



## **African Water Facility Awarded US\$12 Million Grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Advance Water and Sanitation Services in Africa**

**Tunis, July 19, 2011-** The African Water Facility (AWF), an initiative of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB), is awarded a grant of US\$ 12 Million by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to finance projects to advance water and sanitation services across Africa.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced this grant at the AfricaSan 3 conference in Rwanda as part of more than \$40 million in new investments launching its Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene strategy.

AWF's role is to leverage water and sanitation investments, which also includes strategic interventions aimed at improving the living conditions of an estimated 1.5 million non-sewered urban-poor in Africa through the provision of affordable, scalable and sustainable sanitation technologies and service delivery models. Fragile states will particularly be targeted for support, that is, countries where governments struggle most to deliver basic services, among other deficiencies.

“Access to proper water and sanitation services is a necessity” said Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, Chair of the African Water Facility Governing Council, also Minister of Energy and Hydraulics of the Republic of the Congo. “Often overlooked, the provision of sanitation is a key development intervention as it is shown to increase health, well-being and economic productivity. This is particularly crucial for the poor and vulnerable in the urban setting where rapid urbanization is putting extra pressure on services.”

“Deficient water and sanitation services in Africa are a problem plaguing the continent and taking a greater toll on underprivileged Africans” said Bobby J. Pittman, AfDB Vice President for Infrastructure, Private Sector and Regional Integration. “The AWF is committed to addressing this issue by promoting affordable, innovative water and sanitation solutions expected to expand coverage for millions of poor people.”

The AWF plans to undertake projects in sub-Saharan Africa aimed at supporting various sustainable water and sanitation systems, including fecal sludge management models along the value chain. Pro-poor public private partnerships involving local governments, service providers and grassroots/nonprofit organizations will be built for better service delivery. The beneficiary municipalities will share knowledge and experiences throughout the strategic plan period. Lessons from these projects will be synthesized and disseminated for wider replication.

“To address the needs of the 2.6 billion people who don't have access to safe sanitation, we not only must reinvent the toilet, we also must find safe, affordable and sustainable ways to capture, treat, and recycle

human waste,” said Sylvia Mathews Burwell, president of the Global Development Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “Most importantly, we must work closely with local communities to develop lasting sanitation solutions that will improve their lives.”

### **About the African Water Facility (AWF)**

The African Water Facility (AWF) is an initiative of the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW). Established in 2004, it assists African countries to meet the goals and targets for the water and sanitation sector set by the Millennium Development Goals 2015 and Africa Water Vision 2025. Its mission is to mobilise resources for water and sanitation in Africa by contributing to the improvement of water resources governance, increasing water wisdom, meeting urgent water needs and strengthening the financial base for the desired water future. Since 2006, AWF has funded 68 projects in 50 countries through both national and regional projects, including most of Africa’s fragile States. For more information, visit [www.africanwaterfacility.org](http://www.africanwaterfacility.org)

### **In Tunis, Tunisia**

Katia Theriault

African Water Facility, AfDB

Phone: +216 71 10 12 79

Email: [k.theriault@afdb.org](mailto:k.theriault@afdb.org)