



The Africa Working Group Newsletter

About the EUWI and the AWG

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and Sanitation was launched in Johannesburg in 2002 and is being implemented through the EU Water Initiative Africa Component. The purpose of this partnership is to make an effective joint (Africa-EU) contribution to the achievement of water and sanitation related MDGs.

The strategic partnership has created an Africa Working Group (AWG) consisting of representatives from AMCOW-TAC, EU MS, EU COM, civil society and private sector working as a joint platform on water-related development issues.

This document is the first in a series of newsletters aiming at regularly informing all AWG members, as well as AWG partners, on the Africa Component activities.



Mrs. Martha Solomon (Ethiopia) and Mr. Gert de Bruijne (The Netherlands) during the Ouagadougou meeting

First meeting of the AWG in 2007 successfully held in Ouagadougou

The first meeting of the Africa Working Group in 2007 was successfully held in Ouagadougou on April 2 and 3.

Attendance was one of the highest in the short history of the Group: more than 50 participants from 20 European and African countries were warmly welcomed by the Ministry in charge of Water in Burkina Faso. It is also worth underlining that both African and European civil societies were well represented at the meeting.

Main outcomes of the meeting

Many topics were on the agenda, since the last AWG meeting was held in May 2006. Discussions and sessions were therefore copious and intense. Main outcomes are:

New strategy and 2007 work plan

New strategy and 2007 work plan for the AWG have been finally approved after several months of discussion; among the key activities foreseen in 2007 are thematic discussions, mapping of EU Aid in the WSS sector in Africa and evaluation of country dialogues carried out so far.

Financing session

Comprehensive presentations of the African Water Facility and of the Africa-EU Infrastructure Partnership (IP) were delivered. The AWG agreed to set up a task force that will advocate that a strong water component be funded by the Infrastructure Partnership. AMCOW is to send a letter to the EC in order to advocate for a renewed Water Facility under EDF10, and has asked to play an active role in the mid-term review of the Water Facility (see below).

Sanitation session

A half day was dedicated to presenting and discussing sanitation issues. The AWG agreed on the need to increase political commitments to sanitation on both African and European sides. Linkages should be established with existing processes and road maps and the International Year of Sanitation in 2008 (especially with UNSGAB).

Looking more into innovative financing mechanisms for sanitation should also be a priority for the AWG. It was decided to organize an EUWI session on financing sanitation during the Stockholm Water Week in August. Last but not least, we should lobby for significantly more funds for sanitation within the renewed EUWF under EDF10.



Mr. Torbjorn Damhaug, from the AfDB, who won the prize for the fanciest and most convincing slideshow presentation

High level meeting to be organized by the AWG

Many high level meetings are planned in the coming year (African Water Week, AfricaSan+5, CSD16 Spring 2008, G8

meeting in Japan, AU Water summit, etc). It was proposed and approved that the AWG high level meeting should be combined with the CSD16 (Spring 2008).

For this meeting, a strong joint EU-Africa statement should be prepared in 2007, especially on sanitation and financing. The UK has offered to lead on this activity.

Outcome of the evaluation

General construction of the agenda and thematic sessions on financing and sanitation were especially appreciated. 75% of the participants think they had a good opportunity to get fresh information on the AWG activities. A large majority would have appreciated additional unstructured time. Detailed outcome is available on line.

FWG and AWG to work more closely

As recommended by the review of the EUWI carried out recently, the Finance and Africa Working Groups will work more closely in the coming months. The chairman of the FWG, Johan Holmberg, attended the Ouaga meeting.

This collaboration is important considering that the FWG deals mostly with African countries, and that financing has been selected as a key topic for the AWG in 2007.

Collaboration will start with a better coordination between the two groups. The AWG could also be a Forum where African countries get information on the FWG activities, which will create demand for support from the FWG, such as the implementation of financing strategies in partner countries with associated modeling instruments, as presented at the Ouagadougou meeting.

Evaluation of the EUWF to start

Terms of reference of a mid-term review of the EU Water and Energy Facilities are in the process of being approved. Evaluation is to start very soon and first results are expected by mid-June. Evaluation will focus on the added value of the Facilities (compared to other EU financial instruments) and is expected to make recommendations for the necessary adjustments in the design of future Facilities.

AWG upcoming meetings

Two more AWG meetings are scheduled in 2007: In August during the Stockholm Water Week (Monday afternoon August 13); In November in Paris (final date will be determined to AWG members as soon as possible in September). The agenda for the Stockholm meeting will be posted on the CIS-net before the end of June.

Who is who?

The AWG is chaired by two countries: currently (2007), the African co-chair is Lesotho (represented by Mr. Bataung Leleka) and the European co-chair is France (represented by Mr. Martin Parent and Mr. Bruno Valfrey-Visser).

At an early stage of the AWG, it was decided to establish on the European side a "Troika", to deal with more operational matters of the AWG. This Troika consists of the current co-

chair (in 2007, France), the outgoing co-chair (Germany) and the incoming co-chair (UK).

The support group provides technical and administrative support to the AWG; IRC has been contracted to manage this task. Coline van der Ven and Paul van Koppen are the two IRC professionals responsible for this task.



Mr. Francis Bougaire (Burkina Faso, Head of the National Water Resources Management Department and member of AMCOW-TAC), who hosted the meeting and kindly treated everyone to dinner the first evening (many thanks!) and Mr. Martin Parent (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs), current co-chair of the AWG.

EU Water Facility funding secured

In order to secure the funding of the AWG's activities for 2006-2008, an application has been submitted to the Water Facility Unit. France and Germany are co-donors. Funds should be made available in the coming months.

CIS-net, the information sharing system of the EUWI

The EUWI has a dedicated web-site to share information with interested stakeholders (www.euwi.net). On this site, a secure area is available for members of the AWG, this is called CIS-net. Here, all supporting documents related to the work of the AWG can be viewed and downloaded, including agenda and minutes of meetings of the Troika and of the AWG. To get access to CIS-net, please contact Coline van der Ven (ven@irc.nl).

Membership

Presently, the AWG has about 110 registered members. Members automatically receive invitations for the AWG meetings and have access to CIS-net, the secure area of the EUWI web-site (see also above). To register as member of the AWG please contact Coline van der Ven (ven@irc.nl).

Comments and suggestions

If you have any comments on this Newsletter, or suggestions for the next newsletter, please send them to Bruno Valfrey-Visser (valfrey@hydroconseil.com) and Coline van der Ven (ven@irc.nl). The newsletter is open to all the AWG members, so feel free to send any information or opinion that you would like to be published in the forthcoming issue of the Newsletter (scheduled for August).