

The Africa Component of the EU Water Initiative

Dialogue for policy development and aid effectiveness

The challenge

Every minute four children die from water borne diseases or poor sanitation and every day millions of young girls spend their time fetching water instead of going to school. Changing this situation requires commitment and action at all levels of society: at grassroots level, but also at

the level of national governments. It requires coherent policies and coordination of donor funds for water and sanitation programmes to make sure that the funds are used in the most effective way. The European Water Initiative (EUWI) addresses this challenge.

The European Water Initiative

In 2002, the EU Member States and the European Commission launched the EUWI at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The EUWI aims to contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for drinking water and sanitation within the context of an integrated approach to water resources management. It is a political initiative that, through policy dialogue, aims to improve coordination in the sector to deliver more effective development assistance.

The African Working Group

The African Working Group (AWG) is one of the 'regional components' of the EU Water Initiative and is responsible for the Water Initiative in Africa. It emerged from the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership on Water Affairs and





Sanitation signed in September 2002 by the Presidents of South Africa, Nigeria, the European Union and the European Commission. The purpose of this partnership is to make an effective joint (Africa-Europe) contribution to the achievement of water

and sanitation related MDGs in Africa.

The AWG has more than 140 registered members, coming from the Technical Advisory Committee of the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW-TAC), the Euro-

pean Union Member States (EU MS), the European Union Committee (EU COM), civil society, financing institutions, knowledge institutions and the private sector. The diversity of its membership is considered to be one of the strengths of the AWG. Its membership is open to organisations active in the fields of policy dialogue and national policy framework development, accountability and transparency, and donor harmonisation. The AWG is co-chaired by the AMCOW-TAC and an annually rotating EU member state, while a 'troika' consisting of the present chair, outgoing chair and incoming chair functions as the operational management body. The AMCOW-TAC acts as the strategic counterpart to the troika of the AWG.

Clear messages from the e-conference on sanitation

The AWG supported efforts to achieve the sanitation MDG target in Africa, where six out of ten people lack access to basic sanitation. The AWG e-conference held in 2007 provided clear messages:

- Healthy and productive households are necessary in order to boost the national and local economies. Every \$1 spent on sanitation can save \$9 for the economy.
- Leadership in sanitation is needed from the very top, with inter-ministerial cooperation and mutual accountability.

Examples of AWG activities and outputs

- Mapping European aid for water supply and sanitation and for integrated water resources management resulted in the report: 'Working Together to Improve Aid Effectiveness in the Water Sector' (download from www.euwi.net). The report forms the basis for a dialogue on how to better target aid to the water sector.
- A proposal to OECD-DAC to create a new reporting code for sanitation in coordination with OECD-DAC and UN-Water's global report (GLAAS) was endorsed in the OECD meeting of May 2009.
- The three-week e-conference on sanitation saw more than 100 registered participants, two-thirds of them from Africa, developing inputs for the Africa-EU Sanitation Statement.
- As an input to the International Year of Sanitation 2008, the AWG mobilized a broad coalition for its EU-Africa sanitation statement. AMCOW President Minister Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua formally launched the statement at the AWG side event held at the UN Commission for Sustainable Development 16th session in New York in May 2008. The African Union Heads of State endorsed this statement at their meeting in Sharm el Sheik in July 2008. This acceptance of agreed principles provides a sound basis for individual states to mutually support the development and implementation of national plans.
- Support to the Ethiopia Country Dialogue helped develop a national financing strategy for the sector.
- The AWG has created an inclusive dialogue platform for stakeholder coordination and harmonization including donors, NGOs and the private sector.
- The AWG facilitates and coordinates dialogue between European partners and AMCOW to support alignment to regional priorities.



What's in it for...?

AWG's work encompasses water supply and sanitation services, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Transboundary Water Management (TWM). It aims at reinforcing the political commitment and accountability of EC and Member States for harmonized support in these areas, in line with African interests and demand. Furthermore, the



AWG supports African partners on request in enabling partner countries to develop and implement policies, strategies and priorities.

The EU Water Initiative is a political initiative, not a financial one, so what's in it for...?

- **African policy and decision makers:** access to EU policy and decision

makers; access to relevant information on water and sanitation in French and English; access to a dialogue partner and network of donors that can contribute to improved aid effectiveness and support alignment of aid to African priorities.

- **EU policy and decision makers:** access to key

stakeholders in the region; increased understanding of countries in the region; improved donor coordination in the region within the water and sanitation sector.

- **NGOs:** a one-stop shop for targeted advocacy to engage with recipient and donor governments.
- **AWG working group members:** access to other EUWI working groups and to relevant African stakeholders, promoting activities and events (through the AWG newsletter), and sharing lessons learnt.
- **Research community:** getting important research issues related to water and sanitation onto the political agenda, resulting in a stronger link between research and policy.

Further information

For further information, visit:

www.euwi.net/wg/africa or contact:

Mr. Robert Burtscher – Working Group Co-chair Europe: robert.burtscher@ada.gv.at

Mr. Thomas Zipper - thomas.zipper@hydrophil.at

Mr. Charles Ngangoué – Working Group Co-chair Africa: ngangoucharles@yahoo.fr

Ms. Coline van der Ven – AWG Secretariat: ven@irc.nl Tel: +31 70 3044013