



## African Water Agenda

### AfDB Hosts UN Advisory Board Africa's Water Stakeholders Dialogue

**Tunis, 15 December 2006** – The African Development Bank (AfDB) hosted the First Dialogue between the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) and African Stakeholders in Hotel Sheraton, Tunis on 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2006. The objective of the Dialogue is to formulate a framework of collaboration between the UNSGAB and African key organizations in support of the ongoing African water initiatives and programmes including preparations for the 2008 International Year of Sanitation. The main outcome of the Dialogue is the design of specific joint actions by UNSGAB and African key institutions to achieve a breakthrough toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on water and sanitation in Africa.

The AfDB, focal regional institution, is in charge of facilitating the presentation of the African Water Agenda. In line with its leading role in the attainment of the water MDGs in Africa, the AfDB Group President, Donald Kaberuka, agreed to organize the Dialogue in Tunis on December 14, 2006.

His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander, the Prince of Orange, The Netherland, was appointed Chairperson of the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The post has been vacant since the passing away of Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, former Prime Minister of Japan, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

The opening session of the meeting was co-chaired by the Prince Willem-Alexander of Orange, President Donald Kaberuka, and Mrs. Maria Mutagamba, President of the African Ministers' Council On Water (AMCOW) and Minister of Water and Environment of Uganda.

In his opening speech President Kaberuka recalled the Bank's focus on water and sanitation issues as one of the key elements of poverty reduction on the continent. The Prince of Orange, speaking on the behalf of the UNSGAB, declared in his opening statement: ***"Our message is a simple one: no more new ideas and policies. We should implement the ones we already have. It's time for action!"***

The UNSGAB was also represented by its 19 Board members and invited observers, including the World Bank, the European Union (EU), UN-Water Africa, UNDP, and Global Water Partnership. The Secretariat of the UNSGAB will co-organize with the AfDB and participate in the Dialogue. The African side led by Mrs. Mutagamba, included AMCOW Executive Committee Member Ministers and the AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee members representing the five subregions (Northern, Southern, Central, Eastern and Western sub-regions). The AfDB was represented at Senior Management level. Other regional participants included representatives of the African Union, UN Economic Commission for Africa, NEPAD, Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), MAGHREB Union, The African Network of Basin Organisations (ANBO), Africa Water Utility Association, African City Mayors Association and Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW)

The UNSGAB released "The Compendium of Actions" also known as the Hashimoto Action Plan that outlines a global work plan to help ensure the attainment of the MDG for water and sanitation. The participants discussed the common objectives of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), presenting the situation of the water sector activities and programmes in Africa, and The Hashimoto Action Plan.

The participants expressed their commitment to implement the following agreed joint actions:

- i) Focus International and African Head of Government attention on African Water challenges by
  - Sensitizing the African Union Summit of Heads of States on Water & Sanitation in 2008 to accelerate achievement of the MDGs.

- AfDB will also convene African Finance Ministers special meetings on priority and promotion of financing water and sanitation sectors with the support of UNSGAB and AMCOW.
- Improving collaboration to promote G8 water discussion in 2008

ii) Mobilize Financial Resources

- UNSGAB will support the AMCOW Trust Fund, the AfDB's Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative, the African Water Facility and the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa and facilitate access to EU Water Facility and Water for African Cities Programmes
- UNSGAB will endorse the efforts of African Governments to develop water infrastructure which is necessary for water security for social, economic development and environmental management in Africa, and will continue the dialogue to find the best way of doing this
- UNSGAB will support a review performance commitments , either in concert with the proposed African Finance Ministers meeting, at the proposed Summit review or both

iii) Increasing Capacity for Water Management, Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa

- AfDB and other regional organizations will endorse and assist in the development of the Water Operators Partnerships (WOPs) in close cooperation with Global WOPs of Un-Habitat. UNSGAB offers this bottom-up approach as a foundation stone for improving the sector, based on water operators; the AfDB for its part will prepare a review lessons learned in the sector to help construct a regional strategic framework for decision making in water supply and sanitation
- UNSGAB will support the strengthening of the transboundary institutions in Africa and promote creation of new ones where necessary. This will include IFIs, AfDB and OECD in order to include relevant tools and mechanisms to promote Integrated River Basin Management.
- UNSGAB and African key organizations will collaborate to support strengthening African countries' preparedness to withstand changes caused by climate variability and disaster.

The UNSGAB on Water and Sanitation is an independent body established in March 2004 by Mr. Annan, to advise him as well as to galvanize global action on water and sanitation issues which are central to the world's hopes of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The late Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto served as the first Chairman of the UNSGAB, which is composed of members of a wide range of dignitaries, technical experts, and individuals with proven experience in providing inspiration, moving the machinery of government, and working with the media, the private sector and civil society. More information on the UNSGAB members and the Hashimoto Action Plan are available at [www.unsgab.org](http://www.unsgab.org).