



**By Atayi Babs**

Ahead of the upcoming 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union holding 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) has activated the online portal of the continent's water sector and sanitation reporting system.

The new Pan African Monitoring and Reporting System serves as a platform to report progress on the implementation of the AU Heads of States and Government Sharm el Sheikh Commitments to accelerate the achievement of the Africa Water Vision 2025, as well as the global high level political commitments on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on water and sanitation. Considered as one of

the most ambitious attempts at tracking sectoral progress, the system

represents Africa's readiness to learn from past mistakes in monitoring the implementation of the MDGs as well as efforts being made to attain Africa's Agenda 2063.

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Speaking on the successful activation, the AMCOW President and Minister for Water and Irrigation, Tanzania, Engr. Gerson Lwenge stated "The AMCOW Monitoring and Reporting System helps to address Africa's longstanding challenges in producing harmonised water and sanitation monitoring data". Engr. Lwenge recalled that lack of credible national and regional water sector and sanitation monitoring and reporting systems in Africa was widely recognised as a critical constraint to making informed policy and investments decisions on the development and effective use of water resources and sanitation in the continent".

Commenting, the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime said "ongoing actions such as this ensures Africa's readiness to monitor and report on progress towards achieving the SDGs while providing a great opportunity to establish baselines not just for the global indicator framework, but also for the African commitments for which efforts to monitor progress towards attainment are constrained by the lack of baseline data."

The System developed by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) working with the Commission of the African Union captures the harmonised monitoring and reporting indicators for the continent and links with other global monitoring and reporting processes. The AMCOW Executive Secretary, Dr Canisius Kanangire believes "the system provides African Member States an opportunity to own and manage the water sector and sanitation data". Dr Kanangire

reiterated that the issue of water sector and sanitation monitoring and reporting gained momentum in July 2008 with the AU Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration requesting AMCOW to report annually on the state of the continent's water resources and sanitation" to the Summit.

The web-based Reporting system was developed with funding from the African Water Facility (AWF), and supported by the M&E Task Force, the German Cooperation as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and with technical assistance from UNEP-DHI. The highlight of the portal which can be accessed at <http://www.africawat-sanreports.org>

is the

2016 Status Report of

42 African member states submitted using an online reporting framework. It also contains the 2013 and 2014 data submitted by Member States using a temporary paper based template.

The system which serves as database on water and sanitation for Member States in Africa is expected to promote cross-sector learning and knowledge dissemination within the water, sanitation, food, energy and climate nexus while supporting joint sector reviews

The online portal comes with maps and tabular view options which makes it easy to compare progress on various indicators across Member States in Africa.

Launched by AMCOW Ministers during the 2016 World Water Week Africa Focus Day in Stockholm, the online portal supports AMCOW's efforts in developing regular progress reports for submission to the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit.