

CHAPTER 3. REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL EFFORTS TO BUILD HYDROPOLITICAL RESILIENCE IN AFRICA

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In Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Development of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the international community, including all the African nations, set itself the following major goals and targets relating to water (Report of the Secretary-General 2004):

1. To halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water;
2. To develop Integrated Water Resources management (IWRM) and water efficiency plans by 2005, with support for developing countries;
3. To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water resources management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies;
4. To promote effective coordination among the various international and intergovernmental bodies and processes working on water-related issues, both within the United Nations system and between the United Nations and international financial institutions.

These goals and targets have guided and will continue to guide several collective initiatives to deal with hydropolitical vulnerabilities in Africa and build hydropolitical resilience. Of necessity, due to the international status of the major water resources in the continent, a majority of these initiatives are regional and/or sub-regional in scope. Some initiatives focus their efforts at the level of particular river basin(s), lake basin(s) and aquifer(s). The scale of the challenges these initiatives face in their pursuit of just the 2015 target on access to water can be grasped from the following:

To meet the water target in Africa, an additional 405 million people must get access to some form of improved water supply by the year 2015 with an average of over 36 million every year, 690,000 every week and 138,000 every weekday starting in January 2004 (UNEP 2003).

3.1 REGIONAL INITIATIVES

3.1.1 The African Union (AU)

Created in 1999, the African Union (AU) serves as the over-arching regional governing body for the continent. It was established to accelerate the process of political integration within the continent and, thereby, facilitate Africa's ability to compete in the global economy. The union carries out this function by promoting and supporting cooperation between and among African countries. Among its many other functions to promote and support prosperity, peace and security, and development in Africa, the Union provides an enabling forum for African countries to work together to establish initiatives that promote proper development and use of water resources. Recently the African Union has asked the



Carrying water, rainy season. Photo credit: Marcia Macomber.

African governments to commit at least five percent of their national budgets to fund water projects (African Unification Front 2003).

3.1.2 The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)

The New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD, is a multilateral agreement among African countries that aims to eradicate poverty; to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; to halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy and finally to accelerate the empowerment of women in Africa.

It is the inter-connectedness of water to meeting the above goals that makes water resource management and development a central issue that must be addressed by NEPAD. NEPAD recognizes that water resources and access to fresh water are vital component for life and economic development. Chapter Eight of NEPAD, entitled the "Environmental Initiative," identifies conservation and sustainable use of

Coastal, Marine and Freshwater Resources, as one of its eight focal points. NEPAD proposes to attack this challenge not only through assessment and regulation, but also through the application of science and technology aimed at alleviating Africa's shortage of water and, thereby, improving the quality of water and enhancing its distribution for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses. Under the NEPAD strategic Action Plan all regions have been charged with the task of strengthening the financial mechanisms for the development of their water sectors (NEPAD 2002).

3.1.3 African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW)

Launched in 2002, AMCOW is the forum of all 53 African ministers responsible for water affairs in the continent, acting in the spirit of the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The primary objective of AMCOW is to keep under constant review integrated water resource management policies, strategies and actions to address challenges facing the continent in the areas of water and sanitation, and to contribute to the attainment of NEPAD's goals of stronger regional cooperation, peace and



A woman proudly demonstrates her working kitchen sink, South Africa. Photo credit: R. Zurba, USAID.

security, poverty eradication, and sustainable economic development of Africans and Africa.

Since its launch, AMCOW has received support and pledges of support from several international donors and cooperating partners. On the home front, AMCOW has also been working with the African Development Bank on

the establishment of an African Water Facility to be housed by the Bank and to provide the much-needed window for the expeditious financing of water projects in Africa. Securing firm African financial commitments to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals on water will show that the continent is ready for action. These commitments and the other key initiatives will also prepare a firm

foundation on which to build strong partnerships between all stakeholders — regional and international — that is required to address Africa's water and sanitation crisis. AMCOW has developed a triennium work programme for 2005-2007 that includes a large range of activities and initiatives at the regional and sub-regional levels.



Old latrines, Senegal. Poor hygiene is often cited as a reason parents keep their daughters from going to school. Photo credit: R. Nyberg, USAID.



Scientists discuss plans for integrated watershed management at dam catchment in Ethiopia, where rapid siltation, caused by soil erosion resulting from deforestation and agricultural practices, threatens municipal drinking water supplies. Photo credit: Badege Bishaw, OSU.

3.1.4 The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA)

Established in 1958, ECA is one of five regional commissions under the administrative direction of United Nations (UN) headquarters. As the regional arm of the UN in Africa, it is mandated to support the economic and social development of its 53 member States, foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. Concerning water, ECA has been instrumental in mobilizing political will through the formation of the African Ministers' Council on Water and in setting out the African Water Vision for 2025. ECA's strategies to promote the implementation of the African Water Vision 2025 comprise three elements:

- building human and institutional capacities for implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
- assisting Member States, river basin organizations (RBOs) and regional economic communities (RECs) in the development and implementation of integrated river basin and watershed

management strategies and plans for the major river/aquifer basins as well as plans that concentrate on domestic water supply and sanitation and on innovative financing mechanism

- promoting enhanced irrigation development to improve agricultural production and food security through policy dialogue, formulation of basin-wide irrigation development strategies for selected major river and aquifer basins, and disseminating best practices for small-scale irrigation.

ECA also advises countries on developing treaties and protocols on shared waters that address issues such as water quality and utilization, hydropower generation, flood management, and conflict resolution, and on water transfer within basins so that water-scarce areas can be given rights to the resources they need. With its partners, ECA as the Secretariat of UN Water/Africa publishes the biennial African Water Development Report (AWDR) aimed at providing Africa's decision makers with a basis for managing Africa's water resources.



Water tankers being filled for deliveries to camps for internally displaced persons, Liberia. Photo credit: USAID/OFDA.



Drilling borehole in the Koro region, Mali. Muddy water spews up from 50 meters beneath the earth's surface. Wells in this region range from 95 to 140 meters deep. Photo credit: USAID.

3.2 SUB-REGIONAL INITIATIVES

3.2.1 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS, a regional organization of 15 African states¹ was formed in 1975, in order to support economic integration and collaboration within the western region of Africa (ECOWAS, 2005). More recently, it has expanded its governance into other collaborative socio-political development areas, working within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. ECOWAS endeavours to halve the proportion of people in ECOWAS countries who do not have adequate access to safe drinking water by 2015 (Shrimpton 2002). The action plan proposes that in order to reach this goals ECOWAS must intensify its monitoring activities and update evaluation and assessment of water resources, with help from national and regional monitoring and research institutions. It also proposes to support research

1. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.



Pump station in the Namib desert near Walvis Bay, Namibia. Photo credit: Anton Earle.

on land and water resources and facilitate the distribution of this information (West African Water Vision, 2000). Moreover, ECOWAS aims to create synergy and partnership among countries and institutions that are involved in transboundary water resources and, finally, to orchestrate a harmonious exchange of information (West African Water Vision 2000).

3.2.2 Southern African Development Community (SADC)

SADC is the regional governing body for southern Africa composed of 13 member states (SADC 1992).² From the beginning, the formation of SADC was premised on more than just the goal of improving the economic integration of the region; rather, the treaty that created the governing body included social, environmental, developmental, and political aims as well as economic integration. Thus, the expansion of the regional governing body into the management and governance of water and sanitation works synergistically in helping the region to meet its other aims of economic and political stability. SADC is the most advanced of all the sub-regions in

Africa with the creation of its protocol on the Shared Water Course Systems in the Southern African Development Community. The protocol establishes basin-wide management institutions and their financial frameworks, goals and objectives, and acts as a forum for settlement of disputes concerning water between member states. It is also at the forefront of information gathering and research with its SADC Water Resource Database and the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, which allow for wide distribution of information on watercourses and water resource development.

3.2.3 Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

IGAD is a six-member³ regional organization of countries in the Horn of Africa. It was created in 1996 and subsumed the initiative set forth by its

2. Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

3. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda.



The Blue Nile in the Ethiopian Highlands. Photo credit: Anton Earle.

predecessor, the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought Development (IGADD) (IGAD, 2004). Initially, it was created to address the problems of drought and famine caused by the extreme and dynamic weather variations, which had negative impacts on food security, political security, humanitarian affairs, and economic growth of the region.

In compliance with a request from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies, IGAD was, in May 2000, involved with the initiative to address land and water management through programming (IGAD Sudan, 2002a). Its central objectives in terms of water resources management are to:

- provide education and build the capacity of national hydrological services of the member states
- improve, at the base level, the skills needed for using water resources efficiently.

Finally, IGAD aims to promote awareness about shared transboundary water resources (IGAD Sudan, 2002b). The IGAD projects have received the support of the USA and several European countries.



Repairing a water storage facility, Uganda. Photo credit: K. Burns, USAID.

