



AMCOW Policy and Strategy

for Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa



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Supported by



Foreword

AMCOW President (Nigeria)

It gives me great pleasure to present the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa. This has been developed in line with the provisions of the Africa Youth Charter adopted by the Africa Union Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in Africa, held in Banjul, the Gambia, on July 2, 2006.

This Policy and Strategy, developed after an extensive consultation process, serves as the framework for addressing issues related to youth and to promote their active engagement in the sector. This also marks a new chapter in the history of the sector where, within the framework of AMCOW, the youth are being recognized as key partners in the development and management of water resources and sanitation.

There is a consensus that, while young people are among the most affected by the persistent problems in the world, they are frequently overlooked as part of the solution. The development and launch of this document is clear testimony of AMCOW's commitment that youth concerns and opportunities are taken into account in policy and programme formulation for the water and sanitation sector at national, sub-regional and continental levels.

It is gratifying to note that, despite inadequate resources or access to decision-making spaces, young people are increasingly taking leadership roles in addressing the urgent issues facing their countries in general and the water and sanitation sector in particular. In this work, youth are being supported by their governments, their communities, business and civil society institutions.



Hon. Sarah Reng Ocheke

Federal Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria
President of African Ministers Council of Water (AMCOW), 2013 - 2014

But far more important is that the youth of this 21st century in their various work and activities have demonstrated the capacity to take action and to mobilize their peers in a way that is qualitatively different from the capacity their elders had when they were young.

This power to be agents of change emanates from a technological source – growing up with computer literacy, social networking, immediate access to information and knowledge through the internet, mobile connectivity, and much more. Secondly, it emanates from what youth see their peers doing in other countries around the world, advocating for change but also taking action on the ground.

Yet this technical capacity does not tell the whole story. There is also a motivation for change that comes from a deep concern about the threats to their future lives posed by the degradation of the environment, the dying of water and other natural resources. The failure of governments to reverse growing economic and social inequalities, particularly the lack of access to safe water and sanitation among the poorer segments of our populations in Africa, motivates young people to do something about it themselves. Above all,

they believe in the possibility of a better world, a greener world, and they want to make it happen.

The African Ministers' Council on Water recognizes this power in the youth of Africa and has realized that embracing, encouraging and supporting youth to become key and full partners in achieving equitable access to water and sanitation on the

continent is critical to achieving the Council's goals. This realisation is manifest in the "AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa". It is only a first step, but it is intended to be the platform on which AMCOW and its many partners and member governments bring young people fully on board.



Hon. Sarah Reng Ocheke

Federal Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria

President of African Ministers Council of Water (AMCOW), 2013 - 2014

Acknowledgements

AMCOW Executive Secretary



Bai Mass Taal
AMCOW Executive Secretary

- May 2012: 4th Africa Water Week, Cairo where the outline was discussed by youth representatives as well as the AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee
- July 2012: Africa Youth Summit, Johannesburg, reviewed and elaborated the framework strategy, resulting in a first full draft strategy document;
- December 2012: Young Water Professionals Conference, Kigali, led to further consultation;
- March 2013: AMCOW TAC, Tunis, presentation and further consultation;
- June 6, 2013: AMCOW TAC & EXCO, Cairo, finalisation and presentation to AMCOW TAC and subsequently approved by AMCOW EXCO.

A number of players, including member states, youth groups, development partners and agencies have facilitated and provided a direct contribution towards the formulation of the youth policy and strategy.

AMCOW would like to thank those who have facilitated the various inputs that have resulted in this Strategy. First, we thank the leadership of the Executive Council (EXCO) of Ministers who approved and endorsed the Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa during their 11th EXCO meeting held in June, 2013 in Cairo, Egypt.

We appreciate the leading role played by the working group members comprising representatives of youth drawn from all the five sub-regions of Africa and partners such as WaterAid, Global Water Partnership (GWP), UN-Habitat, African Water Association (AfWA), African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS), and Nottawasaga Institute. The working

The process leading to the development of the Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in Water and Sanitation dates back to AMCOW's Brazzaville Declaration during its 6th Ordinary Session in May 2007, which called for development of an integrated strategy and action plan for the involvement of youth in water and sanitation in Africa.

The milestones towards the development and adoption of the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa include:

- 2008: AU summit that culminated in the Sharm el Sheikh commitments for accelerating Water Sanitation and Hygiene where it was recommended to promote programming that addresses the role and interests of youth;
- 2011: Multi-stakeholder forum on preparation for the World Water Forum, South Africa where it was agreed to develop a youth and water strategy by 2012;
- March 2012: 6th World Water Forum, Marseille, identified development of a youth strategic plan for involvement of the youth in water and sanitation in Africa as one of the nine targets on which to focus within the water and sanitation sector;
- April 2012: Core group consultations, Nairobi, prepared the outline of the strategy paper;

group facilitated various policy and strategy formulation workshops and meetings to secure inputs, comments, and suggestions from relevant stakeholders at various levels.

Representatives of AMCOW's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provided the much needed technical guidance together with Regional

Economic Communities (RECs) to ensure its relevance.

This policy and strategy document has been peer-reviewed by a wide range of individuals and institutions that provided extremely useful insights and input and AMCOW remains grateful to them all.



Bai Mass Taal
AMCOW Executive Secretary

1 Executive Summary

AMCOW recognizes the invaluable role that Africa's youth can and do play in promoting water resources management and greater access to water and sanitation; it recognizes their unique contribution as agents of change and rights' holders; it further values the special characteristics of youth that can contribute to water and sanitation efforts, including their capacity for creativity and innovation, their dedication and energy, and their ability to raise awareness and change behaviour through mobilisation of their peers and networking.

In light of this, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) adopted a "Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa" during the 11th Meeting of the AMCOW EXCO in June 2013 in Cairo, Egypt. The approved strategy was the result of two years of consultation with youth representatives and AMCOW partner organisations.

Challenges

The key challenges to youth engagement in water and sanitation are a combination of constraints in the social, political, economic and physical environment. Resources allocated to the sector are not enough. There is a lack of capacity, even in training institutions, low pay leads to skills flight, and budgetary allocations are inadequate. Poorly-resourced facilities make it difficult for youth to see the sector as an avenue for personal development.

Youth lack skill and experience, suffer from poor self esteem, and frequently come from disadvantaged social environments. Inadequate education, limited knowledge, an inability to access information, and lack of marketable skills compromise their ability to participate economically. Poor governance in the sector is often cited as a key challenge to achieving desired change. Where citizen consultations exist they may not cater for marginalised groups, especially youth. Access to financing for education and entrepreneurship is constrained, and financing for innovations even more so. These and numerous other challenges faced by youth must be taken into account in forging a strategy for youth engagement in the water and sanitation sector.

Strategic objective and key result areas

Youth must be seen as key stakeholders now and in the future. AMCOW undertakes to support youth participation in achievement of improved access to water and sanitation services and integrated water resources management.

Statement of objective: To ensure youth engagement for the sustainable development and management of the water and sanitation sector towards social and economic prosperity for Africa.

This strategy focuses on *key areas where youth have an advantage and bring clear added value as agents of change*. Building on the distinct assets and challenges of youth in development, the entry points for youth engagement are:

- mobilizing youth energy and enthusiasm for action towards *social and economic productivity*;
- preparing young people to build careers and play a productive role in the water and sanitation sector to ensure *sustainability* in the sector;
- tapping youth creativity and openness to change through *innovation*;
- ensuring that youth, as a large, vulnerable and marginalized segment of the population, have a voice in decision-making, and so to *improve governance and leadership* in the sector;
- Utilizing the social networking skills and habits of modern young people to promote a *cross-sector/broadened sector* approach to water and sanitation.

Programme focus areas

The strategy outlines indicative activities under each of the following programme focus areas.

Social and Economic Productivity: *To enhance social and economic development by investing in youth to play a productive role in development planning, implementation and monitoring within the water and sanitation sector.*

Sustainability: *To ensure sustainability by empowering youth through knowledge within the water and sanitation sectors.*

Innovation: *To promote innovation through recognizing and supporting the contribution of young people in the sector*

Improved Governance and Leadership: *To improve governance and leadership within the water and sanitation sector*

Cross-Sector/Broadened Sector: *To ensure multi-sectoral participation in efforts to enhance access to water and sanitation*

Means of implementation

The strategy maps out the various stakeholders and their anticipated roles and contributions in implementing the strategy.

2 Introduction

Youth comprise well over 50% of the population in many African countries; they also make up the largest cohort of the unemployed.¹ Such statistics clearly imply that sustainable development requires youth to be a core focus of development planning. At the same time youth energy, creativity and desire for change represent a huge resource, not only to make a significant quantitative contribution to development, but also to push qualitative change in ways of working, innovation and institutional reforms, including better governance, combating corruption, and building a healthier social and physical environment.

Water and sanitation are critical among these issues and at the same time present many opportunities for entry points for youth action, especially in the face of climate change. The African Ministers' Council on Water's work programme identifies youth as an area to be addressed and gives consideration to youth issues, but it does not define clear actions to address them. To achieve

tangible results, an integrated strategy and action plan needed to be formulated for the involvement of youth in water and sanitation in Africa. Based on this, progress of initiatives can be tracked within the pan-African framework for reporting progress of AU commitments to the heads of state.

Responding to this need, a participatory consultation involving youth groups and other key stakeholders involved in the water and sanitation sector in Africa was undertaken. This process resulted in a draft strategy that was presented to AMCOW. During the 11th Meeting of the Executive Committee (EXCO) of the Africa Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) of June 2013 in Cairo, EXCO approved the AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa and directed the AMCOW Secretariat to implement the strategy by developing youth programmes as well as youth water prizes in collaboration with supporting partners, member countries and RECs (EXCO/11/2013/CAIRO/14).

¹ Youth are defined under the African Youth Charter as persons between the ages of 15 and 35.

3 Background

a) AMCOW mandate and commitments to youth engagement

In September 2000, Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015 on eight priority issues, including poverty, hunger, universal primary education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal mortality and major diseases. For the 7th priority issue of environmental sustainability, the world's political leaders committed "to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water" and to reach the rest by 2025.² Two years later at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in June 2002 in Johannesburg, they also committed to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.³

In Africa, since 2000 there has been an escalating series of important declarations and initiatives on water and sanitation. In particular, the Africa Water Vision 2025, the eThekweni Declaration and the 2008 AU Summit culminated in the adoption of the Sharm El-Sheikh Commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of the Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa. In the preamble to their new commitments, the heads of state and government recognized "that water is and must remain a key to sustainable development in Africa and that water supply and sanitation are prerequisites for Africa's human capital development". Moreover, they candidly confirmed "that there is an *underutilisation* and *uneven* sharing of water resources in Africa" and that "not much progress has been made in Africa compared to the rest of the world to achieve the MDGs target, and that based on current trends

Africa needs to accelerate its efforts".⁴

Sharm el Sheikh commits to "[p]romote effective engagement of African civil society and public participation in water and sanitation activities and programmes". Furthermore, the heads of state committed to "[p]romote programming that addresses the role and interests of youth and women, given that the burden of poor water and sanitation falls disproportionately on women and children".

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) serves as the principal inter-governmental body on water issues and is composed of all 53 African ministers responsible for water affairs in the region. The council has the following functions:

- To keep the state of Africa's water resources under review and promote desirable actions of common interest to Africa;
- To facilitate sub-regional, regional and international cooperation through the coordination of issues relating to water policies and actions among African countries;
- To support international cooperation on water-related issues through development of common positions on matters of global concerns as well as cooperation in implementation of relevant conventions and international agreements;
- To encourage mechanisms that promote best practices in water policy reforms, integrated water resources management, food security, water supply and sanitation, and to assist in delivery of national, sub-regional and regional programmes;
- To provide a forum for dialogue with UN agencies and other partners on water programmes;

² United Nations, 2000, United Nations Millennium Declaration, A/RES/55/2, New York: United Nations.

³ United Nations, 2002, World Summit on Sustainable Development: Key Outcomes, New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

⁴ African Union, 2008, Decisions, Declarations, Tribute and Resolution of the 11th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, June 30-July 1, 2008, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, Assembly/AU/Dec. (XI).

- To promote, in the region, studies regarding climate change, develop policies and strategies for the management of water resources during drought and floods, and develop policies and strategies for averting water crises in Africa;
- To keep under review and constantly seek to strengthen the financing of the water sector in Africa;
- To promote sub-regional and basin-wide cooperation.

AMCOW's primary modus operandi is to execute the above mandate by working through partnerships with key institutions at the continental and regional levels. In pursuing a new strategy and programme for engagement with Africa's youth, it will be counting on the support of existing and new partners in order to achieve its objectives.

b) Past initiatives, AMCOW youth engagement

At the 2003 Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water, ministerial commitments included the following:

"Engagement with Civil Society: Ministers undertook to ensure that civil society in general, and gender concerns in particular, are taken into account, through consultation in policy formulation in all sectors of water, sanitation and human settlements."

At its 6th Ordinary Session in May 2007, AMCOW stated, in the Brazzaville Declaration:

*"At the national level, we recognize that the overall responsibility for the governance and equitable distribution of water resources, including assurance of access for the poor, hence water policy, lies with national governments, which remain important vehicles for implementing intra-African commitments including AMCOW's commitments. We are persuaded also of the need to include all stakeholders, especially women, **youth** and parliamentarians, in decision-making at the local level in carrying forward AMCOW's actions."*

While the role of civil society organisations has been acknowledged and is addressed in the existing MoU between AMCOW and the African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW), the role of youth needs to be elaborated. Representing over 50% of the population in Africa, as change agents, as a wellspring of innovation and new ideas, as networkers and motivators, and as the population that is going to inherit the management of systems that are put in place now, youth cannot be ignored as a key stakeholder in water and sanitation development across Africa. For the sake of sustainability, it is imperative that youth are engaged at all levels of development.

c) Past initiatives, youth engagement in water and sanitation issues

The first youth conference on water, sanitation and climate change was held in Kenya, from November 17th to 19th 2010. This event was sponsored by GTZ (now GIZ), Water and Sanitation United, ANEW, UN-Habitat and UNEP.

The conference was attended by over 60 youth participants representing eight countries in Africa. The youth represented youth groups, student bodies, and youth networks engaged in water, sanitation, environment conservation, communication, and climate change-related activities. The conference took place immediately prior to the 3rd African Water Week (AAW3), sponsored by AMCOW in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22-26 November 2010. Youth participation at this event was facilitated by ANEW and UN-Habitat and youth representatives were able to prepare and present a declaration to AMCOW at the African Water Week, encouraging enhanced inclusion of youth in the work of the council. A key outcome of the conference was a declaration (Annex III) that was presented to AMCOW at the 3rd African Water Week, encouraging enhanced inclusion of youth in the work of the Council.

d) Current context

AMCOW held a multi-stakeholder forum on Africa's Preparatory Process for the 6th World Water Forum (WWF) on 21st March 2011. The forum was held as a side event of the World Water Day hosted by the government of South Africa and co-organized by UN-Habitat and AMCOW in Cape Town. The participants agreed to a number of targets to be

addressed through the preparatory process for WWF-6, among which they agreed to develop a youth and water strategy by 2012 and an AMCOW Gender Strategy to be implemented in all countries by 2015.

The Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) of the World Bank, Global Water Partnership (GWP), and the Water and Youth International Movement were tasked with preparation of a discussion document, and subsequently presented a report in Marseille, which included a Target Action Plan and Commitments for preparation of the strategy. That paper, along with the report of its discussion at WWF-6 in March 2012, formed the basis for the establishment of the Core Group and its meeting in Nairobi to prepare this strategy paper. The Youth Statement to AMCOW at the 3rd African Water Week was a key input.

The Africa regional process of the 6th World Water Forum, 2012, identified the development of a youth strategic plan for involvement of youth in water and sanitation in Africa as one of the nine targets on which to focus within the water and sanitation sector. The process, involving wide stakeholder involvement, also proposed a number of 'solutions' to achieve the targets, including, among others:

- youth and gender strategic plans at the national level;
- creating opportunities for career development for young people e.g., through placement in reputable water and sanitation agencies;
- building water sector oriented technical and leadership capacity in young people;
- involvement of all categories of youth: politicians, professionals, and less advantaged youth in water and sanitation initiatives in Africa;
- involving youth in scaling up of livelihood-based initiatives around water and sanitation.

Subsequently a number of AMCOW partners agreed to constitute a core group to lead the process of developing a strategic action plan for youth in Africa. The organisations committed to this process so far include WaterAid, ANEW, UN-Habitat, UNEP, UNICEF, GWP, GIZ and the Africa Water Association (AfWA).

The core group met in Nairobi, Kenya, for a three-day working session from 18-20 April 2012. The session was supported by WaterAid and facilitated by the Nottawasaga Institute. The deliberations and recommendations of the core group formed the basis for a framework strategy paper. This paper was subsequently presented to, and discussed by, youth representatives as well as the AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee during the Africa WaterWeek held in Cairo in May 2012. Subsequently, the July 2012 Johannesburg Youth Summit hosted by the South African Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs reviewed and elaborated the framework strategy, resulting in a first full draft strategy document. This draft was circulated to key stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector across Africa for comment.

In December 2013, the strategy paper was presented and discussed at the 2nd East Africa Young Water Professionals Conference, held in Kigali, Rwanda. Despite its title, this conference gathered young water stakeholders from across Africa and other continents – 241 delegates participated from 24 countries in Africa, Europe, America and Asia – and so it provided a useful forum to gather broader input to the strategy. The final draft strategy, incorporating the input from Kigali and other consultations, was prepared by a group of youth representatives from the five African regions during the 11th Meeting of the AMCOW EXCO in June 2013 in Cairo.

4 Why focus on youth?

Demographic argument: Young people comprise over 50% of the population in many developing countries; they also make up the largest cohort of the unemployed; these statistics and many others imply that addressing development problems clearly necessitates making youth a core focus of development planning.

Developmental argument: Vast numbers of unemployed youth mean that a high percentage of the population are excluded from contributing to economic growth, but what is probably more significant is that a whole generation is losing the opportunity to develop working skills and experiences that are critical to future productive contributions to the economic and social development of nations; there is a clear need to focus on the transition stage in life to build human resources for future development in general, and the water and sanitation sector in particular.

Demographic dividend argument: By capitalizing on the youth population bulge for economic growth, the higher percentage of young people gives developing countries a unique opportunity for increased productivity and consumer market viability over developed countries where populations are rapidly aging.

Social/cultural argument: The energy of youth, their desire for change, and their creativity represent a huge human resource potential not only to make a significantly greater quantitative contribution to development, but also to push qualitative change in ways of working, innovation and institutional reforms, including improving governance and combating corruption.

5 Challenges for Youth Engagement in Water and Sanitation

The key challenges to youth engagement in water and sanitation are a combination of constraints in the social, political, economic and physical environment.

Despite the fact that most people, regardless of their occupation, age, social status and political views, will agree that water is life, the water and sanitation sector remains low on the continent's development agenda. Resources allocated to the sector are not enough. There is a lack of capacity, even in training institutions, where training programmes are not holistic, or they foster the 'silo' approach. Poor pay, especially in the government sector, leads to skills flight, mismatched skills and under-employment. While there is need to raise awareness on better water resource management and sanitation practices, budgetary allocations are lacking. This is reflected in poor and aging infrastructure.

Poorly-resourced facilities for career guidance in the sector make it difficult for youth to see the sector as an avenue for personal development. More resources are allocated to cultivate personnel for industries such as security and tourism, despite the large need for human resource capital in the water and sanitation sector.

Youth are commonly perceived as a problem rather than as a valuable resource. Adults often interpret youth energy as unruly. Shifting role models and evolving language often result in communication barriers. Lack of ambition or willingness to take on responsibility is a common complaint. There is a trend among youth to 'get rich quick', which impacts the choices they make – many prefer not to invest in long-term goals and look for short-term contracts that provide instant gratification. This divide between age groups leads to poor skills transfer across generations.

On the other hand, youth lack skill and experience, suffer from poor self esteem, and frequently come from disadvantaged social environments. Inadequate education, limited knowledge, an inability to access information, and lack of marketable skills compromise their ability to participate economically. An employment market where jobs are allocated on the basis of relationships and bribes rather than merit is demoralising.

Poor governance in the sector is often cited as a key challenge to achieving desired change. This is manifest in a number of ways. At the local authority level, councillors lack the technical and financial skills required to ensure service delivery. At the national government level, accountability mechanisms are often weak. Where citizen consultations exist they may not cater for marginalised groups, especially youth. The African tradition of not speaking against an elder exacerbates the problem.

Access to financing for education and entrepreneurship is constrained, and financing for innovations even more so.

Despite all that, many youth are conscious of their responsibility to themselves and their communities and are making efforts to address environmental challenges.

While youth are strongly connected through the growing prevalence of social media, they come from diverse realities and lack a platform that can consolidate and coordinate their efforts to address the challenges they face in accessing water and sanitation for themselves and their communities. These and numerous other challenges faced by youth must be taken into account in forging a strategy for youth engagement in the water and sanitation sector.

6 Strategic objective and key result areas

AMCOW recognizes the invaluable role that Africa's youth can and do play in promoting water resources management and greater access to water and sanitation; it recognizes their unique contribution as agents of change and rights' holders; it further values the special characteristics of youth that can contribute to water and sanitation efforts, including their capacity for creativity and innovation, their dedication and energy, and their ability to raise awareness and change behaviour through mobilisation of their peers and networking.

Youth must also be seen as key stakeholders now and in the future. AMCOW will undertake to engage the youth of Africa in encouraging and supporting their greater participation in the achievement of AMCOW's goals for improved access to water and sanitation services and integrated water resources management.

Statement of objective: To ensure youth engagement for the sustainable development and management of the water and sanitation sector towards social and economic prosperity for Africa.

Pursuing this objective in partnership with youth organisations and other partners will be guided by the principles of: the right to water and sanitation, inclusiveness, partnerships and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM).

While the issues around water and sanitation are broad and varied, and youth can be engaged in all these issues, the strategy development process has focused on identifying *key areas where youth have an advantage and bring clear added value as agents of change*. Building on the distinct assets and challenges of youth in development, as outlined in the previous two sections, the entry points for youth engagement have been defined as follows:

- mobilizing youth energy and enthusiasm for action towards *social and economic productivity*;

- preparing young people to build careers and play a productive role in the water and sanitation sector to ensure *sustainability* in the sector;
- tapping youth creativity and openness to change through support to *innovation*;
- ensuring that youth, as a large, vulnerable and marginalized segment of the population, have a voice in decision-making, and so to *improve governance and leadership* in the sector;
- utilizing the social networking skills and habits of modern young people to promote a *cross-sector/broadened sector* approach to water and sanitation issues.

The above entry points, where youth can clearly add value through their engagement in water and sanitation issues, lead to the following five key result areas for the Africa Youth Water and Sanitation Strategy.

Key Results Areas

i. **Social and Economic Productivity**

Empowerment of youth to actively participate in economic and social development needs to be central to capitalizing on the capabilities that youth can bring to the development process. They are key to mitigating the anti-developmental effects arising from the social exclusion, unemployment, and disempowerment currently experienced by a large segment of today's youth, in both developing and developed countries.

In the water and sanitation sector, youth groups can be mobilized to play a productive role in development planning, implementation and monitoring. AMCOW will promote strategies to promote and finance such mobilisation.

ii. **Sustainability**

Sustainability can be fostered through a stronger demand for good quality service provision, commitment to proper management of water

resources, and building the human resources needed to achieve these now and in the future.

AMCOW will strive to ensure greater awareness and understanding among Africa's youth about sustainability issues in the water and sanitation sector and their role in addressing them, and it will promote efforts to increase youth entry into professional fields in the sector. AMCOW will also ensure that the water sector agencies and professionals in Africa are more sensitive to the needs of youth in the sector.

iii. Innovation

The crisis in Africa's water and sanitation sector calls for new approaches and new thinking. An important source of such new thinking will be found in the younger generation, if the right opportunities and support are provided.

AMCOW will promote efforts to encourage young people to employ their creativity in addressing critical challenges in the sector. This will include recognizing existing innovative youth initiatives and technologies, identifying best practices and providing incentives for more youth engagement in the sector. It will furthermore undertake to ensure youth are provided with quality information about these challenges and possible solutions, including increased awareness among youth of AMCOW's own activities.

iv. Improved Governance and Leadership

In order to enhance youth engagement in the sector, and to ensure that their perspectives, capabilities and needs are fully taken into account

in planning and decision making, it is critical that youth have a voice and a vote in policy formulation and decisions on implementation. It is also important to recognize that informed young people tend to be highly concerned about rights issues, including the right to water and sanitation. They can be instrumental as watchdogs for the implementation of these rights.

AMCOW will promote increased inclusiveness and strengthened leadership of youth in governance mechanisms in the sector, and advance efforts to provide youth with the tools to monitor implementation of government commitments and to hold leaders to account.

v. Cross-Sector/Broadened Sector

Water and sanitation represent inherently a cross-sectoral concern, including health, education, finance, industry, agriculture, environment and climate change, to name a few. A major challenge in adopting integrated, inter-sectoral approaches to planning and implementing effective and sustainable water and sanitation strategies is getting these many players to come together on programme design and budget allocation.

Youth are concerned about many issues, and have a great capacity for mobilizing their peers through networking and modern communication media, including social media. AMCOW will encourage and support the establishment of youth networks on water and sanitation at continental, regional and national levels and endeavour to provide the tools youth groups and networks will need to address these cross-sectoral concerns.

7 Programme focus areas

This section presents a selection of activities that contribute to achieving the outcomes anticipated under the five results areas.

a) Social and Economic Productivity

Strategic objective: To enhance social and economic development by investing in youth to play a productive role in development planning, implementation and monitoring within the water and sanitation sector

In pursuit of this objective, AMCOW will promote initiatives such as the following:

- ensuring national budgetary allocations to youth activities in regards to meeting the water- and sanitation-related development targets (health, education, climate change, environment, tourism, food security, and agriculture, etc.);
- establishing an Africa-wide youth fund to support youth-led initiatives in the sector;
- promoting and creating an enabling environment and policies at country and sub-regional level to help youth establish their own businesses and build their capacity to effectively manage them;
- sharing information:
 - develop a “community of practice” or network aimed at sharing information and experience in WRM and water supply, sanitation and hygiene by young people;
 - create a web-based platform of all youth in water and sanitation initiatives in Africa, including a database of graduates;
 - undertake a scoping study to understand the existing opportunities and the general environment and context;
- generate, disseminate and manage knowledge on best practice and lessons learned in informal and formal sectors;
- undertake a scoping study on the existing opportunities and the general context of youth engagement in water and sanitation issues in Africa.

b) Sustainability

Strategic objective: To ensure sustainability by empowering youth through knowledge within the water and sanitation sectors

In pursuit of this objective, AMCOW will promote initiatives such as the following:

- Unpacking (interpreting) water and sanitation policy decisions and commitments in Africa for action by youth
- advocating for inclusion of water and sanitation issues in school curricula, formal education and technical training; setting up schools and community clubs (both urban and rural) to make people engage in water and sanitation issues, including hygiene;
- supporting career and professional development within the sector (developing youth water and sanitation leaders);
- linking young water professionals in the water sector with youth and youth groups in informal settlements to professionalize youth initiatives in informal settlements and create awareness of potential opportunities that exist in the sector;
- encouraging ministries from water- and sanitation-related sectors, such as education, health, tourism, industry, agriculture and others, and especially the youth ministries, to strengthen programmes to increase youth knowledge on water and sanitation issues, including:

- establishing skills development centres focusing on water resources, services and sanitation and hygiene;
- establishing networks for coaching and mentorship support e.g. coach teachers for local role models so that they can coach the students.

c) Innovation

Strategic objective: To promote innovation through recognizing and supporting the contribution of young people in the sector

In pursuit of this objective, AMCOW will promote initiatives such as the following:

- design and launch national, regional and continental awards for innovative youth contributions in the sector;
- a steering committee with regional representation should be established to develop an awards programme and identify prize categories;
 - Sector institutions (public, private and CSOs) should support the initiative at the different levels;
 - national platforms/networks should be involved in raising funds for the process at regional and national levels, and in promotion and management of the process.
- encourage the creative application of knowledge by youth through mentorship, financing schemes, and opportunities for showcasing and award programmes for innovative youth initiatives;
- promote youth engagement in green economy initiatives including the implementation and development of green technologies and equipping them with the relevant business skills to effectively manage them;
- support and promote youth engagement in research in the sector and encourage research institutions (especially the NEPAD Water Science and Technology Centres of Excellence) to address youth issues.

d) Improved Governance and Leadership

Strategic objective: To improve governance and leadership within the water and sanitation sector

In pursuit of this objective, AMCOW will promote initiatives encouraging and facilitating youth involvement in national, regional and continental level processes as well as within AMCOW's own structure through the following initiatives:

- National
 - Establish/strengthen youth desks in all water & sanitation ministries (should be a young person heading the youth desks) that will report to the AMCOW Youth Coordinator;
 - Ministries report to AMCOW annually on implementation of AMCOW youth strategy at national level;
 - Ministries convene a youth forum to appoint youth focal person to connect with country-level youth groups and report to the youth desk;
 - Ministries establish links with other existing youth structures and networks;
 - AMCOW to facilitate African Ministers to create policies that will allow young professionals and other youth to participate in sector programming and decision-making.
- Regional
 - Youth desk to play coordination and reporting role with strong link to RECs and regional TACs;
 - Convene regional meeting of focal persons to prepare action plans for implementing the AMCOW youth strategy;
- Continental
 - AMCOW Youth Coordinator who will be the primary liaison person with the national level youth desks and report directly to the Executive Secretary;

- Youth advisory body (YAB) with two representatives from each region for strategy implementation and monitoring;
- Interim body to define governance structure and process;
- YAB reports to TAC & EXCO during their scheduled sessions;
- YAB contributes to AMCOW report to AUC on implementation of Sharm el Sheikh Declaration and to PYU report to AUC on implementation of African Youth Charter;
- Youth Partners Forum coordinates technical and funding support to youth strategy implementation;
- develop a monitoring and evaluation framework linked to national initiatives with accompanying timelines.;
- Unpacking (interpreting) water and sanitation policy decisions and commitments in Africa for action by youth.
- Creating/facilitating dialogue forums at all levels between youth and leaders in government, local authority and the private sector on water and sanitation issues. Regional forums should be organized. During Africa Water Week an African Youth Forum will be convened, during which results of the regional forums will be shared.
- Raising awareness on the importance of the AMCOW youth strategy through national workshops and other activities; ensuring access to information on institutional frameworks, policies and legislation, to increase understanding of why things are done the way they've been done and how we can move forward.
- Promoting and advocating the right to water and sanitation in Africa through national discussions on rights and responsibilities; and building the capacity of the youth to efficiently monitor water and sanitation sector performance.

e) Cross-Sector/Broadened Sector

Strategic objective: To ensure multi-sectoral participation in efforts to enhance access to water and sanitation

In pursuit of this objective, AMCOW will promote initiatives such as the following:

- Building on existing youth networks and platforms linked to civil society for advocacy to provide a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation to work in support of the Youth Coordinator and Youth Advisory Board;
- mobilizing youth at all levels into strong youth networks;
- Mainstreaming youth and water issues in development policies, programmes and budgets;
- Encouraging continuous advocacy – two-way engagement through sensitisation campaigns and dialogue with governments and other stakeholders.

8 Means of implementation

Youth bring innovation, a fresh energy and commitment to the table. They will bring this generation and the next to the future. They provide a channel for continuity. However, they also lack key resources such as technical know-how, experience

and finances. This section maps out the various stakeholders and their anticipated roles and contributions in implementing the AMCOW Africa youth water and sanitation strategy. The following table outlines these roles and contributions:

a) Stakeholder roles and contributions

AMCOW at all levels		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide focal point for youth in secretariat • Facilitate youth participation at TAC • Promote partner engagement and resource mobilisation • Open up spaces for youth engagement and monitoring implementation of the youth strategy at national level 		
Youth and Youth Networks (at all levels)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource mobilisation • Dissemination of information • Innovations and implementation of programmes • Sector monitoring and evaluation 		
Level	Agency	Role
Pan-African	African Union	Policy formulation, legal framework and political guidance
	UN Bodies	Finances, research and policy, technical support, training
Regional	RECs	Coordination, policy formulation, conflict management and development planning
	CSOs	Coordination, mentorship, training
	Education Institutions	Research and development, capacity building and professional training/certification
	Media	Communications, information, advocacy, interpretation (language)
National	Government	Stimulate economic growth (infrastructure development plans, legal framework, political will and democratic structures), youth focal points in ministries
	Private Sector	Technical and strategic support, investments (green economy)
	CSOs	Capacity building, community mobilisation
	Financial Institutions	Funding, technical support
	Public Private Partnerships	Community mobilisation, stakeholder management
	Education Institutions	Research and development, capacity building and professional training
	Donors	Funds, policy support
	Parastatals	Implementation of mandates
	Media	Communication, advocacy, interpretation
	Water Utilities	Stimulate economic growth, service delivery, engaging youth in service quality monitoring
	Community	Stakeholder involvement, mobilisation

b) Communication, Advocacy and Capacity-building

The communication and advocacy mechanism will follow a three-pronged approach as follows.

- i. Raise awareness of the importance of water resources management (WRM), sanitation, and the AMCOW Youth Strategy at local, national, regional, pan-African and international level using the following strategies as appropriate: production of documentaries, campaign videos, flyers, developing a marketing campaign, holding community meetings, working with local radio stations, music campaigns, road shows, 360 degree campaigns, social networks, providing free messages online and on mobiles, door-to-door campaigns, exhibition stands and arts and cultural activities.
- ii. Facilitate dialogue among youth and between youth and other stakeholders through: targeting partnerships; holding global policy dialogues; promoting water icons; participating at events such as COP17 and UNCSD and holding youth forums at these and other key events; building communities of practice and a platform/website on all youth initiatives; using social networks to promote school projects on water and sanitation, promoting school project newsletters; participating in decision-making processes in the water and sanitation sector; holding focus group discussions on water and sanitation issues.
- iii. Build youth capacity through: mentorship programmes; conferences and workshops, demonstrating relevance of youth participation; routine visits to education institutions; raise awareness on policies. (AMCOW must ensure that African water ministries have a youth in their delegations).

c) Coordination mechanism

To achieve a coherent, cohesive and practical voice, it is important to first create a common vision, values, standards and targets by putting in place short, mid- and long-term goals through issue-based task forces composed of existing youth and youth-serving organisations which share a common mission with regards to water and sanitation in Africa.

Social networks provide a unique opportunity for mobilisation and they can be used to facilitate drafting teams. By creating a platform (Twitter, Facebook, Google website) for youth they will be able to exchange ideas on development and the challenges they face in their respective countries on water issues and youth participation.

To ensure increasing political will, an Africa Youth Water and Sanitation Coordinating Committee or at least a task force needs to be established. No resolution on the composition of this mechanism has as yet been agreed. Optional structures were discussed at the Johannesburg Youth Summit, and can be presented to AMCOW-TAC as a basis for further consultation. In the interim, the Core Group will work with the AMCOW Secretariat to explore these and other options for presentation to AMCOW TAC along with the strategy paper.

Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring mechanism will be developed with tangible indicators for each of the agreed actions and anticipated results of the strategy. This will provide the basis for the reporting mechanism as outlined in section 6d, above, namely for governments and youth groups to report on activities and contribute to the timely reports to AMCOW and the AU.

Annex I

AMCOW Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa

Action Plan -Project Concepts for Early Wins to Kick-start the Strategy

Program area	Objective	Overview of Activities	Expected Results	a. Lead Agency b. partners	Potential Funding Sources
1. Social & Economic Productivity					
a. Youth Fund	To establish an Africa-wide youth fund to support youth-led initiatives in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design mechanism (e.g. append to UN-Habitat Youth Fund) Conduct multi-stakeholder consultations Mobilize resources Launch fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth fund institutionalized Youth WASH projects supported 	a. AMCOW Sect & UN-Habitat b. African Water Facility	AfDB/African Water Facility; Norway; Gates Fdn
2. Sustainability					
a. Linking young water professionals with youth from informal settlements	To promote youth leadership in addressing slum WASH problems while enhancing understanding of these issues among sector professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young water professionals run workshops and mentoring activities through OSYCs Support youth groups to develop and implement action plans in informal settlements Young professionals prepare strategies to improve public agencies work in informal settlements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth-led WASH action plans and initiatives in informal settlements Young professionals promote strategies to improve public agencies work in informal settlements 	a. UN-Habitat b. EAYWPA, AfWA	Gates Fdn
3. Innovation					
a. Design and launch national, regional and continental awards for innovative youth contributions in the sector:	To encourage and promote innovation among African youth in addressing improved access to water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering committee to develop design of awards program Sector institutions lobbied to support the initiative National platforms/networks raise funds and promote the process Launch program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth groups motivated to promote their initiatives Youth-led WASH and water resource management innovations recognized and promoted 	a. UN-Habitat b. AMCOW, DWA South Africa, WaterAid	Gates Foundation

Program area	Objective	Overview of Activities	Expected Results	a. Lead Agency b. partners	Potential Funding Sources
b. Green economy initiatives II: biogas from sanitation facilities	To promote youth engagement in green technology enterprise initiatives in the sector and provide assistance in preparing of business plans	UN-Habitat supported business models for youth-run sanitation facilities and organic waste collection in informal settlements linked to bio-gas energy production for local businesses	Income generation, improved livelihoods and agribusiness skills transfer to youth in informal settlements through waste management for energy generation.	a. UN-Habitat b. SNV, NYDA South Africa, KiBO, Local Governments	Mastercard Foundation
4. Governance and leadership					
a. Institutionalizing youth in governance structures	To facilitate and promote implementation of youth policies and ensure youth engagement as well as monitoring and evaluation by the youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMCOW Secretariat promotes action by national ministries • Establish youth desks • Conducting of scoping studies on national policy environments for youth engagement • Convene regional meetings to prepare action plans • YAB contributes to reporting to AUC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth desks established in national Ministries of Water • Regional action plans agreed • Youth contribute to reports to AU • Report on national policy environment for youth engagement in the sector 	a. AMCOW, South Africa Water Research Commission, UN-Habitat, GWP b. AYT, NI, PYU, WaterAid, NEPAD CoEs, WSP,	GWP
5. Cross-sector/ broadened sector					
a. Communication tools	To promote and facilitate development of communication mechanisms that support information sharing and collaboration on water and sanitation issues among youth and youth groups across the continent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the position of AMCOW Youth Coordinator who will report directly to the Executive Secretary • Develop communication tools and interactive mechanisms • Organize social networking initiatives • Work with youth groups to develop key messages 	enhanced cross-border linkages and strengthened networking among youth working in the sector across Africa and the creation of the position of AMCOW Youth Coordinator	a. UN-Habitat, ANEW b. Google, GIZ, AUC	Gates Fdn, Google



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