



N° : SEGL.3/B/ /04

GRUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

Press Release

For immediate release

Mobilization for the Water Sector Development in Africa

The African Development Bank launches the African Water Facility in Tunis

Tunis, 7 July 2005 – The African Development Bank (ADB) organizes on 8 July 2005 at Sheraton Hotel Tunis the African Water Facility Inaugural Governing Council Meeting. This important event will gather the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) representatives, the ADB President, Mr. Omar Kabbaj, the Tunisian Secretary of State in charge of Water Resources and Fishery, Mr. Amor El Abed, as well as the water sector's experts from the ADB, the United Nations Agency for Water (UN Water) et from the African Union in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as the international donors contributing to the Facility: the European Union, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria and France. The Governing Council of the African Water Facility (AWF) will meet for the first time in Tunis to discuss the Funds' priorities of intervention.

The African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) decided to create the AWF in the objective of mobilizing needed resources to finance the activities to facilitate and promote investments and development infrastructures implementation or water sector in Africa. The Bank has accepted to host the Facility and to take in charge its administration.

The AWF creation is a response to the dramatic water situation in Africa, but also to the favorable context resulting from regional and national level awareness of this issue. The continent suffers from low coverage on water supply and sanitation with only 62% of Africans who have access to improved Water Supply. It is also recognized that the level of development and exploitation of water resources in the region is low. While per capita water availability is higher than in South Asia or Western Europe; only about one quarter of the irrigation potential is being utilized; most of the hydropower resources remain unexploited. Indeed, if the water situation is currently most worrying,

the International Community seems to become aware of this challenge. In this perspective, a unprecedented worldwide hope of mobilization appears for the water sector in Africa and in the World.

The Facility is aimed to finance all the activities for the water sector in the ADB member countries, such as supporting regional cooperation and integration through development of shared waters; enhancing national and regional capacity; enhancing national and regional water knowledge; and, accelerating investments to meet basic water needs.

The African Water Facility, an African States' creation, will intend to respond to the immense needs of the continent. The great interest that the International donors already expressed in its regard is very encouraging. The Facility will try to play a crucial role in attracting more resources for water sector in Africa. African Water African Ministers entrusted the ADB, first development finance institution in Africa, to administrate this Funds. The challenge is huge for the institution and ADB must be at the level of the expectations. *“The Facility is simply a tool t reinforce the role of water where it should be, that is to say in the core of life* », explained Mr. Kordje Bedoumra, the brand new Director of the African Water Facility.

Water in Africa

- **Access rate to Water Supply** : 62 % for Africa (global average of 82%, 81% for Asia and 85% for Latin America)
- **35 out of the 55 countries** in the world with domestic water use of less than 50 l/person/day are in Africa
- **Water & Health** : almost half of all Africans suffer from one of 6 main water-related diseases
- **Women & Children** spend 2-6 hours/day, on average, fetching water.
- **More than 300 million people** in rural area do not have access to Water Supply or Sanitation infrastructures.

CONTACT : Sabrina Hadjadj Aoul– Tel : +216 71 10 36 98 – E-mail : s.hadjadjaoul@afdb.org

▶ Internal and External Communications Division– Tel.: +216 71 10 29 16 – Fax: +216 71 10 37 52 – E-mail: comuadb@afdb.org ◀

PRESS RELEASES ARE ALSO POSTED ON ADB WEBSITE AT: WWW.AFDB.ORG