

STATEMENT BY THE IHP NATIONAL COMMITTEES OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

We, the National Committees of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of Sub-Saharan Africa, meeting at the 1st African Regional Consultative Meeting of the National Committees for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-IHP which convened under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources of Nigeria and the UNESCO in Abuja, Nigeria, from 1 -2 March 2006;

Affirm that water, fundamental as it is to human development, is the singular most resource, by its adequate and equitable access, to greatly enhance both the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the implementation of the outcomes of the Water Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Africa;

Are concerned that phenomena, such as climate change and variability, as well as human factors; population growth, competition for water and pollution, increasingly threaten the sustainability of water resources in Africa and hence the livelihood of the many poor living in Africa; especially women.

Nevertheless are convinced that dedicated programmes, such the UNESCO-IHP that focus on building and expanding capacity in water sciences and related technologies, will take the necessary measures to mitigate the human and economic losses associated with the lack of water security and hydrological extremes;

WE HEREBY CALL ON DECISION - MAKERS TO IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

MEMBER STATES

- **Recognize** and **seek** the advisory role of the IHP on water issues to regional bodies including the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW), the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). And at sub-regional level; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD);
- **Make available resources** for water monitoring networks which are practically non-existent in most of the sub-Saharan African countries;
- **Encourage** exchange of information regarding the management of water resources among member states and strive to harmonize policies, databases and data collection methods, as well as methodology in terms of assessment of shared water resources;
- **Ensure** knowledge in water resource management is developed by supporting capacity building initiatives included in the Consolidated African Science and Technology Plan.
- **Support** initiatives aimed at public understanding of the importance of water resource protection

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- **Review** the governance structures of UNESCO-IHP to reflect a more inclusive process by adopting a regional approach to both decision-making and the election of posts of office.
- **Constitute** an advisory committee to review the mandate and functioning of IHP National Committees enabling them to serve as the backbone necessary for implementing the International Hydrological Programme. To enable them to act as governmental advisory bodies and coordinate contacts with other IHP National Committees as well as with the IHP Council and its Bureau. Finally, to be a multidisciplinary body comprising representatives from Water Ministries and Universities as well as Scientists and Professionals from the public and private sectors of the Water Industry
- **Encourage** institutional networking and regular regional and sub-regional meetings between IHP National Committees for the purpose of developing collaborative programmes and effective service delivery.
- **Recommends** the establishment of a number of Water Institutes in the sub-regions of Africa in partnership with AMCOW, AMCOST, NEPAD, African Union (AU) and other United Nations Agencies. These Institutes should then be reclassified as UNESCO Centers of Excellence in the field of water and as such become training hubs for Sub-Saharan Africa
- **Facilitate** the involvement of African experts on the governing boards of international UNESCO centres such as the UNESCO Institute for Water Education (UNESCO-IHE). The idea being not only to encourage further research into those areas that particularly defy this region, but also to increase African student participation in these centres
- **Support** a Bi-annual Consultative Meeting of the IHP National Committees in Sub-Saharan Africa aimed at strengthening regional partnerships and the coordination of IHP activities, and in doing so, keeping IHP at the forefront of regional water programmes in Africa
- **Compile**, and support the development of, a database of Hydrologists and Water Resources professionals within the African region.
- **Implement** sub-regional inventories of transboundary water resource systems and activities to protect the water resources of major aquifers and river systems
- **Appoint** sub-regional hydrologists in Central, Western and Southern Africa.
- **Complete** the African Water Development Report
- **Encourage** the launch of a Scientific Journal of Water Research in Africa

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- **Acknowledge** that water, if it is well managed and used wisely, can make a difference and provide a significant contribution to the development of Africa.
- **Make available** financial resources to enable Africa to acquire capacity for the sustainable management of water (both surface and groundwater resources) taking into consideration adaptation measures towards the impact of climate variability and climate change
- **Support** the implementation of the UNESCO-ESA TIGER (European Space Agency) project through utilization of remote sensing data (satellite imageries) to enhance water resources assessment and sustainable management.

- **Undertake** Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) as well as the Hydrological Risk Analysis of various regional aquifers with the support of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).
- **Support** investigations into climate variability and change influences on the shrinkage and subsequent reduction in volume of the lakes in Africa e.g. Lake Chad basin.

Noting that the above recommendations can only be achieved by expressed endorsement and support of the AMCOW, NEPAD and the African Union, we call on these organisations to engage the IHP National Committees of Africa in partnership to meet Africa's water development goals.

Express our profound gratitude to The Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Alhaji M.S. Shagari, for providing leadership to the meeting and kindly request him to convey to H.E. President Obasanjo, the Government and people of Nigeria our sincere appreciation for hosting this meeting