PRESS STATEMENT

Abuja, Nigeria
Oseloka Zikora
African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW)
Phone: +2348056000563
Email: ozikora@amcow-online.org

African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) Gets US$2 Million Grant to Improve Sanitation Coverage in Africa

December 18th 2012 - The African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW), an initiative of African Ministers responsible for water and a Specialized Technical Committee on water and sanitation for the African Union, is to receive a grant of US$2 Million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to build capacities for sanitation policy development, monitoring and evaluation coverage and advocacy in the continent.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation gave approval for the grant November 2012 as part of its global development efforts in improving water, sanitation and hygiene in Africa, and belief that smart investments in sanitation can reduce disease and improve the lives of the poor.

The overall purpose of the grant is to support AMCOW’s capacity to guide sanitation and hygiene policy formulation and implementation in Africa and contribute to achieving the eThekwini Ministers commitments on sanitation and hygiene in the continent with greater emphasis on fragile states facing bigger challenges in provision of sanitation services. It is expected that the grant will enable AMCOW to:

- Provide technical guidance and training to four fragile counties to develop and adopt quality national sanitation and hygiene policies and plans with real potential for impact;
- hold the AfricaSan conference and awards as a mechanism for tracking progress, refining targets, building leadership, enabling peer support amongst countries and advocacy for implementation of the AfricaSan Action Plan that is targeted at achieving the eThekwini commitments;
- enable African countries to effectively fulfill their obligations to report to the AU on sanitation using the African mechanism for water and sanitation monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

“We face tremendous challenges of diminishing access to clean water and safe sanitation. Across the globe, about 2.6 billion do not have access to safe sanitation. Africa accounts for almost 40 percent of these figures.” says Bai Mass Taal, AMCOW Executive Secretary. “AMCOW is committed to working with partners such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to reduce this scourge and improve access to safe sanitation thereby achieving our overall goal of decreasing poverty and disease in the continent.”

About the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW)

AMCOW’s mission is to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development and maintenance of African ecosystems.
Since inception in 2002 and as a Specialized Technical Committee for Water and Sanitation in the African Union, AMCOW works with the African Union Commission, United Nations system, inter-governmental and regional organizations, development and co-operation partners, financial institutions, and civil society groups to spearhead efforts to address Africa’s water and sanitation policy challenges, and is tasked with developing an implementation strategy and reporting mechanism on the AU Heads of State and Government Sharm el-Sheikh commitments on water and sanitation.

For more on AMCOW, visit www.amcow-online.org