

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF AFRICAN MINISTERS'
COUNCIL ON WATER**

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 2017 WORLD WATER DAY

The 22 March of every year is set aside across the globe for taking action on tackling the water crisis facing humanity. Today, there are over 663 million people living without a safe water supply close to home, spending countless hours queuing or trekking to distant sources, and coping with the health impacts of using contaminated water. Both the African Water Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals aspire to ensure everyone has access to safe water by 2030, making water a key issue in the fight to eradicate extreme poverty.

The global spotlight for this year's World Water Day is on wastewater. The importance of this theme cannot be overemphasised. Wastewater is considered by many as a nuisance, but

opportunities from exploiting it as a resource are enormous. Safely managed wastewater has the potential to be an affordable and sustainable source of water, energy, nutrients and other recoverable materials. The costs of wastewater management are greatly outweighed by the benefits to human health, economic development and environmental sustainability – providing new business opportunities and creating more green jobs.

It is no doubt that water quantity and quality is of vital importance for the ecosystem. Unfortunately, as the world's second-driest continent after Australia, Africa has only 9% of global renewable water resources to support 15% of the global population. The issue of water security in Africa is further aggravated by insufficient treatment of water and wastewater. The growing population, accelerated urbanisation and the rising economy has resulted in increased consumption of water and discharge of wastewater, which cause heavy pollution. Water pollution not only reduces available clean water, but also affects human health and ecosystem. These are challenges which we must as a continent tackle headlong and overcome. It is on this note that we welcome this year's world water day theme as a way of putting wastewater management issues on the front burner with a view to evaluating it as an untapped resource.

By 2030, global demand for water is expected to grow by 50% and most of this demand will be in our cities hence the need for new approaches to wastewater collection and management. At AMCOW, our commitment to achieving an Africa where there is equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation and socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment remains unwavering and very much on course as we lead the continent on the sustainable path of improved wastewater management particularly in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

AMCOW also upholds the fact that water has to be carefully managed during every part of the water cycle: from water abstraction, treatment, distribution, use, collection of wastewater and its treatment, to the use of treated wastewater and its ultimate return to the environment, ready to be abstracted to start the cycle again. In line with this understanding, the Governing Council of AMCOW at its last meeting in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, resolved to ensure coherence in the implementation of our policies with the requirements of the Africa Water Vision 2025 and Agenda 2030 with a focus on achieving efficient management of resources to ensure water, energy and food security.

The Dar es Salaam Roadmap restates our commitment to following the holistic focus and nexus approach of productive wastewater management in the planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation projects at all levels and particularly in African cities. As we commemorate the 2017 World Water Day, AMCOW rededicates itself to creating more vistas

and innovative ways of maximising and upscaling treatment processes and operational systems that will facilitate Africa's capacity to deploy wastewater in meeting the growing water demand in cities, support sustainable agriculture, and enhance energy production and industrial development. Wastewater will no longer be seen as a burden to be disposed of, but rather a resource to be harnessed sustainably in Africa!

Happy 2017 World Water Day!

Dr. Canisius Kanangire

Executive Secretary