

SPEECH BY THE AMCOW PRESIDENT, HON. BEE MOLEWA ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICA DAY AT 6TH WORLD WATER FORUM, MARSEILLE

High Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange  
Mr L. Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission  
Mr D Kaberuka, President of AfDB  
Ministers in attendance  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It has been a tradition over the past five World Water Forums to accord Africa a voice and space to express itself on water challenges. We thank the Forum for this wonderful opportunity. This year's Forum is unique in that its theme; 'TIME FOR SOLUTIONS' aptly articulates the impatience and marginalisation of the most affected communities in Africa.

Where I come from in Africa, and South Africa to be precise, we say '*KE NAKO*' '*NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT*'. '*NOW IS THE TIME FOR SOLUTIONS*'.

It is imperative that we should respond to the challenge posed to this Forum by the two siblings, namely, water and sanitation. The paucity of clean potable water and the lack of sanitation services defines the plight and bitter experiences of millions in the continent. We cannot address the twin challenges of water and sanitation to the exclusion of the masses of Africa.

What binds us today is our concern that at least one out of every five children from Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa to Takoradi in Ghana could be subtracted from the millions of African children who lack access to clean water and sanitation, or that ten out of every fifty women from Kenya to Burundi to Mauritania will no longer have to slog ten to twenty miles or more to fetch water for domestic use. We have come here today with a common resolve to make vital commitments, take solid actions to make these happen in order to increase these numbers that gets subtracted from those who still lack water and sanitation.

Sustainable financing for water security in Africa presents a great challenge to our resolve to make a difference and create access to clean water and safe sanitation for our under-served

and yet-to-be reached growing African populations. Arising from the Africa Regional contribution to the 5th World Water Forum Report, we know that the investment needed to develop adequate water infrastructure platform in the continent is estimated at US\$50 billion, about US\$ 12.0 billion of which, is needed for water supply and sanitation.

Clean water and safe sanitation have been recognized as key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets. The effective utilization of the water resources as well as efficient and harmonious management of our trans-boundary waters will lead to greater food security, better harnessing of our energy sources, creation of diversified transportation means including effective means of intra and inter socio-economic and political integration, peace and security, factors germane for more robust sustainable development.

Key to achieving this is realizing sustainability in water financing. Mindful that water is and must remain key to sustainable development in Africa, our Excellencies, Heads of States in their *Shar m el Sheikh Declaration* committed themselves, among others, to do the following:

- Significantly increase domestic financial resources allocated for implementing national and regional water and sanitation development activities;
- Develop local financial instruments and markets for investments in the water and sanitation sectors;
- Mobilize increased donor and other financing for the water and sanitation initiatives including national projects and Rural Water and Sanitation Initiatives (RWSSI), and the African Water Facility (AWF); etc.

It is commendable that on the issue of up-scaling domestic funding for water, several African countries have increased budgetary allocation to water supply and sanitation to match or in certain cases exceed Official Development Assistance (ODA) contributions. Also commendable is that Rural Water and Sanitation (RWSSI), a creation of the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Water Facility (AWF), an initiative of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) have become home grown African dynamic solutions created to build an enabling environment for sustainable financing of the water sector for the rural, semi-urban and urban areas in our continent.

The leadership in Africa is not paying lip service to the vision and objectives of the Africa's Renaissance. It is gratifying to learn that since 2004, the AfDB has committed funding amounting to US\$ 1.3 billion to 31 rural water supply and sanitation programmes in 23 African countries while donors and African Governments contributed between US\$ 4.5 and 5 billion. Since 2006, the RWSSI Trust Fund has also mobilized about US\$ 140 million from donors in support of RWSSI programme activities.

It is also worth mentioning that the AWF, AMCOW's own baby under the nurture of our key partner, AfDB, has mobilized US\$ 160 million and committed US\$ 100 million to finance 69 national operations spread across 50 countries on the continent. These endeavours have succeeded in leveraging about US\$ 500 million in additional investments into the water sector resulting in a positive multiplier effect of collective pooling of resources.

Much more gratifying is the fact that on this global platform presented by the 6th World Water Forum, we, the Water Ministers are gathered under one roof with our counterparts in charge of Finance, the exchequers and guardians of our treasuries in a conversation that our leaders in Africa had in their wisdom mandated us to hold for some time now. Perhaps even more heart-warming is that we all seem agreed on the need to dedicate greater domestic financing towards water resources management.

We are here to say;

- we recognise that we still have a long way to deliver water and sanitation to our peoples of the continent.
- we still have a long way to fully deliver on the MDGs.
- to our national leaders and institutions that no development can succeed without water.
- We emphasise that sanitation gives dignity to our people.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our experience in support of water and sanitation programs in South Africa with the Ministers of Finance who are here today. South Africa supports water and sanitation programs through various mechanisms, the first being the budget allocations that currently stands at R75 billion for water infrastructure over the next three years; secondly, an off-budget fund expenditure, thirdly, donors and partnerships. We are currently working on possible measures like implementation of "Polluter Pays Principle" that may take a form of carbon taxes as well as through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

I therefore commend today's conference and urge support for the compelling need to replenish the funding basket of the AfDB, RWSSI, AWF and the Global Water Partnerships. These institutions remain critical and strategic to our endeavour to better finance water resources.

We are here with our local structures as in African Water Utilities Association (AFWA) – our civil society, women and youth who also stand ready to facilitate efficient and effective water service delivery in our continent.

For us in AMCOW, we will not rest on our oars with the African Water Facility (AWF) initiative. We have other such initiatives and work programmes designed to add impetus to the solutions we seek to achieve our mandate as a key driver for achieving the Africa Water Vision 2025. I therefore call on our development partners to continue to support us to implement our work plan.

I am proud to inform the Forum of the existing partnerships which seek to engender equitable sharing of water amongst the basins states. Outstanding examples of these Commissions that have been established for purposes of effective water management are the following. The Limpopo Water Commission, the Nile Basin Commission and the Zambezi River Commission are worthy of mentioning. The Orange-Senqu River Commission which is the midwife of the world renowned Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) deserves a special mention.

As we all know better water knows neither boundaries nor borders. It is an important ingredient to economic development, sustainable livelihoods, social cohesion and peace in Africa. Under the leadership of the AU in general and AMCOW in particular, Africa is benefitting from best practices in water resource management and provision for a better life for its citizenry.

Ladies and gentlemen, this Forum has to be defined by taking decisions and actions that involve the participation of the local people, especially, women in the management of the water resource at all level of its value chain in Africa. Women head most households in rural Africa. Women bear the brunt of poverty, underdevelopment and lack of access to water in the continent.

The struggle for the emancipation and empowerment of women cannot be divorced from the struggle for access to water in Africa. Now is the time to use water to wash away poverty and underdevelopment from the impoverished faces of the children of Africa. Now is the time to use water as a catalyst for the emancipation and the empowerment of women in Africa. Now is the time to use water as tool to accelerate the social and economic development of Africa.

In conclusion, I applaud the AfDB for working with the African Union Commission (AUC) and AMCOW in organizing this workshop. I thank you all for your contributions and special focus in

support of achieving Africa's aspiration to attain water security in the continent of Africa.

We all stand ready to establish further partnerships and receive investments.

- We all stand ready to increase the rate and pace of delivery
- We have greatly improved our governance mechanisms and continue on the path of perfecting those mechanisms.
- We have structures and facilities in place that stand ready to receive donations and form partnerships.
- More importantly we have the **POLITICAL WILL AND THE DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED.**

Thank you and God bless.