INTRODUCTION

The World Water Week commenced Sunday 21st August ending Saturday 27th August 2011 with over 2,600 politicians, business leaders, international organisations, scientists, mayors and water professionals, gathered in Stockholm under the theme “Responding to Global Changes: Water in an Urbanising World.”

The opening session of the Water Week on Monday August 22nd called for increased investments in disaster-resilient infrastructure and smarter water management to avoid droughts, floods and pollution from further threatening the food, energy, and water security in a rapidly urbanising world. Speakers included Anders Berntell, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Hon. Gunilla Carlsson, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation, Mr. Sten Nordin, Mayor of Stockholm, Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UNHABITAT, and Trevor Balzer representing the Hon. Rejoyce Mabuddafhasi, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa.

AMCOW RELATED ACTIVITIES
AFRICA FOCUS DAY ON 23RD AUGUST 2011

The Africa Focus Day on Tuesday 23rd August 2011 was one of the most highly attended sessions during the week with over 400 participants including five Ministers – Hon. SS Nkomo, AMCOW Vice President and Minister of Water Resources Development and Management, Zimbabwe, HE Kamal Ali Mohammed, Minister for Irrigation and Water Resources, Sudan, Hon. Sarah Reng Ochekpe, Minister for Water Resources, Nigeria, Hon. Issoufou Issaka, Minister for Water and Environment, Niger, and Prof. Ogunlade Davidson, Minister for Energy and Water, Sierra Leone, Hon. Betty Atuku Bigombe, the Minister of State for Water, Uganda, three Deputy Ministers, Hon. Rejoyce Mabuddafhasi, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, Prof. Mohammed Abdel Motalab, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt, and Hon. Kebel Gerba, Minister of State for Water and Energy, Ethiopia, as well as the Chair of the Africa Group Climate Change Negotiation team, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, development partners, global leaders, water and sanitation specialists, and civil society activists.

Africa Focus Day convened by AMCOW in association with different partners featured four sessions on Water, Climate and Development, Financing Africa’s Water Agenda, Regional Overview of Utility Performance in Africa, and Challenges and Workable Solutions in Improving Water and Sanitation Services and other partners to develop and implement. The occasion was also used to release the French version of the Africa Water Atlas.
At the High-Level Ministerial session, the Ministers stressed the need for Africa to own the processes of the aid interventions in Africa, and the critical role that AMCOW should play in encouraging peer review mechanisms among the member countries in the quest to achieve the MDG targets on water and sanitation. The Ministers called on the AMCOW Secretariat to initiate more interactions among the Council Ministers so as to effectively utilize the high level regional platform and strong voice that AMCOW represents in building synergies that further the development of the continent’s water resources and sanitation. Participants agreed that AMCOW Ministers and water stakeholders must continue to apply pressure to give greater attention on water in the COP negotiations.

On financing of the water sector, participants noted that out of the required investments of US$10 billion per annum, only US$7.64 billion per annum is available and that to address the gap, issues of Tariffs (users), Taxes (national budget), and Transfers (official development aid) must be addressed. Regarding improvement of aid effectiveness for water and sanitation in Africa, the EUWI while noting that there is no obvious linkage between EU water sector aid received by African countries and their actual need, in terms of access to water and sanitation, called for improved targeting of aid within Africa, reduction of aid fragmentation, establishment of a joint donor fund to cover anticipated additional costs, and urgent coordination to address the low level of use of partner country systems for the delivery of aid.

The Department of Water Affairs, Republic of South Africa also organized a side event on “Strategic response to global challenges, taking water in an urbanising world into consideration.” Issues discussed included “Flood management in the Vaal – Orange River System”, “Water in an urbanising world, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro drought emergency case study” and Hartebeesdam Integrated biological remediation programme – addressing urbanisation, impacts with innovative turnkey solutions”. The event also mapped the way forward following the various deliberations.

Participants commended the Ministers present for actively participating through the sessions and called for more of such high level presence of political leadership at such fora to enable Africa take the lead in coordinating ownership of interventions in the water and sanitation sector.
6th WORLD WATER FORUM AFRICA PREPARATORY PROCESS TARGET COORDINATORS MEETING / STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEFING
As part of the wider consultations and dialogue with different stakeholders aimed at coming up with solutions for the identified regional targets defining Africa’s participation at the 6th World Water Forum, target coordinators met on Wednesday 24th August 2011. Members of the Steering Committee under the chair of Hon. SS Nkomo, AMCOW Vice President, Southern Africa region, and Ministers Sarah Ochekpe of Nigeria, Ogunlade Davidson of Sierra Leone, and Kamal Ali Mohammed of Sudan were briefed on the work done so far. See attached Power Point briefing. Ministers emphasized the need for AMCOW Secretariat to constantly brief and involve all the AMCOW Ministers in the process to ensure a region wide buy-in of the outcomes.

CONSULTANT / TAC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON AMCOW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE
The Consultant working on the draft AMCOW Governance Structure met with the constituted TAC Working Group and the AMCOW Secretariat to finalize the document. Clear timelines for recommended deliverables were adopted to ensure that the document is finalized for ratification at the upcoming EXCO meeting in October 2011.

EXPERTS GROUP MEETING ON AFRICAN WATER SECTOR M & E / REPORTING FORMAT TO AU SUMMIT ON SHARM EL SHEIKH DECLARATIONS
TAC at its last meeting in June 2011 in Tunis mandated the AMCOW Secretariat to organize a workshop of experts on M&E from the countries, RECs and other agencies doing monitoring and evaluation in the sector. The workshop held on Thursday 25th August 2011 and discussed ways of enhancing the M & E and Reporting format proposed for reporting to the AU Summit on Sharm El Sheikh Declarations, and strategies for harmonizing and internalizing existing water and sanitation M & E systems, as well as reporting initiatives currently in use in Africa, into the Pan-African Water and Sanitation M &E systems. Recommendations from the workshop are expected to be presented to the next TAC meeting for adoption and ratification by AMCOW EXCO.

CLOSING PLENARY
The Closing Plenary of the World Water Week was addressed by the Hon. Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria, Hon. Sarah Ochekpe as one of the speakers who provided the political perspectives on the week and her statement was an overview of the African perspective.