commission to lead the process of gathering the African input into the global development framework. To this end, she disclosed that her department is working with AMCOW to organize the final regional consultations on water in Tunis early March 2013. The outcomes of that meeting are expected to be fed into the final draft of the Eminent Persons Panel global water consultations in The Hague, Netherlands during the World Water Day celebrations.
The draft Monrovia Water Sector Declaration being outcomes of the Water Community Consultations held the previous day was presented by AMCW Executive Secretary, Bai Mass Taal to President Sirleaf for onward transmission to the High Level Panel Meeting.

The Eminent Persons Panel on Post 2015 Development Framework is made up of 27 leaders from government, the private sector and civil society and is co-chaired by United Kingdom Prime Minister, David Cameron, President Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia and President Susilo Yudhoyono of Indonesia. The Monrovia meeting is part of the series of outreaches embarked on by the group to engage all stakeholders in developing the post 2015 development agenda expected to take off at the end of the 2015 MDG target.

Signed

Oseloka Zikora
Communications
AMCOW Secretariat
11 TY Danjuma Street
Asokoro, Abuja
Nigeria
Tel: (O) +23498703749 (M) +2348056000563
E-mail: ozikora@amcow-online.org