

WATER DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICA

PROPOSED THEME FOR THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE SUBMITTED BY ETHIOPIA

Introduction

Water is one of the cross-sectoral elements of the Sustainable Development Goals. The targets relating to access to water and sanitation, health, education, energy, sustainable consumption, food security, bio diversity conservation, and gender equality directly relate to sustainable use and management of water resources. Having less than ten percent of the world's fresh water resource and the most underdeveloped water infrastructure, Africa faces chronic water scarcity and the resultant human development shortcoming.

Water infrastructure development is the most critical intervention for Africa to ensure access to clean water, energy and to ensure food security. Moreover, infrastructure development underpins efforts for the conservation and sustainable water management. This proposal seeks to bring to light the situation of water development in Africa and to elicit solution-oriented deliberations on the development deficit. The theme complements the proposal of the African Union under the title "Unlocking finance for water investment to promote equity, efficiency, peace and sustainable access."

Situation of water development in Africa

Economic water scarcity in Africa is normally caused by a lack of water infrastructure (UNESCO 2020). As a result, in 2017, 73% of the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa did not use safely managed drinking water services (WHO/UNICEF). Furthermore, the two percent global rise in people without access to electricity occurs mostly in sub-Saharan Africa (IEA: 2021). From the 20 countries with the largest access deficits in clean energy, 15 are Sub-Saharan countries of Africa (tracking SDG7: 2022).

Alleviating this grave problem and ensuring adequate and safe water supply and sanitation services, food security and access to renewable energy depends on effective policies, increased investment and financing

for development of new infrastructures and improvement of existing ones.

Africa's plans for water development

Water development is at the heart of Agenda 2063. The very first aspiration under Agenda 2063 provides, “Africa shall have equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment”. It also envisages, by 2063, African countries will be amongst the best performers in quality-of-life measures, including in provision of water and sanitation.

Furthermore, effective interconnection of water pipelines is an element of the continental integration agenda. To attain this objective, the African Union gave greater focus for water projects by devising water development projects, including hydro-electric and multi-purpose infrastructures. These projects constitute, a third of the fifty-two projects under PIDA (the project on Infrastructure developments in Africa). The full realization of these projects depends on effective policies, adequate investment and concerted cooperation.

Expectations from the interactive dialogue

The interactive dialogue on water infrastructure development in Africa is expected to:

- allow substantive deliberations and sharing of experiences between national governments, regional organizations, global and regional financial institutions on the water sector investment.
- provide an opportunity to take stock of the policy and financial performances and shortcomings.
- Enable focused deliberation on creative solutions for the technical and financial challenges;
- encourage practical measures by national, regional and international actors, to bridge the development deficit in the water sector.