AMCOW President and Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Dr Mohamed Bahaa El-Din
opened the Africa Focus Day at the World Water Week with an emphasis on the need to sustain AMCOW’s goal to utilize water resources for growth and development in the continent. At the event held Tuesday August 28th 2012 in Stockholm, Dr El Din said “Water for Growth – in all of its important and significant connections – should henceforth be elevated to the level of political attention and implementation priority that has been accorded to drinking water and sanitation over the last ten years.” Read the full speech.

This year’s Africa Focus Day attracted over two hundred and fifty participants including AMCOW Ministers, water experts, development partners, civil society and AMCOW friends. Ministers who graced the occasion included the AMCOW President, Dr Bahaa El-Din of Egypt, Dr Salem Mohamed Rashrash, Minister, General Water Resources Authority, Libya / AMCOW Vice President, North Africa, Dr Laurent G. Sedogo, Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries, Burkina Faso, Hon Seifdeen Abdallah, Minister for Water, Sudan, and Hon Julien Reboza, Minister of Water, Madagascar. Others were Hon. Betty Bigombe, Minister of State for Water, Uganda, Hon Gersh Kebede, Minister of State, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ethiopia, Hon. Rejoice-Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, and Hon Charles Zulu, Deputy Minister for Water, Zambia.

The Africa Focus seminars explored the themes “Water Security: Opportunities for the 21st Century” and “Managing Africa’s Water Resources: Challenges and Opportunities.” At seminar 1, AMCW Executive Secretary, Bai Mass Taal made a presentation on “Key Messages From Marseille - Cairo- Rio +20” setting the stage for a high powered discussion panel featuring Prof. A Szollosi-Nagy, Rector, UNESCO-IHE Institute, Delphi,
Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Chair of GWP Regional Chairs, and Akissa Bahri, Co-ordinator of Africa Water Facility.

A presentation on “2012 Africa Status Report on the Application of Integrated Approaches in Water Resources Management” introduced another lively panel discussion featuring Dr. Khalil M Timamy, (AUC) Maarten Gischler, DGIS, Netherlands, Gustavo Saltiel, (CIWA), Dr. Themba Gumbo (Cap-Net), Mr Andre Fourie, Head: Sustainability, South African Breweries (WEF-WRG), Dr Ahmed Wagdy (Advisor to AMCOW President), and Dr Stephen Donkor, Snr Regional Adviser, WRDM, UNECA.
Presentations during the session include:

- Implementation of the Water and Sanitation Development Plan (WACDEP) Program and the mobilization of non-traditional financial resources.
- Water and Sanitation Delivery in Africa: Beyond 2015.
- Water and Sanitation Delivery in Africa: Beyond 2015.
Main Messages from Africa Focus Day at the 2012 World Water Week

1. Our efforts to improve governance of the water sector should focus on improving the effectiveness of the institutional linkages between AUC, AMCOW, RECs, R/LBOs and member states.

2. It is important to place water as an engine of growth. Without that most of on-going efforts for development in Africa may not deliver the desired outcomes.

3. Without shifting focus from water supply and sanitation, it is vital to also raise the priority given to water for food, energy and industrial production.

4. It goes without saying that the achievements of AMCOW in the last decade could not have been possible without the immense support of AMCOW's development cooperation and funding partners.

5. The immeasurable financial commitment of AMCOW's partners need to be matched by the contributions of AMCOW member states. Domestic funding solutions to development programmes ensure ownership and provide better sustainability.

6. Governments are advised revise their intentions for endorsing new commitments until previous commitments are met or at least reasons for delays have been identified and analysed especially regarding MDGs. Feasible alternatives for reaching the sanitation goals have to be specified to overcome the existing huge African in-equalities. Furthermore, mobilizing the political will is a pre-requisite to achieve commitments.

7. Establishing a functional Enabling Environment is a pre-requisite to sustainable development, as identified several years before, we need to continue creating such an enabling environment for harnessing water resources for growth and development.

8. Continue building capacities within the water sector. 300% more capacities are required. A proper mechanism for capacity building has to be in effect. This has to be driven by governments.

9. Horizontal integration across the water sector is much needed. Decisions have to be streamlined between water, agriculture, environment, energy, and finance sectors.

10. Need to tie national visions to African Vision.

11. Promote Regional and Basin wide IWRM as one package and link it to National IWRM Plans.

12. Water should be treated as a business opportunity rather than a risk opportunity, while recognising water as a social commodity; several examples exist to support this.

13. Water is a UNITING FACTOR.

14. Sustainability of water sector projects is the key to attract private investments.

15. Identify explicitly the requirements for good bankable project, to gain a higher opportunity for funding when submitted to development partners (with positive and sustainable Social and Environment impacts, and pertaining to achievement of the African Vision 2025 and AMCOW's WORK PLAN, national and regional policies and strategies). A well-established mechanism to help nations in making their proposals bankable is needed. In this regard we acknowledge the efforts by AWF, PIDA and ICA.

16. Proper M&E systems are required for effective follow up and reporting on progress. We acknowledge the efforts by AMCOW and its partners to achieve such goals.

17. Data management in all of its prospects need to be enhanced. Starting at the national level, data collection, processing, sharing, and support for decision making have to be further developed.

18. Promote moving towards green cities paradigm.