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AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW)



**AMCOW CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN RIVER AND LAKE BASIN
ORGANIZATIONS**

Kampala, Uganda – 19-20 October 2006

**Excerpts of the Conference Outcome Relating to Institutional
Arrangements**

Outcomes on Institutional Issues - Regional coordination mechanisms

Introduction.

The African Union Commission has recently made attempts to establish a federation of African basin organizations. This is an indicator of an urgent need to forge an effective collaborative mechanism for bringing Africa's R/LBOs into the dialogue on water policy and development on the continent. AMCOW was formed to tackle the problem of water and sanitation facing Africa. It is a forum for *all* African Ministers responsible for water resources. Its mission is to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the provision, use and management of water resources for sustainable social and economic development and maintenance of African ecosystems and to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation to address the water and sanitation issues.

A strong need exists for building an institutional mechanism to support better cooperation among river and lake basin organizations at an Africa-wide level, as well as encourage and strengthen further agreements on shared water resources on the continent. Such a mechanism is called for by the Sirte Declaration, and is clearly an objective of both the AU and AMCOW. Several possible structures for such a mechanism were considered by the conference, with their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Thematic group 3, Institutional Issues, considered four presentations: relationships between river and lake basin organizations, relationships between RBOs and civil society, institutionalizing region-wide cooperation among river and lake basins, and the role of regional and international bodies. The presentations provided the basis for an exchange of views on the way forward.

a) General Conclusions

Views were expressed that it was necessary to take into account a number of strategic considerations:

1. The vision and directions embodied in the Sirte Declaration;
2. The mandate, objectives and role of AMCOW;
3. The need to mobilize the relevant continental bodies in pursuit of the goals set by the AU and in the mandate of AMCOW;

The achievement of the larger goals of the AU and the specific goals of AMCOW foresee the institutionalization of relationships with relevant regional bodies, and the forging of strategic partnerships.

Key considerations guiding the discussion were:

- In furtherance of its mandate and work, AMCOW has since its inception, forged partnerships or entered into arrangements with regional and international bodies (UN-Water/Africa, African Development Bank, UNEP, the EU, GTZ, etc.). The practice of entering into relationships with others has been instituted.
- AMCOW has also resolved to develop rules of procedure for enhanced engagement with civil society.
- ANBO and its members have been active participants in the respective activities of AMCOW. It is therefore appropriate that the issues to be addressed in institutionalizing the relationship be examined in a systematic way.

The thematic group, after considerable discussion, concluded that the way forward should include the following key steps:

- The establishment of a committee by the President and Executive Committee of AMCOW, to further elaborate this discussion. Membership should be drawn from the AU, AMCOW, ANBO, sub-regional economic communities ANEW, and could include UN-Water/Africa, and other partners.
- The committee will prepare terms of reference for their responsibilities for presentation to the President and Executive Committee of AMCOW, for forwarding to the Executive Committee of ANBO.
- The committee will prepare a proposal for options for a future affiliation between AMCOW and ANBO, taking into consideration the issues identified in the meeting. The proposal will be presented to the Executive Committee of AMCOW for review;
- The proposal as endorsed by the AMCOW Executive will be presented to the General Assembly of ANBO in January 2007. Whatever is resolved by the ANBO Assembly would then be submitted to the next ordinary session of AMCOW for their consideration, and final presentation, for information, to the AU Summit in July.