

High Level Panel on Water and Climate Change in the context of the SDGs - COP 21, Paris

2 December 2015

Remarks by GWP Chair Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss on the Launch of the expanded Water, Climate and Development Program for Africa

- **H.E Rhoda Peace Tumusiime**, AU Commissioner, Rural Economy & Agriculture
- **Hon. Amadou Mansour Faye**-AMCOW President, Minister for Hydraulic & Sanitation-Senegal
- **Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

In 2008, African Heads of State and government issued the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration on water and sanitation. The declaration expressed the highest political resolve, determination and ambition of African leaders to place water at the center of Africa's growth and development. African countries are some of the fastest growing economies globally. Water is key to sustain the continent's growth.

In 2010, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) requested Global Water Partnership (GWP) and its partners to support implementation of the climate change related commitments in the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration.

Specifically, AMCOW asked GWP and partners to develop and operationalize a program on Water, Climate and Development, known as WACDEP.

WACDEP supports countries to integrate water security and climate resilience in development planning processes, build climate resilience, and support countries to adapt to a new climate regime through increased investments in water.

I am very proud to report that GWP, under the leadership of AMCOW, has made significant progress on this mandate.

In the last five years, we supported eight countries to put in place national investment plans for water security and climate resilient development.

In Ghana, we work with the national economic development planning commission to integrate water security and climate risks into national and local development plans.

We supported local governments in Rwanda and Burundi to mobilize poor communities, women and youth to develop and implement local investment strategies and improve resilience of communities to impacts of droughts.

In Burkina Faso, we supported local communities to generate knowledge and solutions to reduce their climate vulnerabilities and address gender issues as part of climate change adaptation and food security.

We supported the government of Zimbabwe to develop a national climate change response strategy for the water sector, worked with the government of Cameroon to develop a national biodiversity strategy and national adaptation plan, and we are working with the Africa Water Facility to support the government of Mozambique in building resilience against urban flooding in two secondary cities.

Honorable ministers and distinguished guests, GWP cherishes the trust and support from the African Union (AU), AMCOW, river basin organizations, and regional economic communities in Africa.

We do not work alone. We work with partners. Alone, we would not achieve much. We owe the progress we have made and the results achieved to our partners.

We working at the regional and transboundary level in partnership with the Volta Basin Authority, Lake Chad Basin Commission, Limpopo River Basin Commission, IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS and other regional entities. In North Africa we helped develop a hydro-social economic model for the North-Western Sahara aquifer that supports the economies of Tunisia, Libya and Algeria. We worked with ORASECOM the prioritize climate change adaptation actions in the Orange-Senqu River Basin.

Honorable ministers and distinguished guests, although we have made progress, many challenges remain.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 5th Assessment Report projects that many African countries will face increased temperature, frequency of floods, and droughts.

Climate change, a burgeoning population, and youth unemployment continue to challenge African leaders to rethink the development paradigm, consider how to sustain economic growth, and ensure sustainable and inclusive climate resilient growth and development.

Migration within Africa and across the Mediterranean to southern Europe has reached crisis levels due to political instability and lack of economic opportunity.

Urbanization rates are high. By 2050, more than 60 per cent of Africa's population will reside in urban areas. More than 40 per cent are under 15 years old in most countries.

As noted by the IPCC, climate change compounds these challenges through recurrent droughts and changes in rainfall patterns.

Extreme climatic variability, low levels of water storage infrastructure, low utility of hydropower and irrigation potential, and gaps in climate and hydrological information undermine government efforts for sustainable economic growth.

Despite these challenges, GWP remains committed to support the AU and AMCOW to implement actions towards the 2025 Africa vision for water security.

We are encouraged not only by the progress made and results achieved, but also the lessons learned. Here are some of those lessons:

- The GWP Country Water Partnership (CWP) platform is a key success factor. CWPs enable sustained engagement and support to national water governance processes and strengthens local expertise and ownership.
- Capacity development plays a critical role in water security, climate resilience and strengthens on-going processes within countries and local institutions.
- Targeted efforts are needed to enhance capacities of economic development planners in Ministries of finance, relevant sectors and institutions involved with development of public investment frameworks that integrate water security and climate resilience.
- Support to project preparation is key to enhance institutional capacity and requisite skills for bankable projects to enhance access to climate finance.
- We need to step up efforts to strengthen institutional mechanisms for project preparation across the continent and explore access to innovative finance risk insurance, green bonds, pension funds and others.
- Evidence-based and practical adaptation responses are needed. Demonstration projects that are scalable, innovative and implementable play a critical role to galvanise communities and political support for improved water security and climate resilience.
- Gender and youth need targeted support to improve climate resilience, reduce inequality and ensure sustainable and inclusive growth and development.

Honourable ministers and distinguished guests, we have reinforced our belief in the essence of why GWP was founded nearly 20 years ago: Partnerships are key for progress.

Our partnership with the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ACA) hosted by the African Development Bank helped us leverage more than 13 million Euro in climate finance. Our partnership with UNDP, UNEP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and others helped us deliver support on National Adaptation Plans in many countries.

Our partnership with the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) generated tools and frameworks for water security and climate resilient development.

These partners and the lessons learned give GWP the confidence to welcome the recent request from AMCOW for GWP to expand WACDEP in Africa.

During the 2014 Africa Water Week in Dakar, Senegal, AMCOW requested GWP to expand WACDEP to an additional 10 countries in Africa.

On behalf of GWP, I am honoured to launch the expanded Water, Climate and Development Program in Africa. This is in addition to the eight countries that have been supported since 2010. GWP will work with its partners and AMCOW to define the ten countries from 2016 and support implementation up to 2019.

Ten new countries will be supported in project preparation, investment planning, capacity development, knowledge management and national adaptation plans.

Honourable ministers and distinguished guests, the global community recently adopted the SDGs as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For the first time in history, we have a global goal on water. This is significant.

WACDEP will not only support climate resilience but also promote the realisation of the SDGs.

In addition, I am pleased to announce that GWP is developing the SDG Preparedness Facility. This will support countries to implement the SDGs related to water and includes enhancing finance to water, strengthening policy and institutions, improving monitoring, knowledge and capacity, and strengthening partnerships.

I am also pleased to announce that GWP will partner with the AU, AMCOW, ICA and relevant development banks and commercial banks to strengthen institutional mechanisms for project preparation on the continent and explore innovative access to private sector finance, including climate risk insurance.

The AU commissioner, honorable ministers and distinguished guests, GWP cannot do it alone.

We look forward to collaboration and partnership with you and other organizations in our ongoing effort to support implementation of the SDG on water and the climate change related commitments in the 2008 Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration.

I thank you all.