



Position of the African Union for the purpose of the conference held by Forum for 21st Century on 29 November 2011 reflected in the first draft of the negotiation paper, regarding the global water issues.

The African Union would like to thank the Forum for 21st Century for initiating the discussion and organizing the conference on global water issues. While Africa uses only about 4 per cent of its renewable freshwater resources, water is becoming one of the most critical natural resource issues. The African continent is one of the two regions in the world facing serious water shortage. More than 300 million people in Africa lack adequate access to safe water. The Union express its appreciation of the opportunity to renew and refocus the attention of the international community on the water problems. At the same time we express our full support towards solving the challenges occurring in the new global scenario. After an in-depth analysis of the draft proposed by the Forum for 21st Century let us annotate it and include our suggestions as well. The African Union stresses that it supports all efforts to take part in making the global situation's performance more effective and that it sees the most important issues in assecuration of collective security in 21st century.

- ✿ The African Union welcomes the proposal of creating a world wide committee that would be dealing with global issues and would be an affective tool in enforcing the results that would come out of the negotiations.

✿ **Funding**

Africa's financial needs are much greater than its domestic resources; therefore foreign sources should be tapped. At present Africa lacks the technology and financial resources to develop its full potential. Concerning the financial contribution to the fund, the most members of the African Union, especially LDCs cannot financially support the fund. Currently there are 33 African countries considered as LDCs, the poorest and weakest countries in the world, held back by weak economies and weak capacity for growth. They are also countries which are particularly vulnerable to man-made and natural disasters, climate change, economic shocks and diseases. Apart from LDCs, all countries and territories in Africa are on the list of Official development aid recipients. These facts may help us to make it clear, that Africa lacks at the moment financial resources. In adopting the Millennium Declaration, in 2000, the world's Heads of State and Government identified a number of values, including tolerance and solidarity. We shall therefore, count on that new culture of international solidarity in tackling the concerns highlighted in this statement. It is hope of the African Union that future international support will be proportionate to the gravity and magnitude of the water and sanitation problems in Africa.

We propose, therefore, acceptance of the special status of the African Union, which represents the African countries as the recipients of international development aid. United Nations framework convention on climate change recognizes developing countries of Africa as being especially vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and they are classified as Non-Annex I parties. The Convention emphasizes activities of the Annex I and



Annex II parties that promise to answer the special needs and concerns of these vulnerable countries, such as investment, insurance and technology transfer. We suggest to the Forum for 21st Century the implementation of this existing model also in the committee dealing with water issues.

The African Union welcomes a shared input from the World Bank, that has environmental protection in its agenda, state governments and the private sector represented by the largest trans-national corporations that also take part in water pollution. We agree with the intention to direct 1.5% of the GDP to the funds created by the committee by the members except the countries being counted among the group of Non-Annex I, which was defined above. We appreciate also proposition, that 2% of the net earnings by each signing TNC shall be directed to the funds created by the committee.

Representation

We agree with the Forum that the committee will consist of a board in which all the member countries will have one seat in stable representation and decision making. We suggest the same status for the corporations instead of the proposed advisory representation as they should contribute to the fund with the 2% of their net earnings and play a significant role in the international affairs.

Concerning the organization and the work of the representatives, we accept that these representatives are going to be located in the committee and are going to carry out day to day decisions. They should be supported by staff members that are going to carry out day to day work. The African Union supports also the idea of the general assembly held every half a year where the heads of the government responsible for environmental issues are going to take part in evaluating the past year the upcoming year and approving the budget for the upcoming year.

Agenda

The magnitude of the needs in the Water Sector in Africa requires close cooperation between developing and developed countries. We highly appreciate the idea of the main role of the committee, which is assistance to various NGOs and the projects they are carrying out. We welcome The Forum's offer of assistance by creating of new wells.

We recognize that the primary responsibility for ensuring the sustainable and equitable management of water resources, in Africa, rests with our governments and peoples. The multiple challenges confronting our continent have led to the adoption, by the African Heads of State and Government of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The Ministers responsible for water resources, in this regard, have a special role to play.

We propose the close cooperation between the committee and NEPAD. There are many initiatives which NEPAD endorses and supports. Committee could assist the NEPAD in enhancement of effective planning and integrating water resources development and



The Model Conference Global Environmental Issues

Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics in Bratislava



Modelová konferencia Environmentálna sekcia

Fakulta medzinárodných vzťahov, Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave

management of shared watercourses. Committee could also support resource mobilisation for increased financial investments and capacity building in the sector with the view of attaining the Millennium Development Goals and the African Water Vision Targets. We stress particularly capacity building, empowering the implementing institutions to perform their mandates.

The NEPAD has identified infrastructure as one of the major parameters for economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa. Infrastructure in this context includes water and sanitation, energy, transport and information communication technology. The current status of infrastructure and in particular water supply and sanitation as well as the infrastructure gap between Africa and other developed worlds constitutes a serious handicap to Africa's production and improved productivity and competitiveness. Without addressing the water needs, Africa will continue to remain unable to feed itself and uncompetitive in global markets.

The framework for action of the African Water Vision for Water consists of actions under the following broad categories: Strengthening governance of water resources; Improving water wisdom; Meeting urgent water needs; Strengthening the financial base for the desired water future.

NEPAD's water program and the African Water Vision for Water could help the committee to identify the main objectives for its projects, which would meet the urgent African water needs. On the other hand cooperation with the sub-regional initiatives will assure the local approach to solving water problems in Africa.

We would like to draw attention of the Forum for 21st Century also to green revolution, which is needed in Africa. This revolution needs to be supported by increased investment in research and technology, and by favourable policies and institutional arrangements. Important is the support, mobilization of the regional and international scientific community and an extensive platform of partners to address successfully the enormous challenges ahead. Unsustainable use of natural resources is one of the main reasons for Africa's little or lack of development. One of the problems, which affect also the water cycle is deforestation. Deforestation reduces the content of water in the soil and groundwater as well as atmospheric moisture. With this example we want to point out the comprehensive approach, which is needed to water problems solving in Africa.