Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) paid a courtesy call to the African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) in Abuja to discuss possible strategic partnerships.

Speaking during the visit, AMCOW's Executive Secretary Dr. Canisius Kanangire said that AMCOW views JICA as a partner and that JICA can play an important role in the area of disaster capacity development.

"Disaster capacity is what we see JICA helping us with. Africa needs small but effective plans to address disasters on the continent," said Dr. Kanangire.

Dr. Kanangire noted that AMCOW was looking at how to innovate to deliver on its mandate. "We are in the process of strengthening AMCOW to effectively deliver on its mandate. We have re-organised and strengthened our capacity but above all we are exploring new and innovative ways in implementing water and sanitation across Africa."

The Executive Secretary said that AMCOW was developing and providing a platform for coordination for Member States on issues of sanitation and water. The Executive Secretary lamented the high level of defecation on the continent and noted that this needs a high level of commitment from African governments.

Dr. Kanangire called on the continent to develop a think tank mechanism to be able to transform the environment on which water is managed in Africa. "It is critical that we engage and empower our youths in the Water and Sanitation Sector to harness the Demographic Dividend through investments in the Youth. We must provide them with ways and means and capacitate them to help with the many issues surrounding the continent especially in the Water and Sanitation Sector."
AMCOW discusses possible strategic partnership with JICA - African Ministers' Council on Water

"We are asking JICA to help with the Volunteer and Internship Program for the youth in Africa who in turn will help the vulnerable people on the continent. The youth should benefit from capacity building to make Africa become the engine of development."

The JICA delegation was led by Takashima Wataru, Project Formulation Advisor (Water supply) and Professional Engineer (Water Supply & Sewerage) Japan International Cooperation Agency Kenya Office who said that it was critical for JICA to visit AMCOW's Secretariat and learn more about what AMCOW was doing. He noted that the delegation will convey what was discussed in the meeting to JICA headquarters, stating that the information shared in the meeting will be useful for decision making on any collaboration in the near future.

AMCOW is an institution with ample opportunity to be the platform for coordinating action on the African continent toward accelerated improvements in the water and sanitation sector and the SDGs.

The central role of AMCOW in Africa also gives it the unique mandate to revitalize the efforts of the continent to translate into reality by 2025 Africa Water Vision of "an Africa where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment."