



Lusaka Statement on Water Integrity

Water is a fundamental resource for sustainable development. It is essential to economic growth, to eradicate poverty, to secure water, food and energy for a rapidly growing population and sustaining ecosystems for future generations. In most countries, water crises are not due to resource scarcity but primarily due to governance failures. Fragmented institutions obstruct accountability in a sector with high investment and aid flows, making it particularly vulnerable to corruption. Lack of water-related integrity incurs huge cost for societies, in lives lost, stalling growth, wasted talent and degraded resources. There is no sustainability without integrity.

The extent of the African water challenge was summarized in AMCOW's 2012 snapshot: 344 million people in Africa rely on unimproved water sources. Corruption drains billions from the water sector, while more than 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live in water-scarce environments, and 115 people die every hour from diseases linked to poor sanitation, poor hygiene and contaminated water.

In 2000, the African Water Vision 2025 named inappropriate governance and institutional arrangements as one core 'human threat' to sustainable water management: The vision called for fundamental changes in policies, strategies and institutional arrangements, for the adoption of participatory approaches, as well as for openness, transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. The importance of good water governance has been recognized in the preparations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in numerous international and regional declarations and conventions, as well as in stakeholder fora including the 6th World Water Forum, the Water Integrity Forum 2013 and the OECD Water Governance Initiative.

The UNDP-Water Governance Facility together with its partners UNDP Cap-Net, WaterNet, WIN and SIWI, implemented the 3-year Regional Capacity Building Programme promoting and developing water integrity in Sub-Saharan Africa from 2011-2014. Through partnership with ECOWAS, EAC-Lake Victoria Basin Commission and SADC, the programme trained around 500 water professionals. The first African Water Integrity Summit brought together 90 experts and stakeholders from 22 African countries and 30 in total, to share their experiences, lessons learned and identify integrity challenges as we move forward.

To build a water secure future for all, the summit finds

- Stakeholders across the regions have successfully pioneered initiatives for more integrity, sometimes in the face of strong resistance. Their courageous actions have created visible improvements for the benefit of their communities and societies at large. Decision-makers at the highest level should take note of their successes, demonstrate clear commitment to the promotion of water integrity, support integrity ambassadors and ensure that anti-corruption policies are developed, and effectively implemented. Condemning corruption in public is not sufficient when implementation and enforcement of rules is neglected, undermined or obstructed at the same time.
- There is no water integrity without water. Challenges posed by depleting water resources, fast population growth and urbanization, rapid destruction of productive aquatic ecosystems and climate change all threaten to overwhelm water management systems. Managing and maintaining the integrity of water resources is part and parcel of managing water with integrity.

Lusaka Statement on Water Integrity (cont.)

- Ongoing water reforms in many countries and regions in Africa offer a unique opportunity to improve the integrity of the water sector. Poverty and vulnerability to corruption are fundamentally linked; and integrity is a condition for financially viable and sustainable water service delivery. Therefore, water security, poverty eradication and economic growth can only be achieved if water policies go hand in hand with promoting integrity. Water integrity should be mainstreamed in all sector policies and institutions, in legislation, regulation at various levels, in investment projects and programmes, and in business models in water service provision. Organizations, including our own, need to consider water integrity in the development of organizational policies, strategies and action plans
- Participation of informed stakeholders and a strong civil society are driving forces for change towards integrity. Water governance has to be inclusive, actively carry the debate to weak stakeholders, and address the opportunities and challenges that come with the inclusion of the private sector. Data and information should be freely accessible, understandable and usable, as the basis of transparency and accountability. Clear results frameworks and integrity indicators need to be developed to support both decision making, and to monitor integrity levels. Basic standards of financial management and accounting should be required and enforced by all donors and fund providers as a condition for their support.
- The lack of integrity reflects a multi-dimensional capacity gap across all African regions: gaps in basic skills and capacities of local communities, needed for meaningful participation, in professional skills for informed decision making and efficient service delivery, and in technical skills for dedicated integrity professionals tasked with developing organizational frameworks, enforcing rules and building organizational cultures. Beyond personal capacities, institutional capacities present a significant bottleneck and hamper the ability of national and regional bodies to effectively coordinate their efforts. Investment in capacity development is required across all levels, for communities, policy-makers, administrators, water professionals and the private sector. The momentum created by the regional capacity development programme should be translated into a sustained movement and expanded to neighboring regions.
- Integrity challenges go beyond corruption. Integrity affects water governance in terms of who gets what water, when and how. Lack of integrity undermines how costs and benefits are distributed among individuals, society and the environment. It also increases transaction cost, and discourages appropriate investment in infrastructure. Procedures that ensure integrity are not for free; continuous communication of rights and processes to stakeholders is critical to enforce rules in big investment projects, as is real-time monitoring of infrastructure to uncover problems. But investments in integrity can reap high returns in improved revenues, efficiency gains, increased investment and growth.
- Regional bodies are well placed to act as drivers of change; raising awareness; linking and harmonizing efforts across regions; support capacity development, and nourish political will in member countries. They play a critical role in advocating for the inclusion of water integrity in international and regional fora, including AMCOW, the 7th World Water Forum, and the international consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. Future capacity development efforts should also include regional technical agencies and implementing bodies such as regional development banks, transboundary river basin organizations and regional courts.

The costs of inaction are too high to remain passive. The Summit and its partners call on governments, regional bodies and international organizations, the corporate sector and civil society to promote water integrity. The regional programme has laid the groundwork for capacities in the regions; now the momentum created by the first generation of African water integrity ambassadors need to be maintained, sustained and nourished, and build upon to ensure a water secure world for all.

Lusaka, April 2014