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Sixth World Water Forum process kicks off

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African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) has been chosen to coordinate processes leading to Africa's participation at the 6th World Water Forum (WWF) holding in Marseille, France in March 2012.

Vice President, Regional Commission, International Forum Committee (IFC), Maurice Bernard announced this at the Africa Regional Process Kick-off meeting holding as a side event at the ongoing Africa Water Week. "AMCOW's choice to coordinate the process for the region is obviously natural as it represents the most effective platform that provides the required political leadership and can galvanize region wide stakeholder participation." Maurice said.

WWF regarded as the world's largest water event is expected to gather stakeholders in and outside the waterbox to debate questions on water management and access to water supply and sanitation, formulate SMART concrete proposals that promote action and solutions while soliciting true and lasting political commitment.

According to Maurice, the Marseille forum is uniquely planned to involve wide stakeholder exchanges that encourage participation from all organizations especially smaller ones and "out of the box" groups. The regional process will be structured around five to ten multi stakeholder target processes per region and region specific targets based on thematic areas. WWF and other major regional stakeholders has already pledged support for Africa to achieve this.

AMCOW Executive Secretary, Bai-Mass Taal expressed confidence that AMCOW will provide the necessary political leadership and environment for effective mobilization of targeted groups in the processes leading to the 2012 WWF. He however stressed that though significant financial and capacity support are expected from donor partners toward Africa's participation in the 2012 WWF, there was still need for Africa to be seen as owning the participation process.

Source: *aww-3, November 23, 2010*

Prioritise scientific research on meteorology and hydrology, Africa told

African countries are not putting premium on research and the building of data on meteorology and hydrology despite the continent being hit hardest by the vagaries of climate change, experts said at African Water Week 3 (AWW-3).

This, they said, was most likely to undermine the

countries' efforts to adapt to adverse climate change related impacts. "In Africa, the network for hydrological data collection is deteriorating, equipment is obsolete, their operations in some countries have been discontinued," said Datus Rutashobya of World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

Speaking at a side event organized by the Global Water Partnership at AWW-3, Rutashobya blamed this on the lack of investment in research occasioned by prevailing economic difficulties. The situation was worsened by what he termed the lack of recognition on the part of decision makers on the importance of

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

researched data leading to no allocations to carry out such research when budgeting.

“We need to work towards sensitising policy makers about the services so that they understand the value better,” said Rutashobya. “Data has to be regularly collected and the data should be readily available at an appropriate time.” He said researched data was vital for predicting, forecasting and planning. “This is a requirement for climate change and hydrological issues for the different countries. Water knows no boundary, so cooperation is important.”

Development partners such as the World Bank, the EU and Government of France have intervened with an investment of \$21m, deployed to upgrading weather stations in 36 countries. But the funding needs to be complemented by governments to ensure continuous data collection. Rutashobya also said the funding from development partners provided under the World Hydrological Cycle Observing System of the World Meteorological Organisation, has been used to train staff as part of capacity building.

Other speakers concurred on the need to build capacity in research and link research to decision making processes of countries. Africa, they warned, will pay heavily for neglecting research on climate change issues even Africans and a non-government organization will receive awards in various categories of the prestigious 2010 AMCOW AfricaSans Award for their innovation in addressing water and sanitation issues in the continent.

Source: aww-3, November 23, 2010

MDGs - Africa has made progress

The Director of the Economic Development, and NEPAD division (EDND) of UNECA, Emmanuel Nnadozie, has said that African countries had made progress in their pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), describing the situation as ‘the cup is half-full’.

Speaking at a press conference on the sidelines of the 11th Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethio-

pia, Nnadozie said “countries have shown commitment and willingness to achieve the MDGs. And we believe that this is doable, if we do more”.

Carving an emerging picture of a continent focused on securing progress in realising strategic development, he cited the increased number of women in the Rwandan Parliament, Ghana’s efforts in strengthening its economy, gender parity in primary education, net primary education enrollment, drastic maternal mortality reduction and increased availability of antiretroviral treatment against the spread of HIV/AIDs in many countries, among others.

Nnadozie, however, cautioned, “at a certain point, finding a way to meet the challenges of the MDGs is difficult and some countries are bound to request support from outside.” While aid is important, continuous dependence can be counterproductive.

With budgetary constraints, some African countries may not achieve all the MDGs by 2015, he added, but with good resources and good governance, considerable progress could be made.

Asked whether countries have not overburdened themselves by setting too many goals, Nnadozie alluded to the need to find a balance between having resources and being able to manage them well. Mobilising domestic resources would be another option available to help countries meet some of the MDGs.

Some reports have reflected a positive sign of improvement across all the MDGs on the continent but at varying rates.

According to the recently published Africa MDGs 2010 report, jointly prepared by ECA, AU, AfDB and UNDP, the rate of improvement varies across goals, countries and within countries.

The report, which is based on latest updated and harmonised data from the UN agencies’ statistics databases, reveals that while Africa is lagging on the attainment of the MDGs compared to other regions, African countries, through support from their international development partners, have taken a series of measures aimed at stemming the adverse effects of under development.

Source: Africa News, November 20, 2010 Saturday

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