



UN-Water/Africa



# Africa Water

A newsletter of UN-Water/Africa in support of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)

## Report says Africa's water problem is one of "induced scarcity"



REUTERS

The forthcoming African Water Development Report (AWDR), which will be launched in Mexico City on March 19, says the problem of water stress in most African countries "is not necessarily one of physical water scarcity but structurally induced scarcity due to low level of infrastructural and socio-economic development".

Because of this contradiction of water availability and lack of access, African policy makers must address water as a substance, a resource and service, including its market and non-market values in order to reconcile its economic, social and environmental values.

But the report also found that most of Africa is still not covered by adequate water and sanitation.

For instance, it found that Sub Saharan Africa has a coverage of barely 57% as against over 80% for northern African countries while the world average stands at 82%.

According to AWDR, Africa's rural population is still worse off. The rural coverage for 2002 is at a very low level of 46% even though it increased by 9% and some 69 million more people gained access to water supply in rural settings between 1990 and 2002.

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## Putting it all together...



*Prof. Kodwo Andah*

As soon as the constituent members of UN-Water/Africa decided to begin work on the biennial AWDR, they knew on whose shoulders to anchor the important task of synthesizing 25 national reports, two subregional reports,

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## DateKEEPER

*March 17, 2006:*

*11.15-13.15. AfDB hosts a session on Groundwater Resources Management and Protection in Africa. 13.30 - 14.20. Opening of the African Pavilion. Lunch will be served.*

*14.30-16.30. ECA hosts a session on Water for Growth and Development in Africa.*

*14.15-16.15. IDRC hosts a session on Water and Free Trade Agreements to Increase Water Security.*

*16.45-18.45. AfDB hosts a session on Financing Mechanisms for Local Water Initiatives Session on Financing Mechanisms for Local Water Initiatives.*

*March 18, 2006:*

*11.15-13.15. AfDB hosts a session on Management of African Transboundary Basins.*

*March 19, 2006:*

*9.00 - 10.00 Presentation of the Africa Regional Reports, Three major reports to be launched: Water Resources Development in Africa: Challenges, Responses and Prospects, African Water Development Report and the African Ministers Declaration.*

*16.45-18.45. Regional session on Water Supply and Sanitation for All.*

*March 20, 2006:*

*8.30-10.30. Session on Multi-Stakeholder Response to the Regional Reports.*

*11.15-13.15. Session on Investments for Agricultural Water Management in Africa.*

*March 21, 2006:*

*Ministerial Dialogue; Multi-stakeholder Dialogue.*

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cascaded in hundreds of data and indicators from dozens of United Nations organizations: they chose the shoulders of Kodwo Andah, Professor of Hydrology and Integrated Water Resources Management at Perugia University for Foreigners, Italy.

Prof. Andah worked with passion and conviction, poring over thousands of pages, and finally producing a 378-page document which will be launched at the 4th World Water Forum next week. To interview him in Mexico City, please call Yinka at 55 3270 0887.

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## Africa's water problems...

Regarding food security, AWDR says there is no sub-region in Africa where there is a guarantee and where there would not be a recourse to food imports or food aid. It notes that two-thirds of African countries have developed less than 20 per cent of their agricultural potentials with "less than five per cent of cultivated areas being irrigated in all but four countries in Africa".

The report says Africa is home to more than 50,000 known plant species, 1,000 mammal species, and 1,500 bird species. But it says about 321 and 273 animal and plant species respectively are critically endangered. The situation seems to aggravate in higher proportions in all the subregions with the number of threatened mammal, bird and fish species increasing, on average, at about 2, 2.5 and 5 times respectively, says the report.

## Water Facts

The following are distilled from the African Water Development Report 2006 and the World Water Development Report:

- Most of Africa's largest rivers are severely fragmented by dams, diversions and canals, leading to the degradation of ecosystems.
- Africa has at least 1,272 large dams with 39 situated in South Africa, 213 in Zimbabwe and 107 in Algeria.
- Rapid urbanization in Lagos increased solid waste generation sixfold to about 3.7 million tonnes a year in 1990.
- About 3 million people across the region die annually as a result of water-related diseases. 72 per cent of all reported cholera cases in the world in 1998 were in Africa
- Water quality is declining in most regions, affecting the diversity of freshwater species and ecosystems.
- Poor water quality is a key cause of poverty. About 3.1m people died in 2002 as a result of diarrhoeal diseases and malaria, 90% of whom were children.
- In 20 years, countries such as Niger lost more than 80 percent of their freshwater wetlands.
- More than 600 lakes in Africa have shrunk dramatically over the past decades, drained by deforestation, pollution and farming.
- The world will require 55% more food by 2030, increasing the demand for irrigation, which already accounts for 70% of all freshwater used by humans .
- Many urban water supply systems are "losing" 30-40% of

water through leakage and illegal extraction

- Political corruption is estimated to cost the water sector millions of dollars every year and undermines services.
- One billion people are without access to clean drinking water.
- About 2.6 billion people are without adequate sanitation.
- Rapid urbanization, about 4 per cent in Africa, is increasing pressure on water resources.
- 30-40% of water 'lost' through illegal tapping and leaks.
- Only 12 percent of nations met the global target of instituting an integrated water resources management by 2005.
- The waters of the Western Indian Ocean are major sea routes for an estimated 470 million tonnes of oil every year. This incurs a high risk of disastrous oil spills. Several oil spills have affected African penguins and other marine life.
- Government statistics show that Nigeria loses 350,000 hectares of arable land per year. In the north of the country, 10 states have already been impacted and each year, the desert advances another 600 metres further south.
- The number of Kafue lechwe, a type of antelope endemic to the Kafue Flats, has decreased to a third of its original 1970 population of 100,000 and elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes and wild dogs have disappeared from the area entirely due to change of flood patterns as a result of two dams on the Kafue river.

Africa Water is an information service of UN-Water/Africa and African Development Bank in support of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW).

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