

# GENDER AND WATER POLICIES IN AFRICA: Synthesis Report



water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Global Water  
Partnership



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# **Final report on Gender and Water Policies in Africa project**

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# PREFACE FROM THE MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION OF SOUTH AFRICA



**Nomvula Mokonyane**

Minister: Department of Water and Sanitation

Ladies and gentlemen, you will surely agree with me that South Africa is one of the countries where women contributed immensely in the fight against Apartheid and oppression, they have been involved in different protests and have participated in historical events such as the anti-1913 Land Act led by Charlotte Maxeke, the 1956 march led by Lillian Ngoyi, against the pass laws. Although the dream of those women has been realised many decades later, we honour them for their sterling contribution to the economic, social and political emancipation of the people of South Africa, in particular women. However, in the same breath, the Youth became the game changers through the 1976 Uprising that turned around the education system and advanced the liberation of the people of South Africans.

As we all are aware, Water is Life and Sanitation is Dignity, the involvement of women in the sector is therefore important in accumulating considerable knowledge about water resources management, including water consumption, conservation, quality and storage methods. However, efforts geared towards improving the management of water as a scarce resource and extending access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, often overshadow the central role of women in water management.

As part of a sustainable program to improve the participation of women in the water sector, the department has put an effort in identifying projects of excellence that are driven by women within their communities to be recognised at the Annual Women in Water Awards. The purpose of the awards

has helped in encouraging and involving women to come up with new innovative means to help save water. These women come up with contemporary solutions of water resource management through indigenous knowledge including developing new technologies.

Water must be appreciated, not only as an end in itself, but as a springboard to development and should be considered throughout the SDG framework, both inside and outside of the “water box.” As such, it is necessary to work in partnership with the countries and organizations involved in other goals of food security, risk management, energy, sustainable cities, health, and ecosystems, to be sure that targets relative to water will be linked to these goals.

It is easy to draft global goals, but difficult to implement them, especially when financial flows are stressed. Because of the all-encompassing role of water within development, there is no way to break the vicious cycle of poverty unless we invest

in water resources’ development and management of uncertainty and risk, along with water and sanitation access.

The conference will in various sessions be deliberating on a number of issues that hinge on the essence of gender and development in the water sector. These will, include amongst other, issues such as:

- Policy, Legislation and Human Rights;
- Gender mainstreaming in African Water Policies and Strategies, especially, as to how far we have come. It is my believe that working together we can achieve all the goals and objectives that as conference we have set ourselves by giving answers to the challenges that women face in this particular sector.

An enormous challenge lies ahead of us – such as ensuring that we build and sustain partnerships across borders and gender stereotypes as well as the development of a shared vision on water resource management and conservation.

## PREFACE FROM AMCOW GENERAL SECRETARY



**BAI MAAS TAAL**

AMCOW General Secretary

**O**n behalf of the African Ministers' Council on Water, it brings me great pleasure to introduce Gender and Water Policies in Africa, an important study to help advance gender and water policy on the continent.

The AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Africa's Water Sector was developed in the context of the African Union's efforts to support gender mainstreaming, within development sectors including the water sector. The policy serves as a guiding framework for AMCOW, AU member states and other stakeholders, to mainstream gender in their sector policies, programs, actions and investments. The Gender Strategy has identified seven mutually reinforcing objectives that should be pursued by all member states, partners and water authorities, as summarized below:

1. Policy positions on gender in the water sector in Africa supported

and strengthened through policy formulation and implementation

2. Adequate human and financial resources allocated to gender mainstreaming through strategic resource mobilization activities
3. Gender approach to implement project interventions at all levels within the water sector, including economic empowerment through equal access to water for productive purposes developed and adopted
4. Strategic research and collection of operational information on gender undertaken, produced, shared and used by stakeholders to inform evidence based responses
5. Human and institutional capacity developed to support gender equality interventions at all levels

6. Mechanisms to promote cooperation and coordination to mainstream gender in the water sector strengthened
7. Monitoring and evaluation system and indicators to support gender equality interventions in the water sector developed and implemented.

The purpose of this Gender and Water Policy Study endorsed by AMCOW Ministers

in 2012, is to examine the extent to which the AMCOW gender policy and strategy has been implemented in national states as well as in transboundary river basin agreements in the African continent. The study offers important insight to furthering the AMCOW gender strategy and we encourage member states to review and seriously consider the findings.

## PREFACE FROM WRC CEO



### DHESIGEN NAIDOO

CEO: Water Research Commission

It has been an honour for the Water Research Commission to support the study Gender and Water Policies in Africa Project, and we are grateful to our partner – the Government of South Africa as well as the various participants and stakeholders who contributed to its successful outcome.

Women are regarded as strategic users of water (WfGD, 2009)) meaning they know and understand water resources management from a quality, reliability, source and location perspective. It is important, therefore, that women are an integral part of the process when decisions regarding planning, delivery, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of water services are taken. In addition the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to women and girls' access to safe, affordable and reliable water and sanitation will in turn enable their access to better education, minimise their risks of gender based violence and improve maternal and infant mortality rates.

The struggle of women and men to access water services is a global phenomenon, and the rural poor communities are the hardest hit. The AMCOW's Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Africa's Water Sector is aimed at addressing these challenges. AMCOW embarked on a three year participatory process culminating in a stakeholders' forum which identified women's equity, economic and practical needs as being the priorities. Equity refers to supporting women with sufficient resources to minimise the amount of time spent accessing water and sanitation, thereby increasing their participation in decision making and management of water resources. Economic needs refer to the extent to which women have realised an increase in incomes generated through the productive use of water in the small and medium businesses or agricultural activities. Lastly practical needs refer to pragmatic ways in which women and girls have improved accessed to safe sources of water and sanitation resulting in reducing

the number of hours girls spend being away from school as a result of unsafe water and sanitation services at school particularly during the menstrual cycles.

It is important to view these three gender needs in relation to other challenges like access to land, security of tenure and human rights. The right to food and water become meaningless if access to arable land coupled with access to water for productive purposes is not planned for with appropriate accommodation of the needs of women and girls. Many poorly conceptualised programmes miss the intended targets giving rise to misconceptions about lack of women's agency. Rural development programmes in particular need to demonstrate greater confidence in women's local and indigenous knowledge of water resources management in order to better support livelihoods.

This report demonstrates the critical importance of research in bringing the bottom-up approach to policy formulation.

Evidence from the ground on the communities' real needs with regards provision of water services is critical to inform policy shaping and implementation architecture. The emergence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is important in emphasising the role played by monitoring in order for countries to know their achievements in improving their citizens' lives and livelihoods. It is our hope that Africans and the rest of the world will continue to value the role of research, capacity building and monitoring in helping us to achieve all the set SDGs and in particular SDGs 1 – 6 specific for the water and sanitation sector.

The successful emancipation of human society from the gender inequities will signal the change of fortunes globally to a more sustainable and prosperous world for the benefit of all.

# GENDER AND WATER POLICIES IN AFRICA PROJECT



**Dr. URSULA SCHAEFER-PREUSS**

Chair, Global Water Partnership

I am pleased to introduce *Gender and Water Policies in Africa*, an impressive collaborative effort across the African continent in line with GWP and AMCOW gender strategies.

Global Water Partnership (GWP) actively supports the Dublin Principle that women play a central role in providing, managing, and safeguarding water resources. Gender is a strategic cross-cutting thematic area that is mainstreamed within our new strategy, along with our dedicated stand-alone gender strategy to support gender mainstreaming efforts within sustainable integrated water resources management.

We are proud to partner on this initiative, because we know that gender mainstreaming into national strategies, policies and programs can lead to better outcomes towards achieving gender equity, and also for achieving water security.

This effort illustrates the variety of

circumstances in Africa with regards to gender mainstreaming efforts in water policy. It offers us important new information on the actual situation regarding gender and water policies at national level across the African Continent. This new information will allow us to build on existing efforts, share best practices, and assist us in focusing our efforts where gaps exist and where attention and action is needed.

GWP is grateful to the researchers, our partner organizations, and also in particular to our Southern Africa Regional Coordinator Ruth Beukman, for realizing this project.

For GWP, inclusiveness and gender sensitivity has always been a core value. There can be no water security without gender equity in carefully and effectively managing the precious resource of water. We hope this initiative goes some way in enhancing gender mainstreaming efforts and prompts further knowledge development and knowledge sharing in this important area.

## Gender and global principles of water governance

The gendered aspects of global water and environmental governance principles have been emphasized in all the international and continental principles and protocols on water, environment and climate change. The first United Nations Rio Summit on climate change and environmental sustainability in June 1992 recognized the role that gender inequality plays in the effects of climate change. Secondly the Rio Declaration principle 20 recognizes women's vital participation in environmental preservation and management for sustainable development. The Dublin Principles recognize that women play a fundamental role in water management and sustainability and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) urge governments to support gender sensitive WASH infrastructure and services. Gender is recognized as central to African visions on climate change and water governance in particular. The African Development Bank and the African Union underline the importance of gender in the African Water Vision 2025, which supports "an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment"<sup>1</sup> Gender mainstreaming in legislation and policymaking on water and environment is accepted as a fundamental means to ensure that women play a central role in decision-making about water and are ensured access to safe water sources and sanitation.

Women's equality in decision-making about and their access to water are twinned with the removal of obstacles to material aspects of gender inequality in Africa related to property ownership, equal access to material resources and poverty alleviation in households (Crow 2001).

Gender mainstreaming in water resource governance on the African continent is essential to ensure that women and men have equal access to water as a fundamental human right. Finally African countries must redress the gender imbalances in water and the environment in order to reach the 2015 Millennium Development goals associated with poverty, maternal health and girls' rights to education.

## African Ministers' Council on Water Gender Strategy and policy

In May 2011, The African Ministers Committee on Water (AMCOW) launched its Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Africa's Water Sector. The strategy followed a 3-year participatory process that involved hundreds of stakeholders such as government, civil society and donor organizations in 40 countries.

The stakeholders' forum identified three key gender needs that have to be resolved if African women are to be empowered and gender equality in water is to be realized. These were identified as women's equity, economic and practical needs. Equity needs refer to the percentage of time women on the continent spend accessing water and sanitation services, compared to men as well as the percentage of women who participate in decision making and management about

1 [http://www.netsafttutorial.com/fileadmin/DATA\\_CD/05\\_step5?SF28\\_African\\_Water\\_Vision\\_2025.pdf](http://www.netsafttutorial.com/fileadmin/DATA_CD/05_step5?SF28_African_Water_Vision_2025.pdf)

water and sanitation services compared to men. Economic needs refer to the extent to which women have experienced an increase in income generated through the productive use of water compared to men, and the percentage of men and women obtaining access to safe water infrastructure compared to men. Water. Finally practical needs refer to the percentage of women users of safe, improved water and sanitation sources compared to men; such as the ratio of girls to improved toilets compared to boys, and the number of girl hours away from school due to lack of safe water and sanitation.

These gender needs couple women's equal gendered representation in water policy and management with alleviation of poverty through more efficient use of female labor and time, for capacitation and income generation.

The AMCOW gender policy is developed in relation to the Integrated Water Resources Management process that emanates from the Dublin principles and as a key part of the African Union's broader efforts to support gender mainstreaming within its organizational structure and in the continent's development sectors, including water and sanitation. The Global Water Partnership (GWP), an international NGO supports AMCOW's implementation of the IWRM and gender mainstreaming. GWP defines Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) as "a process which promotes the coordinated development

and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems"<sup>2</sup>. IWRM highlights women's central place in water governance and use for economic efficacy. IWRM insists upon the place of all water users and stakeholders, including women, in water resource decision-making and policy, as well as the efficient use of water for the efficient, economic productivity. The IWRM's emphasis on women's key roles in water stresses the importance of the AMCOW gender policy and strategy and the related management and implementation processes to ensure its success.

The gender policy serves as a framework for AMCOW member states and other stakeholders on mainstreaming gender in the water sector policies, programs, actions and investments. It provides stakeholders with support on actions and approaches that incorporate the diverse needs and concerns of women and men, and thereby lead to equitable access, use and management of water resources in Africa. As indicated earlier, the AMCOW gender policy is based on international and continental protocols and commitments to achieve gender equality in the water sector and seeks to assist member states to meet these commitments.

The gender strategy provides a coherent framework that enables and sets out the

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gwp.org/en/The-Challenge/What-is-IWRM/IWRM-Principles> accessed 1 May 2014

processes that guide the implementation and assessment of gender mainstreaming and policy organizations undertake and monitor activities aimed at mainstreaming gender across different and sometimes competing users and sectors that have water as a critical input. The gender mainstreaming for Africa identified 6 objectives -

- 1. Mainstream Gender in Sector Policies.** African country member states assess sector policies and embrace best practice including strategies to support productive uses of water
- 2. Monitor and evaluate gender at country and regional level.** Member states collect sex-disaggregated data, undertake gender analysis and use outcomes for decision- making
- 3. Advocate for the mainstreaming of gender:** Partners advocate for the mobilization and allocation of financial and human resources (financial and human) for the promotion of gender in the water sector.
- 4. Build Capacity to mainstream gender.** Capacity built for sector stakeholders to identify, address and respond to gender issues in water supply, sanitation and resources management
- 5. Undertake research on the impacts and process of gender mainstreaming:** Research coordinated, learning and knowledge shared on gender in the sector in Africa
- 6. Use networks and partnerships to bring synergy to gender mainstreaming efforts:** networks and partnerships Strengthen and promoted to advocate gender issues in the water sector

## Background to the study

Careful studies across the social and economic sciences (see inter alia Van Koppen 2000), as well as a cursory gender analysis of the water sector in Africa show that women play a key role with regard to the multiple uses of water in and around households, in the use and management of water, in agriculture, and in small-scale activities that allow both men and women to grow more crops, vegetables and to rear livestock. In addition, women's water requirements extend beyond domestic needs. Productive uses of water at the household level include a range of small-scale productive activities that enable poor men and women to grow subsistence food, rear livestock and undertake informal micro-enterprises. Without access to sufficient and reliable water for productive uses in and around the household, people are excluded from a range of options that would otherwise enable them to secure their sources of food and income. The Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach recognizes that water is an economic, social, and environmental good that should be equally distributed to both men and women. Water supply services and infrastructure are economic activities; and women's lack of rights to land and water, as well as on development efforts, often negatively affects their livelihoods.

All the international principles and protocols on water, climate change and environment reinforce the role of women as central to the provision, management, and safeguarding of these natural resources. However, the gender gap in water management,

distribution and access are not fully addressed. Though women are defined as essential providers and users of water, the social and cultural roles of women are little known, inadequately understood, and their ability to pay for water is often assumed but seldom validated. Women's control over natural resources is limited because customary laws, and societal values and practices determine men as the 'guardians' of property, the 'heads' of the household and the decision-makers in the public sphere. In addition many women's control over water and other natural resources is more complex because of their intersectional identities as members of marginal ethnic groups or their lower socio economic status. As a result women's participation in decision – making may be further limited by these intersectional identities, and their valuable knowledge and expertise as indigenous water managers is lost. If gender

mainstreaming in the decision-making processes governing water is not ensured at all levels of scale, and the associated monitoring and evaluation processes do not inform policies in a well articulated systemic loop, then gender sensitive water policies and programs are likely to fail.

As a consequence to the roll out of the widely accepted IWRM principles, many African countries implemented some reforms in placing women in critical position in decision - making, at the ministerial level in most African countries. The assumption underlying the appointment of women to senior positions in water governance is that these reforms will trickle down to affect ordinary women's and girls' access to safe water and sanitation infrastructure and ensure their participation in decision-making in water governance at all levels of scale. Consequently, the envisaged indicators of such gender empowerment would be the



adoption and enactment of national gender sensitive policies, the implementation of gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation systems, the collection of sex - disaggregated data in the water sector. These gender sensitive systems of governance and implementation should ultimately inform an expansion of ordinary women's and girls' access to safe water and sanitation sources in all geographic locations with associated improvements in their health and economic statuses closer to that of men.

The African Ministers ' Council on Water policy and strategy to mainstream gender in the Africa Water sector was developed to ensure women's and men's equitable access to and use and management of water on the continent and to fulfill AMCOW's commitments to the international and regional commitments on gender and water since the Rio Declaration of 1992. The AMCOW gender policy is formulated to enhance effective, efficient and sustainable use of water resource management and informs the recognition that women play a key role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water on the continent. This policy also supports the Africa Water Vision 2025.

There are approximately 300 water agencies and associations across the African continent. However no systematic review has been done to assess whether and how women's participation in water management is ensured in state legislation, policies, or practices and whether or how women's participation in water management ensures gender equitable access to water for ordinary citizens.

## Overall aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to examine the extent to which the AMCOW gender policy and strategy has been implemented in national states as well as in trans-boundary river basin agreements on the African continent. The study examines the extent of countries formal commitment to the AMCOW gender policy and strategy, and how this commitment has translated into policy practice and implementation. The efficacy of such commitments requires us to look at the wider structural political environment necessary to facilitate the implementation of gender policies and strategies within the waters sector. Secondly we need to examine whether gender sensitive policies in water governance has been formulated, whether and how such policies have translated into women's representation and decision-making in water governance, the creation and implementation of gender sensitive targets, monitoring and evaluation assessments, as well as the capacitation of water governance officials across regional, national and local scales to ensure effective policy implementation and articulation of targets with decision making and monitoring and evaluation. Finally we must assess the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming reflected in periodic assessment of policies, using research, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

This review will have a special focus on the effects of impact and implementation of the AMCOW gender strategy and policy in regional and national contexts. Such a review will indicate whether and how gender mainstreaming is taken into account in national water ministries, water

management policies and practices and how such findings can inform the existing water governance processes. In addition the review sets in place a baseline study that will provide a reference for similar studies in future.

### **Africa – a continent with diverse climate and water sources.**

The five continental regions have diverse climatic and hydrological profiles, and water governance needs to be formulated in relation to this diversity. This ranges from water scarce, water stressed regions in the Horn, North and North Western Africa, to the central parts of Southern Africa. These regions experience desertification, erratic rainfall and frequent droughts. At the same time the agricultural sector, which relies upon available fresh water supplies is a major contributor to most national economies on the continent. In West Africa 76% of water supplies are used in agriculture. The major parts of East, Central and West Africa are well endowed with natural fresh water supplies and predictable, plentiful rainfall.

### **Fresh water governance, use and challenges**

In all the African regions examined here, major river basins are shared across national boundaries and potential conflict exists over national dam projects on rivers such as the Nile and Orange rivers with negative effects for neighboring countries located downstream. In addition lack of adequate water and sanitation infrastructure especially in post-conflict societies in North, West, Central and Southern Africa present enormous challenges to safe water supplies. High population growth rates and high

urbanization rates place additional pressure on urban water sources and infrastructure. Many countries on the continent such as Djibouti in the east and Gabon in the west have experienced some of the highest economic growth rates globally, with expansion in mining and secondary manufacturing industries. Such rapid expansion requires close attention to quality and size of infrastructure and proportion of water use by the private and public sectors. Recent rapid economic expansion in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Gabon, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Ghana require attention to water use and treatment to prevent degradation of existing water sources.



## Methodology

Five research teams assessed the extent of gender mainstreaming in the transnational river basin agreements and national water policies and governance in seven countries in each of the following regions – West, North, Central, Southern and Eastern Africa. The

research was conducted between August and December 2013. Research methods consisted mainly of desktop reviews of policies and decision-making in the water governance sector with limited interviews of water policymakers. The researchers for the different regions are presented in the table below:

**Table 1: Research team and countries reviewed**

Region	Principal Investigative Researcher	Countries reviewed
Principal investigator	Elaine Salo, Leah Chirwa, Netsai Matshaka	Principal investigator and co-ordination team
North Africa	Mey Ahmed	Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, Mauritania
East Africa	Sarah Muzaki	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda
Central Africa	Monique Yizbadek	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea Gabon
South Africa	Jacqui Goldin	Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
West Africa	Tagbo Agazube	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone

The results for the countries in the sample are presented in Table 2 below, reflecting their progress in gender mainstreaming in water policies and management. The methodology organizes gender mainstreaming in water governance into four stages of progress with the associated indicators, as presented below. Countries progress using the relevant indicators was summarized from the findings in the final research reports. The different stages and the associated indicators within each stage are described.

## Stages in gender mainstreaming in water governance

A supportive political and institutional environment is considered as the primary basis to initiate and facilitate gender mainstreaming policies and progress, in order to buttress and sustain gender sensitive policies in water governance. If this environment is not in place then no progress can be made.

**Stage 0:** Indicates the absence of such a sustainable environment.

**Stage 1: Low level of gender mainstreaming**

**Indicators**

A stable political environment,  
Constitutional prohibitions of gender or sex discrimination;  
Official state endorsement of international and continental gender protocols.

**Stage 2: Medium level of gender mainstreaming**

**Indicators**

Gender quotas set for women's representation in government and all other areas of decision - making  
Evidence of institutionalizing a gender machinery that consists of one or more of the following -a women's ministry, national gender policy and strategy, gender focal point desks or officers in water and related ministries

**Stage 3: Advanced stage of gender mainstreaming**

**Indicators**

Resource allocation for gender mainstreaming through gender budgeting process  
Monitoring and evaluation processes in place including collection of sex-disaggregated statistics and qualitative research in gender, water and sanitation  
Appropriate time bound gender targets set and continually evaluated through ongoing research  
Institutionalized feedback loops informing relevant gender machinery about progress in GM

**Stage 4: Complete stage of gender mainstreaming**

Extensive, sustained articulation between gender machinery and water, health environments demonstrated by institutionalized programmatic collaboration and planning to meet gender targets, and defines necessary projects and progress.

## FINDINGS

**Table 2: Gender mainstreaming progress by region and country**

Region and country	Stages in Gender Mainstreaming Implementation				
	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
North Africa	Libya	Mauritania Algeria Morocco Sudan	Egypt Tunisia		
West Africa	Mali	Burkina Faso Liberia Sierra Leone	Ghana Senegal Nigeria		
East Africa	Somalia Djibouti		Rwanda Kenya Uganda Ethiopia Tanzania		
Cntrl Africa	Central African Republic	Chad Congo Gabon Equatorial Guinea	Democratic Republic of Congo Cameroon		
Sthrn Africa		Zimbabwe Angola	Malawi Zambia Lesotho	Seychelles South Africa	

Progress in initiation and implementation of gender mainstreaming across the continent is uneven. The East and Southern African regions show substantial progress in gender mainstreaming in the water sector, followed by West and Central Africa. North Africa has the most countries in the very early stages of gender mainstreaming in the water sector. Five countries (14 %) out of the total sample of 35 countries had not initiated any gender mainstreaming in governance in general or in the water sector; 12 countries (34%) were in the first stage of gender mainstreaming implementation while 15 countries (43%) were in stage two. Only 2 countries (6%) of the sample South Africa and Seychelles were in an advanced stage of gender mainstreaming and showed signs of institutionalizing the practice in the water governance sector.

Our findings indicate that political stability, a strong commitment to economic growth with poverty reduction as well as the constitutional commitment to sex or gender equality and the endorsement of international and continental gender and gender in water protocols provide the necessary minimum requirements to initiate gender mainstreaming. Countries that are war torn or in conflict, such as Somalia, the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali with fragile and fractious state institutions are unable to begin to address gender inequalities

effectively. In Mali, the initial progress in gender mainstreaming in the water sector that had until 2012 included some gendering of monitoring and evaluation in water was disrupted when a coup d'état was declared.

If poverty alleviation is harnessed to post conflict national reconstruction, then such national projects inform the initial phases of gender mainstreaming as is the case for Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is primarily due to the feminization of poverty in these countries and the high incidence of female - headed households as men are recruited into the conflict. The preponderance of women in post war societies with international donor support for gender sensitive reconstruction projects inform the first stages of gender mainstreaming, albeit unevenly in the water sector. However these processes are insufficient to ensure continued progress in gender mainstreaming in the water sector.

National states' political commitment to a national gender policy framework, with well thought through iterative implementation processes are necessary to ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes institutionalized and normalized in the water sector. A well developed gender machinery at different levels of scale, that is institutionalized within the water sector and that is well articulated across the associated sectors, sanitation, health, environment land, agriculture are required to ensure strengthening and sustainability of gender mainstreaming. Most of the countries in our study are at the beginning of the phase to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in the water sector. As indicated above, most regions on the continent with few

exceptions have made some progress in the initial phases to institutionalize gender mainstreaming. Progress across the different countries is varied and uneven. During stage 1 of gender mainstreaming, such policy initiatives are in danger of being dropped from the national water agenda when states are faced with budget cuts or donor funding is discontinued. This happens when the benefits of such policy initiatives are not yet seen, because gender mainstreaming is poorly understood, or poorly articulated across the related water sectors. Gender is then considered to be an unaffordable policy 'non-essential'.

Gender mainstreaming in the water sector seems to be particularly challenging when water activities are governed in a fragmentary manner, across a number of ministries often alongside agriculture, land and environment.

In most countries we found that gender mainstreaming is limited to the representation of women in decision - making processes at the national level and sometimes at the level of local water user associations. Women's representation in decision - making processes is insufficient to ensure effective progress in gender mainstreaming within Stage 2 unless accompanied by training and capacitation especially of the relevant bureaucrats in the national WASH sector and the Women's Ministry sector.

In countries, such as Djibouti, Republic of Congo and Senegal, women's representation in national government is not effectively articulated with women's participation in local water user associations. The

women's participation in local user association is limited to poverty reduction mechanisms, and often seen just a means to meet international donor agency funding requirements. In such cases women's participation is not envisioned as a central process in the gendered empowerment in the water sector. Consequently local women are not considered as a target population for capacitation and training in gender mainstreaming or as important potential local actors in higher-level consultation on water and sanitation. Such oversight, accompanied with deep divisions in socio-economic class between women disrupts the necessary articulation of processes and personnel between national and local levels of gender mainstreaming.

Resource allocation for gender mainstreaming in the water sector is uneven across the regions and remains a challenge. Financial resources as well as skills and capacity are uneven and gender budget training and implementation are rare except in a few cases such as Egypt, Morocco, and the Seychelles. Gender budgeting was discontinued in South Africa in the late 1990s as state expenditure was cut. In most countries capacity in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are dependent upon donor funding and occurs sporadically. In cases such as South Africa gender budgets are associated with expanded social expenditure, and even antithetical to neoliberal economic policies. It is frequently not even considered as important in national water sector finances.

Gender targets and sex disaggregated statistics that inform water sector monitoring and evaluation have occurred to some

extent, in countries such as South Africa, the Seychelles, Ethiopia, Southern and East Africa. However it is not clear whether these targets and statistics are established across scale in the entire water governance and management system.

For all the countries in this study we found that gender mainstreaming especially in relation to women's effective access to water resources for economic purposes, is particularly negatively affected at the local level in rural areas because the governance of natural resources is decided by customary law that biases male ownership and authority. This is the case even if gender or sex discrimination is legally prohibited. Only in the Seychelles, where matriliney is customary, did we find that women's access to water resources in rural areas was unimpeded by customary law. Customary law dominates especially in rural areas, where local customary authorities are more powerful. Women have little rights to land ownership and to the water sources associated with that land.

Regional gender policies and protocols in the water sector assist in promoting gender mainstreaming in water governance at the national level. Regional protocols such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) gender strategy, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa which seeks to empower women, the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS) and the Southern African Development Community gender policy and strategy have influenced the promotion and implementation of gender mainstreaming in national governments and in the national water sector in West Africa

and Southern Africa. These well-articulated policies and strategies with their associated gender directorates and research networks constitute another layer of accountability to gender mainstreaming through monitoring and evaluation processes such as the submission of country reports of progress.

### **Gender mainstreaming in trans-boundary riparian agreements**

The research findings on trans-boundary river basin agreements are uneven across the research reports. However research

findings indicate that gender is recognized albeit unevenly as a central aspect in trans-boundary river basin protocols, or agreements across the five regions. Strong commitments to gender mainstreaming in regional economic communities such as the case for ECOWAS and SADC, as well as collaboration with international agencies such as Global Water Project in West Africa to implement IWRM do exert influence on the recognition of gender in these riparian agreements.



**Table 3: Gender mainstreaming progress in trans- boundary river and lake basin commissions by region**

Region	Stages in Gender Mainstreaming Implementation				
	Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
North Africa	Nile River Basin Initiative				
West Africa (28 river basins)		Niger Basin Authority Lake Chad Basin Commission Volta Basin Authority Organisation for the development of Senegal River Organization for the development of the Gambia River			
East Africa	Fourth Nile River Basin Initiative	Lake Victoria Basin Commission			
Central Africa	Economic Community of Central African States Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa Lake Chad Basin Commission		Convergence Plan of the Africa Forest Commission International Commission of the Congo-Ubangi – Sangha Basin		
Southern Africa			Orange Senqu River Basin Basin wide commissions for Limpopo, Okavango, Zambezi rivers		

Most trans boundary river basin agreements tend to be gender blind in joint projects. This is often due to the mistaken belief that large-scale infrastructure projects such as hydroelectric power generation are not impacted by or have gendered effects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The African Ministers Council on Water needs to pay special attention to gender mainstreaming in national water ministries in those countries recovering from conflict or other social instability to ensure that gender remains on the national water agenda and to initiate gender mainstreaming. An initial gender audit across the WASH sectors could initiate the process. Countries such as Djibouti, Somalia, Liberia, Mali, Egypt, and Libya are included here.
- Countries in stage 2 of gender mainstreaming need to be supported to reinforce ongoing mainstreaming projects and to implement the necessary capacitation and institutionalization of the necessary monitoring and evaluation processes such as time bound gender targets, the collection of sex disaggregated statistics at all levels of scale and across the related WASH sectors. Gender working groups could be instituted across the WASH sectors to ensure better cross-sectoral harmonization, and co-ordination of monitoring and evaluation processes and project.
- Knowledge gaps in information related to gender in the WASH sector as well as in trans-boundary river and lake basin agreements should be identified and suitable research projects should be identified and funded through national and international partnerships and in collaboration with universities and other research centers. Regional gender research centers such as the ECOWAS and SADC gender centers and desks as well as the UN Economic Commission for Africa Gender Centre could provide partnerships for such projects in each of the regions.
- Customary authorities as well as all members of local water user associations should be capacitated in the importance and skills of gender mainstreaming. Local women and male leaders could be identified, to be capacitated as advocates of gender mainstreaming in the local WASH sector and to strengthen the articulation between the local and national levels of management across the WASH sector. This will mitigate women's marginalization at the local level by customary authorities and laws with regards to decision-making about water, and access and use.
- Countries in the advanced stages of gender mainstreaming should be encouraged to periodically assess the institutional cycle of mainstreaming policies and their implementation to ensure that systemic articulation within the WASH and gender sectors is strengthened and eventually normalized.
- With regards to trans-boundary river basin agreements, stronger influence should be exerted on members to adhere to the gender protocols already contained in regional development communities and in the AMCOW gender strategy.
- Trans-boundary river basin protocols should be harmonized with national water policies that include gender mainstreaming as a key process.

## CONCLUSION

The incorporation of gender mainstreaming as a cross cutting policy and implementation process within a cross-sectoral water management arena is complex. Countries across the African continent are endeavoring to make gender a key aspect of water governance and policy implementation with uneven results. Commendable progress has been made in gender mainstreaming in the water sector in West, Southern and East Africa but more needs to be done in this regard in North and Central Africa. Harmonization of the gender machinery with mainstreaming processes across the associated water sectors and through levels of governance scales is key to ensuring the success of gender mainstreaming in the water sector. Political and economic stability are key prerequisite factors that provide the supportive structural environment for the initiation of and progress in gender mainstreaming in the water sector. Finally political commitment to find the necessary resources for gender mainstreaming and to work collaboratively with international and regional partners who support gender mainstreaming will ensure that this process is institutionalized across the continent.



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## ANNEX

### Ministerial Declaration

Adopted by Ministers meeting at the Gender, Water and Development  
East London, South Africa  
5 November 2014

*We, Ministers with responsibilities for water, sanitation, environment and development, assembled in East London, Republic of South Africa to initiate discussions in implementing gender mainstreaming on actions required to increase water security and sanitation dignity so as to achieve sustainable management of water resources.*

*We consider that the Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Action, World Summit on Sustainable Development Summit, Budapest Water Summit for Sustainable Development, reflected water is key to peace and stability and central to provide powerful multifaceted contribution in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.*

*We consider the equitable and sustainable use and the protection of the world's freshwater resources a key challenge facing governments on the road to a safer, more peaceful, equitable and prosperous world. Combating poverty is the main challenge for achieving equitable and sustainable development, and water plays a vital role in relation to human health, livelihood, economic growth as well as sustaining ecosystems. The outcome of the Korea Water Summit on Sustainable Development must include decisive action on water issues.*

*We express our deep concern that at the beginning of the 21st century 1.2 billion people live a life in poverty without access to safe drinking water, and that almost 2.5 billion have no access to proper sanitation. Safe and sufficient water and sanitation are basic human needs. The world-wide struggle to alleviate poverty must bring safe and decent living conditions to those who are deprived of these basic requirements.*

*We confirm our resolve to reach the International Development Targets agreed by the UN Millennium Summit, in particular the target to halve, until the year 2015, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water. We also confirm our resolve to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at regional, national and local levels.*

*Water is needed in all aspects of life. For sustainable development, it is necessary to take into account water's social, environmental and economic dimensions and all of its varied uses. Water management therefore requires an integrated approach.*

## **Governance 2**

*The primary responsibility for ensuring the sustainable and equitable management of water resources rests with the governments. Each country should have in place applicable arrangements for the governance of water affairs at all levels and, where appropriate, accelerate water sector reforms.*

*We urge the private sector to join with government and civil society to contribute to bringing water and sanitation services to the unserved and to strengthen investment and management capabilities. Privately managed service delivery should not imply private ownership of water resources. Service providers should be subject to effective regulation and monitoring.*

*We encourage riparian states to co-operate on matters related to international water courses.*

### **Funding Gap**

*There is an enormous gap in funding investments in water infrastructure, maintenance, training and capacity building, research, and data generation.*

*It is urgent to close this gap using existing resources more efficiently and with additional financial resources from all sources: public investment budgets, capital markets, and community based finance, user and polluter charges; as well as increased international development financing from public and private sources particularly for developing countries to reflect the acute needs in the water sector.*

*Resources also need to be made available to assist developing countries to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and to assist in adapting to the impacts of climate change.*

*In this regard we highlight the importance of a specific mechanism for channelling investments and financial resources into water and women.*

### **Role of the international community**

*We call on the international community to strengthen its commitment and its efforts to enable developing countries to manage water sustainably and to ensure an equitable sharing of benefits from water resources*

### **Capacity Building and Technology transfer**

*We recognise that capacity building and innovative technologies including the improvement of indigenous technologies are needed to efficiently utilise water, control pollution and develop new and alternative water sources in water stressed countries. We will support capacity building programmes and information exchange to ensure the effective use of human, financial, and technical resources for water management.*

## Gender

*Water resources management should be based on a participatory approach. Both men and women should be involved and have an equal voice in managing the sustainable use of water resources and sharing of benefits. The role of women in water related areas needs to be strengthened and their participation broadened.*

*We recognise that governments must immediately implement their international commitments to women's rights and gender equity in relation to water and sanitation; 3*

*All stakeholders must recognize that women's empowerment is essential to poverty eradication and environmental regeneration. Women, therefore, must be leaders in the development, implementation, and monitoring of viable initiatives and solutions.*

*We recognise that Local governments, utilities and the public sector must use participatory, gender-balanced and gender-sensitive working methods in developing sustainable, equitable and affordable water and sanitation systems, and water treatment infrastructure. Women must be key actors in the decision-making and development, implementation and monitoring of these systems.*

### Asserting our existing commitments

- *Towards the emancipation of women in Africa;*
- *To implement the AMCOW policy and strategy for mainstreaming gender in the water sector in Africa, that we signed in 2013; and*
- *To ensure that national water development and management fully align with our commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, the proposed Sustainable Development Goals, the human right to water and sanitation and the human rights to food, adequate standard of living, dignity, non-discrimination and participation.*

### Commit:

- *To accelerate the implementation of the AMCOW policy and strategy for mainstreaming gender in the water sector in Africa in our countries by:*
  - *establishing or strengthening national-level Gender and Water Desks as well as a functional Gender Unit within the AMCOW Secretariat by 2015;*
  - *establishing national targets and a monitoring and evaluation framework for each of the seven pillars of the AMCOW gender policy and strategy, including sex-disaggregated indicators for the African context, following guidelines of the UNESCO World Water Assessment Program, by 2016;*
  - *reporting annually to AMCOW on progress on each of the seven pillars of the policy and strategy;*
  - *harmonizing the reporting on the AMCOW gender strategy with other gender-inclusive reporting commitments and;*
  - *proposing to AMCOW to introduce a Gender Day during the bi-annual Africa Water Week from 2016 onwards*

- *To call on our fellow African water ministers, through AMCOW, to commit to the same commitments as those listed in the above by 2015*
- *To promote learning from each other and the promotion of good practices in the gender and water and sanitation sector*
- *To promote the establishment of a Global Women for Water Fund for a sustainable follow up initiative of the High Level Gender Forum held in Tajikistan on August 2013.*
- *To propose to AMCOW to designate a Minister to be the champion for gender and water and sanitation in Africa*

*We thank the government of Republic of South Africa for its hospitality and its determination to promote dynamic action on gender mainstreaming so as to promote water sustainable development agenda.*

