

Foreword/ K.Y. Amoako

The central role of water in Africa's quest for broad-based and sustainable development is now universally acknowledged. According to a recent study by the World Bank, of seven major sectors likely to reduce poverty, water and sanitation scored 100 out of an index of 100. Private sector growth and investment climate scored 85, Transport scored 79, ICT scored 74, Energy scored 69, Urban micro-finance scored 40 and Small/medium-sized enterprises scored an index of 38.

Since Africa has abundant water (over 80 major transboundary river/lake basins, some among the largest in the world) which policy-makers have recognized as a key to sustainable development, this study should be good news. Unfortunately, abundance has not necessarily translated into availability. About 300 million people in Africa live in a water-scarce environment. By 2025, the target year of the Africa Water Vision, 25 African countries will face water scarcity or water stress primarily due to insufficient investment in sustainable delivery of water supply, water augmentation measures, pollution control and watershed management.

Africa remains the most vulnerable region to climate change: droughts and floods have increased in severity and frequency in the last 30 years. Only 64 per cent of Africans have access to basic water supply. In sub-Saharan Africa, the coverage is 51 per cent while only 45 per cent have access to sanitation. Because of these realities, almost half of the African population suffers from one of six water-related diseases. The situation will worsen as the population of Africa approaches 1.453 billion by 2025. The Africa Water Vision 2025, which was acknowledged by African Heads of State in Sirte, Libya in March 2004, is for a continent where there sustainable access to a safe and adequate water supply and sanitation to meet basic needs of all.

It is also a vision for an Africa where the ecosystems are preserved, water for energy is available and there is the political will amongst all leaders to share the benefits of water. But to do these, we need facts and figures about the state of water in Africa, the challenges that we face and what must be done to meet those challenges.

The African Water Development Report (AWDR) will serve that purpose. The present edition has been written with status reports prepared by African countries themselves around eleven themes selected in consonance with the World Water Development Report (WWDR): Meeting basic needs, Securing the food supply, Protecting ecosystems, Sharing water resources, Managing risks, Valuing water, Governing water wisely, Water and industry; Water and energy; Ensuring the knowledge base and Water and cities. Since a new edition of AWDR will be published every two years, it will feed directly into every edition of WWDR.

This edition has been made possible with the active collaboration of many UN agencies (ECA,

UNEP, WMO, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP and UN-HABITAT) who have come together to form UN-Water/Africa and with the support of other non-UN agencies, especially the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and the African Development Bank.

I am confident that this report will be an invaluable resource for all – policy-makers, technocrats, development partners and other stakeholders in a continent that fulfils the Africa Water Vision 2025.