

Chapter 2:

International and African Milestones

The process of sensitizing governments, especially in developing countries, towards improved access to and provision of water supply and sanitation services has progressed from broad recommendations of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976 to the Mar del Plata Action Plan, which called upon countries to set targets, establish suitable standards and prepare specific projects. This led to the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD, 1981-1990) by the United Nations General Assembly. More recently the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 drew up a comprehensive programme of action contained in Chapter 18 of Agenda 21, and identified the areas where environment and economic development intersect, adopting the Dublin Principles, based on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

The culmination of these international efforts are enshrined within the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the international community. It is evident from the targets embodied in the MDGs that water is cross-cutting and essential in achieving these goals for a society free from extreme poverty, hunger and preventable diseases whilst ensuring environmental sustainability. There is, however, a diversity of opinion regarding the progress, or otherwise, of Africa's participation in such programmes due to the slow pace or lack of substantial progress in addressing these pressing problems in previous target-oriented responses, such as the IDWSSD.

Relevant International Milestones

Recommendation C.12 of Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements

Held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976, called upon governments to adopt programmes with realistic standards for quality and quantity, provide water for urban and rural areas by 1990, if possible, and adopt and accelerate programmes for the sanitary disposal of excreta and wastewater in urban areas.

The Mar del Plata Action Plan (1977)

Called upon countries to set targets, establish suitable standards and prepare specific projects. Countries requiring assistance were expected to request such assistance from international organizations.

International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (IDWSSD, 1981-1990)

Launched by the United Nations General Assembly in November, 1980, with the purpose of ensuring that governments adopt and implement programmes so that by the end of 1990 all

peoples in the world would have access to safe and adequate drinking water supply and sanitary excreta and household waste disposal facilities.

The Lagos Plan of Action

Aimed at the economic development of Africa over the period 1980-2000, the Lagos Plan of Action endorsed the objectives of the IDWSSD and specifically recommended to African governments that in the formulation of national water plans, those pertaining to water supply should represent national aspirations during the IDWSSD.

As the end of the IDWSSD and the 1990s dawned, two important events took place to build up the momentum. The first was the Global Consultation held in New Delhi, India, from 10-14 September, 1990. From the statement issued at the end of the consultations, four guiding principles emerged urging United Nations agencies, the international community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to intensify their efforts with a view to:

- a) Protecting the environment and safeguarding health through integrated management of water resources and liquid and solid water;
- b) Bringing about institutional reforms for promoting an integrated approach, including changes in procedures, attitudes and behaviour;
- c) Enhancing community management of services; and
- d) Introducing sound financial practices achieved through better management of existing assets.

The Consultation agreed that the sectoral challenge in the 1990s for most developing countries would be “some for all, rather than more for some”.

The second event was the African Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Conference held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, from 10-11 May, 1990. From this Conference emerged a statement known as the “Abidjan Accord” that endorsed the agreement entitled “Guidelines for the Development of Country Strategies for the 1990s.” This Guideline comprehensively elaborated on the principles for strategy formulation and the actions required to implement water supply and sanitation programmes in Africa.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 drew up a comprehensive programme of action contained in Chapter 18 of Agenda 21, and identified the areas where environment and economic development intersect. It outlined the basis for action, objectives, activities and means of implementation, including the required capital outlay and scientific and technological means that are needed. The concerns of Agenda 21 in the context of Africa are also reflected in the Report of the African Common Position on Environment and Development.

Rio and After

The United Nations Water Conference (Argentina, 1977) and its various follow-ups, the International Conference on Water and the Environment (Dublin, 1992) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992) gradually began to put emphasis on water as a fundamental resource to all socio-economic developments and on maintaining healthy ecosystems. Water is therefore to be considered not only as an economic good but also a social good. The Dublin Conference focused on the development, management and utilization of water resources in harmony with environmental conservation within the concept of sustainability, and called for the adoption of Integrated Water Resources Development and Management, under four main principles:

- A holistic approach needed for the development of human societies and economies, and the protection of natural ecosystems;
- The need for a participatory approach in institutions and arrangements for water development and management;
- The need to recognize the central role of women in the provision, management and safeguarding of water; and
- The recognition that water has an economic value and should therefore be considered as an economic good.

These recommendations were further emphasized at the Ministerial Conference on Drinking Water and Environmental Sanitation (Noordwijk, 1994). In the face of the predicted increase in freshwater stress across the globe, estimated to affect about two thirds of the world population by the year 2025, the First Water Forum (Marrakech, 1997) established the World Water Council and entrusted it to develop a World Water Vision for 2025. Consequently, the World Commission on Water for the 21st Century encouraged the formation of continental, regional and national commissions to formulate their respective visions.

Global, continental, regional and national water vision documents with their respective framework for action were presented at the 2nd World Water Forum (The Hague, 2000) and the Ministerial Conference also at The Hague at the same time. There were many outputs from the Second World Water Forum that were capped by two global documents, the Vision and the Framework for Action. The first of these, *“A Water Secure World - Vision for Water, Life, and the Environment in the 21st Century”* was prepared by the World Commission on Water, and accompanied with a detailed Vision report from the Vision Management Unit entitled *“Making Water Everybody’s Business”*.

Box 2.1: Vision Messages for a Water Secure World

- A holistic, systemic approach relying on integrated water resources management must replace the current fragmentation in managing water.
- Participatory institutional mechanisms must be put in place to involve all sectors of society in decision-making.
- Freshwater must be recognized as a scarce commodity and managed accordingly.
- Full-cost pricing of water services with targeted subsidies for the poor.
- Freshwater must be recognized as a basic need, with adequate access ensured for the poor.
- Incentives for resource mobilization and technology change are needed.
- Institutional, technological and financial innovation is needed.
- Private investment and community action.
- Political will is needed – going beyond Dublin and Rio.
- Governments are key actors – as enablers and regulators.
- Behavioural change is needed by all - no more business as usual.

The second output was the Global Water Partnership's (GWP) report entitled "*Towards Water Security: A Framework for Action*", which is based on the Vision material and focuses on the steps involved in moving from Vision to action. The Ministerial Conference, aimed at mobilizing official governmental support to counter global water predicaments with political action, welcomed the *Vision* and *Framework for Action* documents. The Ministers came out with a Ministerial Declaration on Water Security in the 21st Century, including seven key challenges to achieving water security.

Box 2.2: Ministerial Declaration – The Main Challenges

- *Meeting basic needs*: Recognizing that access to safe and sufficient water and sanitation are basic human needs and are essential to health and well being, and to empower people, especially women, through a participatory process of water management;
- *Securing the food supply*: Enhancing food security, particularly of the poor and vulnerable, through the more efficient mobilization and use, and the more equitable allocation of water for food production;
- *Protecting ecosystems*: Ensuring the integrity of ecosystems through sustainable water resources management;
- *Sharing water resources*: Promoting peaceful cooperation and developing synergies between different uses of water at all levels, whenever possible, within and, in the case of boundary and transboundary water resources, between States concerned, through sustainable river basin management or other appropriate approaches;
- *Managing risks*: Providing security from floods, droughts, pollution and other water-related hazards;
- *Valuing water*: Managing water in a way that reflects its economic, social, environmental and cultural values for all its uses, and to move towards pricing water services to reflect the cost of their provision. This approach should take account of the need for equity and the basic needs of the poor and the vulnerable; and
- *Governing water wisely*: Ensuring good governance, so that the involvement of the public and the interests of all stakeholders are included in the management of water resources.

The Africa Water Vision for 2025 was formulated under the theme: Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socio-economic Development. In short, the Vision has been presented as follows: "*An Africa where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment.*"

Table 2.1: Milestones and Targets of the Africa Water Vision 2025

Actions	Targets		
	2005	2015	2025
Improving governance of water resources 1. Development of national IWRM policies and comprehensive institutional reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In process of development Full implementation 	100 % of countries	100 % of countries	
2. Enabling environment for regional cooperation on shared water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated in existing river basin organizations Implemented in existing river basin organizations Initiated in new river basin organization Implemented in new river basin organization 	100 % of organizations 50 % of organizations	100 % of organizations 100 % of organizations 50 % of organizations	100 % of organizations
Improving water wisdom 1. Systems for information generation, assessment and dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established at national level Established for international river basins Established at Africa wide level 	50 % of countries 30 % of basins	100 % of countries 100 % of basins	100 % complete
2. Sustainable financing for information generation and management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of global experience Implementation at national level Implementation at river basin level Established at Africa wide level 	100 % complete 50 % complete 30 % complete	100 % complete 100 % complete 30 % complete	100 % complete
3. IWRM capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create public awareness and consensus Knowledge gaps identified Partnership for strategic assistance National research institutes established Regional research institutes established Gender/youth concerns mainstreamed 	100 % of countries 100 % of countries 100 % of countries 20 % of countries One established 30 % of countries	60 % of countries Two established 100 % countries/ basins	90 % of countries Three established
Meeting urgent water needs 1. Proportion of people without access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To safe and adequate water supply To safe and adequate sanitation 	Reduce by 25 % Reduce by 25 %	Reduce by 75 % Reduce by 70 %	Reduce by 95 % Reduce by 95 %
2. Water for achieving food security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water productivity of rain-fed agriculture and irrigation Size of irrigated area 	Increase by 10 % Increase by 25 %	Increase by 30 % Increase by 55 %	Increase by 60 % Increase by 100 %
3. Development of water for agriculture, hydropower, industry, tourism and transportation at national level	5 % of potential	10 % of potential	25 % of potential

<p>4. Conservation and restoration of environment, biodiversity, and life-supporting ecosystems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of sufficient water for environmental sustainability • Conserving and restoring watershed ecosystems 	<p>Implemented in 30 % of countries Under development</p>	<p>Implemented in 100 % of countries Implemented in 50 % of countries</p>	<p>Implemented in 100 % of river basins</p>
<p>5. Effective management of droughts, floods and desertification</p>	<p>Under development</p>	<p>Operational in 50 % of countries</p>	<p>Operational in 100 % of countries</p>
<p>Strengthening financial base for desired water future</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable financing for policy and institutional reform and capacity-building 2. Sustainable financing for information generation and management 3. Financing urgent water needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of pricing and full cost recovery • Increasing private sector participation • Mobilizing finance from national and international sources 	<p>Operational in 60 % of countries Secured in 100 % of countries</p> <p>Operational in 60 % of countries Operational in 30 % of countries Secured in 50 % of countries</p>	<p>Operational in 100 % of countries</p> <p>Operational in 100 % of countries Operational in 100 % of countries Secured in 100 % of countries</p>	

Sources: ECA et al., (2000) ; AWDR National Reports, 2003.

The International Development Targets agreed at the Second World Water Forum include halving the fraction unserved by water and sanitation by 2015. According to the data from a recent survey, urban Africa will require an 80% increase in the numbers served over the next 15 years to meet this target. Just to maintain current levels of coverage in the face of natural growth and rural migration, the served urban population must increase by more than 10 million each year over the same period. “Business as usual” in African urban water and sanitation is, therefore, not an acceptable scenario, given the public health consequences of failing to improve both coverage and effective use of urban facilities.

The real challenge is to learn new ways of working to increase our capacity to address these needs; the answers must lie fundamentally in the institutional, financial, and social arrangements that determine how much is spent on water and sanitation and by whom. Technical options that reduce cost, simplify maintenance, and improve the quality of service are also a key to success. The fundamental requirements for these changes in the sector will be the human capacity (technical, managerial, and motivational), the political will to achieve it, and sound strategies to ensure that each of the partners in the effort can contribute effectively.

From Vision to Johannesburg – The African New Thrust

- **1999:** Stakeholders Meeting (mainly NGOs) in Gaborone, Botswana, condemned regional bodies such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) for not mobilizing Africa for the Vision development process.
- AfDB reacted by holding stakeholders' consultations in Abidjan in late 1999. Decision made to organize Africa Caucus Day at 2nd WWF in The Hague.
- **March 2000:** Caucus held successfully and Vision presented in The Hague.
- **April 2000:** Follow-up meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between OAU, AfDB, ECA and tasks shared:
 - OAU political mobilization.
 - ECA technical analyses.
 - AfDB financial mobilization.
- Failure to get Vision approved by Head of States Meeting in Lomé, Togo in July.
- Suggestion to create the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) by UNEP.
- **September:** Core Ministers meet in Nairobi on sidelines of the launch of the African Water Facility (AWF), supported by the World Bank.
- **April 2001:** Inter Agency Group for Water in Africa (IGWA) meets in Niamey and decides to programme Inter-Sessional activities.
- **September 2001:** 1st IGWA/IWRM Sub Regional Meeting in Accra:
 - WWAP invited to discuss Focus on Africa at WSSD
 - IGWA decides on African Water Development Report (AWDR) to be linked methodologically to WWAP but more in-depth and Africa-owned.
- **September 2001:** African Water Task Force is created.
- Dutch Support for Partnerships with AfDB and ECA:
 - ECA Support for AWDR, AWICH, IWRM Workshops and Accra Conference.
- **April 2002:** Accra Conference of the Africa Water Task Force (AWTF) (Setting Priorities and Accra Declaration). Launch of AMCOW and Abuja Statement.
- AWTF decides to organize Water Dome at WSSD.
- **August 2002:** Water Dome a great success and WSSD makes water the number one priority out of five: water, energy, hygiene, agriculture and biodiversity (WEHAB). AMCOW Constitution approved by Ministers and Africa Water Facility announced by AWTF.
- Consultative Meeting on writing AWDR for North and West Africa.
- **October:** AWTF Meeting in Abidjan.
- **November 9th:** IGWA Session in UNEP.
- **December:** IWRM Workshop for Southern Africa.
- **February 2003:** IWRM for Central Africa.

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