

**GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DEVELOPPEMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP**



THE RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANIATION INITIATIVE

Your Excellency

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Development Bank's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI) is a response towards the attainment of the goals of the Africa Water Vision declared at the Second World Water Forum in The Hague in March 2000. The objectives of the Millennium Development Goals gave additional impetus to the Initiative. The Bank Group developed a Concept Paper on the Initiative in January 2003. The Concept Paper made proposals for strategic measures and actions for achieving 80% access to water supply and sanitation services to rural areas in Africa by the year 2015. It was subsequently presented at several international fora, including the World Panel on Financing Water Infrastructure in 2002 and the AMCOW meeting in Dakar in May 2003, where it received endorsement.

Essentially, the Initiative is intended to help mobilise as well as facilitate the flow of available and potential resources to accelerate investments in Rural Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa. The rationale for the rural focus is to contribute towards rural poverty reduction. As a result of low access to water supply and sanitation services in rural areas, rural populations are burdened to a greater extent by preventable water and sanitation related diseases; both women and men are deprived of opportunities from embarking on productive economic activities due to time and efforts used to fetch water.

The amount of time spent by children especially girls also results in low enrolment rate in education. These problems contribute to accentuate poverty in the rural areas. Providing access to water supply and sanitation services would contribute to spur economic development in the rural areas.

The RWSSI would be implemented through partnership with Regional Member Countries, donors and other stakeholders. This partnership would look to NEPAD and AMCOW for political leadership, with governments and civil society embracing the key principles and practices that will create the required environment for the Bank Group and the donor community to provide technical and financial support. The partnership would foster coordinated resource mobilisation, capacity building and more efficient implementation of programmes and projects, which are the necessary ingredients for achieving the goals of the Initiative.

The implementation of the RWSSI has started in five countries which the Bank considers favourable for immediate investment in view of the existence of strong water and sanitation policies and institutional arrangements in those countries. Country Programme documents and proposed initial investment programmes are currently under preparation with African Development Fund resources for Mali, Rwanda, Ghana, Ethiopia and Uganda. There are nine countries scheduled for intervention under the Initiative in the next phase and they include Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia. The Initiative will be extended to all other Regional Member Countries progressively but in fast track mechanism. .

We appreciate the strong support we have received from AMCOW in the development of the RWSSI and hope we can count on AMCOW during the implementation of this phase. We also request the support and participation of the international community and development partners in this initiative.

Thank you for your kind attention.