The Africa Youth Summit Outcome in South Africa

Introduction

The Africa’s Water Vision 2025 calls for participatory approaches and management of water and sanitation at the lowest appropriate level, including the mainstreaming of gender issues and the concerns of the youth. Africa is a youthful continent with youth comprising over 50% of the population and constituting the majority of the unemployed.

AMCOW, during the preparatory process for the 6th World Water Forum held in March 2012 in Marseille identified the development of a Youth and Water Strategy by 2012 as one of the key target solutions.

Following this resolution and building on other processes after Marseille, the youth of Africa converged in Johannesburg, South Africa from the 2nd to the 6th of July 2012 under the banner of AMCOW and produced the Draft Africa Youth in Water and Sanitation strategy and the roadmap for the approval of the strategy.

Background

Efforts to mobilize and involve the youth in the Water and Sanitation sector in Africa have been on-going. At its 6th Ordinary Session in May 2007, in the Brazzaville Congo, AMCOW recognized the need to include all stakeholders, especially women, youth and parliamentarians, in decision-making at the local level in carrying forward AMCOW’s actions.

At the AU Summit in Sharm el Sheikh in 2008, Heads of State in Africa committed to “Promote effective engagement of African civil society and public participation in water and sanitation activities and programmes" and to “Promote programming that addresses the role and interests of youth and women, given that the burden of poor water and sanitation falls disproportionately on women and children”.

In line with these commitments, AMCOW during a multi-stakeholder forum on Africa’s Preparatory Process for the 6th World Water Forum (WWF) held on 21st
March 2011 agreed on 9 targets to be addressed through the preparatory process for WWF-6. Under Target 2 AMCow and partners agreed to develop a Youth and Water Strategy by 2012 and AMCow Gender Strategy implemented in all countries by 2015.

After Marseille, a Core Group was formed to spearhead the Youth Strategy Development process and with support from WaterAid a three day working session was organised in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18-20 April 2012. The working session was developed a framework for the Youth in Water and Sanitation strategy. The framework was subsequently presented and discussed by youth representatives as well as AMCow Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) during the Africa Water Week held in Cairo in May 2012.

The Africa Youth Summit

It was against this background that the South Africa Government in collaboration with the AMCow Secretariat and members of the AMCow Core group convened an Africa Youth Summit.

The main objectives for Youth Summit were as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for Government representatives to share on youth engagement in the water and sanitation sector
- To review and consider strategic areas of focus for the Africa Youth Strategy and Implementation plan building on various processes including outcomes of the Nairobi AMCow Core Group meeting and previous Youth declarations and statement
- To discuss and identify steps to institutionalise the youth activities and engagement at country, regional and continental levels
- To map out next steps and processes leading to the adoption of the Africa Youth in Water and Sanitation Strategy and Implementation Plan by AMCow.

Countries involved

The Africa Youth Summit attracted participants from 13 Africa Countries including the following: Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Sudan. Some of the stakeholders involved in the Summit were UN-Habitat, WaterAid and Africa Young Water Professionals beside the AMCow Secretariat.

Pertinent issues discussed

- Water resource management
- Skills development
- Green economy
- Unemployment
- Leadership and governance

Outcomes
- Draft Africa Youth in Water and Sanitation Strategy
- Roadmap/process plan for the approval of the strategy by AMCOW Executive COUNCIL (EXCO)

**Resolutions**
- The draft Africa Youth in Water and Sanitation strategy will be circulated to key stakeholders in the WASH sector across Africa for inputs prior to approval by AMCOW
- AMCOW EXCO and TAC members are updated on the progress being made during the World Water Week in Stockholm
- Review of the draft Youth in Water and Sanitation Strategy by AMCOW Sub-Regional TAC Meeting from November 2012 to May 2013
- Endorsement by AMCOW EXCO in May 2013
- Launch of the approved strategy in South Africa, June/July 2013 during the next Africa Youth Summit

**Recommendations**
- The Youth gathered urged all countries in Africa countries to implement the draft strategy with immediate effect and not wait for its approval.
- In this regards, the Youth encouraged government identify steps to institutionalise the youth activities and participation at country, regional and continental levels
- Governments and other stakeholders are expected to present progress reports on youth participation in the sector and against the Strategy during the 2013 Africa Youth Summit to be held in South Africa.
- Finally the youths requested for their permanent and regular participation in AMCOW TAC and EXCO meetings.