

**SPEECH BY THE AMCOW PRESIDENT, HON. DR. MOHAMED BAHAA EL-DIN,
MINISTER FOR WATER RESOURCES AND IRRIGATION, EGYPT
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE TECHNICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE
FRAMEWORK FOR WATER SECURITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT**

In November 2010, during the 3rd Africa Water Week, the extra-ordinary session of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) adopted a decision recommending that the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and partners operationalise the Water, Climate and Development Programme (WACDEP). The programme supports the implementation of climate change commitments in the Sharm el Sheikh Declaration and contributes to AMCOW's work programme.

In support of the implementation of the WACDEP Programme, GWP and the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) supported AMCOW to develop the Strategic Framework for Water Security and Climate Resilient.

The Framework is an output of the Water, Climate and Development Programme, an AMCOW programme implemented by GWP. The Framework provides guidance to countries on how to integrate water security and climate resilience into national development plans and investment decision making processes, with a focus on prioritising investment programs that can withstand the impacts of climate change under multiple scenarios.

On behalf of AMCOW, I am pleased with the support from our partners, GWP and CDKN who supported this work. I hereby launch the Technical Background Document that complements the Framework as part of our continued efforts to implement the climate change related commitments in the Sharm el-Sheikh Declaration.

The Technical Background Document and the Framework- is a key milestone towards the attainment of the Africa Water Vision 2025 of equity and sustainability in the use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment.

I welcome the development of this Technical Background Document that supports application of the Framework by providing detail on concepts, methods and approaches that underpin the actions and steps identified in the Framework. The process of applying the Framework itself will build climate resilience by strengthening institutional capacity, improving knowledge and understanding, and enhancing partnerships for action to improve water security and climate resilient development.

The Framework serves as a tool to help integrate water security and climate resilience into development planning, with a focus on prioritising 'no or low regrets' investments and financing strategies.

AMCOW invites you to work together to achieve the vision of this document and to ensure that African nations make the necessary investments and develop adaptive capacity to achieve future economic and social development goals, despite the onset of a harsher climate.

Thank you

Dr Mohamed Bahaa El-Din

Minister for Water Resources and Irrigation, Egypt, / AMCOW President 2012-2014

Proceedings



After the speech, the AMCOW President, **Dr Mohamed Bahaa El-Din** further made some observations emphasising that **climate change is not a reason for inaction.**

‘Climate variability means we have a cycle of climate. Whether climate change or climate variability, what do we do. If climate variability, do we do nothing. If climate change happens, must we take actions to counter the negative activity? In both cases we should

consider what measures should be taken regardless of climate change or climate variability. It needs to be based on information and good analysis of the data collected, he said.

Prof. Torkil Jonch Clausen – Sr. Advisor, Global Water Partnership, presented the Framework for Water security and Climate Resilient Development.

Prof. Torkil Jonch Clausen emphasised that ‘One cannot afford to do nothing, yet without proper information, one does not know what to do. We need to build resilience into our work and what we do. An overview of the framework was presented highlighting the 4 phases and key outputs from each phase. He indicated that the Framework will be used in a programme of AMCOW implemented by GWP, 23 countries to benefit in pilot phase with in– depth work in 8 countries and 5 pilot basins/aquifers.

This was followed by panel discussions facilitated by GWP Executive Secretary, Dr. Ania Grobicki.
Panel Discussion

- **Bai Mass Taaal, AMCOW Executive Secretary**

Framework bridges science/policy aspects. It is an important contribution to Africa’s growth and development. With respect to climate change, investment need build in long term resilience. The framework is providing the conceptual background to a larger project under AMCOW-the Water Climate Development programme. The policy and projects on the ground will be on-going. The programme is scaling up slowly. Looking at climate impacts and where the hotspots are. This includes exploring for opportunities to enhance investments in transboundary cooperation and adaptation.

- **Robert Bercher, Austrian Development Agency (ADA).**

ADA is contributing \$1.5M to the Water Climate and Development program. He mentioned that he was pleased with the progress made and the Framework’s focus on no/low regrets

investments. No / Low Regret investments can help address the equity challenge in order to avoid spending all for some instead of some for all.

- **Kathleen Dominique (OECD)**

OECD is working on water and climate change adaptation. Three salient points from the Framework that demonstrates the pragmatism of the approach in the Framework.

1. Emphasises the importance of making the economic case when thinking of climate resilience. It answers the question of action as well as inaction. Key to gain political action and prioritize efforts.
2. Approach to integrate risks from long term climate change with the other drivers of climate risk. Must think about both and all the other drivers that affect our use of water and exposure to environmental risk. – population,
3. A pragmatic approach that clearly communicates what are sensible ways to deal with uncertainty. It is clearly a complex issue characterized by uncertainty. How can decision makers take a practical approach to dealing with this problem

- **Sam Bickesteth –CDKN CEO**

At its heart the project doesn't fall into the trap that other programs fall into. There is an existing deficiency in water investments. Climate change is likely to exacerbate the deficit, but if we set up different programs, separate programs, we won't meet the MDGs. At the heart of our efforts, we aim to eliminate poverty, build resilience because the poverty exacerbates vulnerability to variability and Climate change. It is building on what we know. Better information is needed to make decisions around no regrets, but also around the particular trade-offs moving forward. The framework does a lot to help making the difficult decisions move forward. The infrastructure needed must be built with resilience and with low carbon, green infrastructure. Need to take account of opportunities to move to low carbon construction methods.

- **Dr Themba Gumbo, UNDP-Capnet Director**

Next step is to take this Framework through to capacity building. UNDP-CapNet with its African networks is poised to support the next phase of the program. Several capacity development products exist. The main challenge will be to ensure focus and target them to the 8 pilot countries and 5 pilot basins. 2nd challenge is to make sure the products are adapted to local circumstances.

Contributions from the audience

- **Sonia Hoes, ICA – Infrastructure Consortium for Africa based in Tunis at AfDB**

How ICA can contribute to program development. The role of the ICA is to bridge the gap between preparing projects that are bankable and mobilizing financing. ICA can assist in budget preparation, provide knowledge in project preparation, and mobilize financing. ICA members are interested in climate resilient programs. ICA and GWP are exploring what contribution we will make, discussion on going.

We need to make sure implementation brings on-board learning and sharing among the preselected basins. Documenting of experiences is very much important. It is important for youth and young professional.