



*...a 20-year story of service to
Africa's water and sanitation sector.*

AMCOW
Story



AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER

The Journey



i → The journey so far...

AMCOW at 20 Story: A 20-year story of service to Africa's water and sanitation sector.

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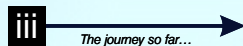
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AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER

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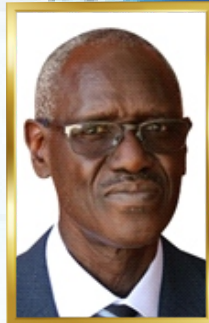
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Praises about AMCOW



"When we were creating AMCOW, the simple idea was to establish an indigenous and independent body that will direct African water affairs, bringing our leaders to discuss and liaise with relevant agencies to provide our people with adequate water services." **Barrister Mukhtari Shehu Shagari: First President of AMCOW former Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria.**



"AMCOW is indeed an excellent initiative. It is such an institution that no other continent has created and sustained successfully. It is significant and unique, and we must highlight the uniqueness for the world to see. As we organise the 9th World Water Forum, AMCOW should have its Pavilion and host other African institutions. We should give AMCOW significant participation as it celebrates its 20th Anniversary. **Abdoulaye Sene.**



"Whenever you see an AMCOW Executive Secretary, you are looking at 55 African Countries. So, this is not a joke; we are saddled with a huge responsibility – considering our Continent and water's value to human existence and development." **Bai-mass Taal: First Substantive Executive Secretary of AMCOW**



Foreword



Hon. Carl Hermann Gustav Schlettwein
Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform,
Republic of Namibia and AMCOW President

Establishing AMCOW has strengthened the mobilisation of relevant stakeholders for appropriate change in Africa's water sector because of its platform to bring efforts together. AMCOW brings together government ministries responsible for water and sanitation, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Rivers and Lake Basins (RLB) and other global sector players for a joint effort toward sustainable water and sanitation development in Africa.

We appreciate the founding leaders of AMCOW for the efforts they put into establishing this kind of an institution. Their aspiration inspires us, as does the foresight displayed strategically to find lasting solutions to Africa's water challenges and ensure sustainable socio-economic development in our environment. Although we may not have reached where we want to be, we agree that they have stimulated growth and development by setting an example for younger and emerging generations to follow.

From the beginning, our founding leaders had the vision of an Africa where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment. To drive the achievement of this vision, the African Union Heads of States and Governments, thus, mandated AMCOW to monitor and report to the A.U. Commission on water and sanitation status in the Continent. This mandate, therefore, placed AMCOW in a strategic position - a leading voice on water issues in the Continent.

AMCOW, therefore, works 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

AMCOW at 20 Story narrates the tale of our journey and where we are today.

This book illustrates AMCOW's assurance and accountability to Africans and the global water sector. Our goal is for you to see that the Ministerial Conference established in 2002 is evolving and eager to improve its services to Africa. The AMCOW Story may not be as complete as it should be, but it provides enough information for anyone to understand AMCOW until the next edition. It inspires the mind to see how this great institution has evolved over the years and the purpose it is meant to achieve. AMCOW's stakeholders would wonder as they read and discover bits and pieces of tales that they had never heard about AMCOW.

As you read, one thing should come to mind for every Member State's citizen – AMCOW belongs to us and would be helpful to us if we raise the flag high.

Acknowledgement

The AMCOW at 20 Story could not have been possible without the support of several exceptional individuals and organisations that have conceptualised and implemented the idea.

First, I want to thank my predecessor, Dr Canisius Kanangire, for envisaging and voicing the idea of telling the AMCOW story to preserve the legacy of our dear founding leaders whom you will read about in this book. I thank all AMCOW staff who have worked tirelessly to contribute the fragments of stories to the best of their knowledge. I want to mention Mr Joe Adeleye, Mr Kitchinme Bawa, Mr Patrice Leumeni, Mr Emmanuel Uguru and Mr Bala Tuham for their contributions to the AMCOW Story.

I will not fail to highlight the efforts made by Mr Obinna Richfield Anah, who spent several days researching, asking questions and compiling the whole story, being AMCOW's Knowledge Management and Information Sharing Officer at the time.

AMCOW greatly appreciates the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), which has documented reports and stories of AMCOW's creation and evolution over the years up to 2009. We have drawn several historical records from their archives.

I want to thank Dr Stephen Max Donkor especially. He reached out to us when he saw our adverts about the AMCOW at 20 celebrations and provided information about Mr Halifa Drammeh and his role in establishing AMCOW.

I believe that this is just the beginning of more editions to come.
I wish you an exciting read.

Dr Rashid Mbaziira
AMCOW Executive Secretary



The President Of The Federal Republic Of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Gcfr Having A Group Photograph With The Delegates At The African Minisrers Council On Water (amcow) Meeting April 29-1st May, 2002

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the African Ministers' Council on Water, which started as a dream for a few African leaders, has evolved into a unique continental platform for convening decision-makers and professionals who determine the future of the Continent's water sector.

The African Union's Heads of State and Government's mandates capacitates AMCOW to cover the Continent's member states, regional economic communities and river and lake basin organisations - which play very economical and developmental roles. AMCOW has been given the commensurate capacity and clear position to be a think tank for Africa, a unifier, guide, and voice on global water and sanitation issues.

The idea of documenting and telling AMCOW's Story during the 20th Anniversary is to appreciate the efforts of its founding leaders and demonstrate its potential stemming from the critical role that it plays. AMCOW at 20 Story aims to narrate what AMCOW is, how it was created, who created it, and why it was created. Also, to tell stories of some of its milestones, its structure, achievements and aspirations. As you read, you will see images and names of great individuals who forged and drove this organisation to the place where it is today. You will read about their contributions and appreciate them.

It is expected that this document will provide some of the specific information and knowledge that African water professionals and their partners need to know about the Continent's ministerial conference on water, AMCOW.

The history of AMCOW

Laying the foundation

In 1998, the U.N. agencies recommended the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to chair the Water Working Group of the United Nations System-wide Initiative on Africa (UNZIA). Working with other co-chairs, UNEP was requested to develop a strategy for consolidating the group's work progress.

The agencies asked the working group (water cluster) of the UNZIA, under the leadership of the co-chairs (UNEP, World Bank and World Meteorological Organization (WMO), to take the necessary steps to "explore the feasibility of organising a regional ministerial forum on water" in Africa.

Interestingly, the African Union launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at a July 2001 summit meeting of African Heads of state. They called on governments throughout the Continent to develop specific responses on the implementation. They asked ministers responsible for various sectors to devise strategies for achieving the goals of NEPAD.

In considering the centrality of water resources in sustainable development, the summit recognised the critical role of the Ministers responsible for water in Africa and outlined the following objectives toward dealing with water and sanitation as the need to:

1. Plan and manage water resources to become a basis for national and regional cooperation and development,
2. Cooperate on shared rivers among member states and
3. Ensure sustainable access to safe and adequate clean water supply and sanitation, especially for the poor.

It was clear that several elements would be critical to construct an effective mechanism for regional cooperation and the development of water resources. Governments needed to reach a consensus on the relevant structure, which would demand the more active participation of ministers in the discussions—also, the process required clear steps to yield the desired outcome.

Ministers in the regions organised the first informal consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, to discuss the formation of a regional forum of water ministers in Africa. This engagement led to the beginning of an extensive dialogue that would lead to the founding of AMCOW within the context of mounting global concern about Africa and the need for African countries to take the lead in addressing the Continent's numerous development problems.



The dais during PANAFCON II L-R: Olushola Sodeko, AU; Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, AMCOW-6 President; Bai-Mass Tal, Executive Secretary, AMCOW; and Halifah Drammeh, UNEP and UN-Water/Africa

Conception and proposal of the idea – AMCOW

The idea of AMCOW was born at a half-day Africa Caucus at the 2nd World Water Forum at The Hague, Netherlands, in March 2000. The African Water Vision 2025 got launched at the Caucus, which many African Ministers of Water attended and, more significantly, the top leadership of the three African Continental Institutions, including:

- a. Dr K.Y Amoako of UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA),
- b. Mr Omar Kabbaj, President of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and
- c. The Deputy Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) representing Mr Salim Salim Th Chair).

These three heads of regional organisations demanded that the vision be followed up and presented to the next OAU Summit for adoption. This direction led to the formation of the African Water Task Force (AWTF) with representatives from all the Regional Organisations. Chaired by Professor Albert Wright (then with the World Bank) and including Dr Stephen Max Donkor, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Mr Halifa Drammeh (UNEP), Mr Shehu Yahaya (AfDB), Dr Edward Clinton (OAU) and others.

The AWTF met to consider how to get the AWW 2025 on the agenda of the OAU Summit in Lome, which was due in June 2000; due to procedural constraints, this attempt did not succeed.

At this juncture, Halifa Drammeh (a.k.a. The Emperor) proposed forming a Council of African Ministers to adopt the AWW 2025, own it, and promote its adoption by the OAU Summit. He managed to raise a small grant of 20,000USD from UNEP and invited five key Ministers from the five sub-regions of Africa for the first preparatory meeting at UNEP in Nairobi. These Ministers were HE Abu Zeid of Egypt, HE Monyane Moleleki of Lesotho, HE Shehu Shagari of Nigeria, HE Macky Sall of Senegal and HE Ronnie Kasrils of South Africa. They not only met to assume ownership of the AWW 2025 but decided to formalise the Ministers Council with the support of the African Water task Force as its Technical Advisory Body.

They further tasked the AWTF to prepare Africa's contribution on the water to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) scheduled to be held in South Africa in 2002. This effort led to the first African Regional Conference in setting priorities for the Water Sector in February 2002 and immediately followed by the formal Launch of AMCOW in April 2002.

One anecdote worth mentioning is the name AMCOW. *"In an informal bouncing of potential terms with Halifa and other members of the AWTF, he proposed the name AMCOW using AMCEN for Environment as an example. The rest is history",* said Dr Stephen Donkor.

Where it began

At the margins of the Bonn International Conference on Freshwater (3-7 December 2001), ministers and representatives from 23 African countries held further intensive consultations. They decided to establish an African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW), stating that *"such a forum will enable our region to facilitate the development of common perspectives and positions on the agenda items of major international conferences."*

It was after these consultations that these leaders launched AMCOW formerly.

How it happened

AMCOW was formally launched in Abuja in April 2002 with the Abuja Declaration. Thus, the Abuja Declaration culminated in a protracted process to forge and formalise a coordination structure for Africa's water policy dialogue and policy. From 29-30 April 2002, ministers responsible for water in 41 African countries met in Abuja, Nigeria, and formed the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW). The idea was to promote cooperation, security, socio-economic development, and poverty eradication by managing water resources and providing water supply services.



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The journey so far... →

See the Nile River - the longest river in the world,
<http://worldtraveland.com/blog/nile-river-facts/>



The Mandate

AMCOW's 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.

AMCOW's functions

AMCOW's functions include to:



Keep the state of Africa's water under review and promote desirable actions of common interest to Africa.



facilitate regional and international cooperation through the co-ordination of policies and actions amongst African countries regarding water resources issues.



support trans-national cooperation on water related issues through development of common positions on matters of global concern as well as cooperation in implementation of relevant conventions and international agreements.



Encourage mechanisms that will promote best practices in water policy reforms, integrated water resources management, food security, water supply and sanitation and assist in delivery in National regional and sub-regional programmes;



Promote participation in regional studies regarding climate changes, develop observation networks, encourage information exchange and setup strategies for the management of water resources in time of drought and floods and develop policies and strategies of arresting the water crisis in Africa; and



Keep under review and constantly seek to strengthen the financing of the water sector in Africa.

AMCOW's Structure

The AMCOW institutional setup consists of a Full Council of Ministers (the ministers responsible for water from each member country), an Executive Committee (EXCO) with a President/Chair (presently Namibia).

The EXCO comprises three representatives of water ministers from each of the five sub-regions (AMCOW member states are divided into five sub-regions: West Africa, Eastern Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, and Southern Africa). Each sub-region has a sub-regional Secretariat (usually housed in the respective Regional Economic Community) to coordinate sub-regional activities. A Vice President heads each sub-region.

AMCOW Secretariat

The Secretariat is in Abuja, Nigeria and is headed by an Interim Executive Secretary (ES) and support staff. The EXCO gets advised by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The EXCO ensures that decisions of the Council are implemented and is responsible for the development of work programs/budgets for approval by the Council, mobilising the necessary financing and supervising the work of the Secretariat.

AMCOW founding leaders

AMCOW had several leaders who were there when it was created. However, a few of them played essential roles and championed the course, establishing the organisation. These include:

- His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Republic of Nigeria.
- H.E. Mr Mukhtari Shagari, Federal Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria, and first President of AMCOW.
- H.E. Mrs Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda, and President of AMCOW (2004 May 2007).
- H.E. Mr Ronnie Kasrils, Minister of Intelligence, South Africa, and Minister of Water during the period (2001 – 2006).
- H.E. Mr Macky Sall, Prime Minister of Senegal, previously Minister of Water.
- H.E. Edward Lowassa, Prime Minister of Tanzania, former Minister of Water.
- H.E. Mrs Martha Karua, Minister of Justice, and Constitutional Affairs (Kenya), former Minister of Water.
- H.E. Moleleki Monyane, Minister of Natural Resources, Lesotho.

The gallery below shows a few of those forefront champions.



His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo

President Obasanjo was Nigeria's sitting President during the early efforts to establish the African Ministers Council on Water. During that time, he played a fatherly role of seeing into the future to provide that independence that has set AMCOW apart. President Obasanjo advocated for an AMCOW that should be sustainable through regular support from its Member States instead of a trust fund.

Today, AMCOW owes its autonomy to His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo.



His Excellency President Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, and Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (New Partnership for Africa's Development).

His Excellency was the Minister of Mines, Energy and Hydraulics, Senegal, from May 2001 to August 2003. Being a sitting Minister responsible for water in his country, President Macky Sall became one of AMCOW's early founding leaders. He played very influential roles in the conception and establishment of the African Ministerial Council on Water – one of the Vice Presidents of AMCOW at the time.

Later, His Excellency Macky Sall got appointed as the Minister of State, Minister of the Interior and Local Collectivities, and Idrissa Seck's government spokesperson.



Barrister Mukhtari Shehu Shagari (CFR)

His Excellency Barr. Shagari is the First AMCOW President. He got appointed as Nigeria's Minister of Water Resources in 2001 and AMCOW President in 2002. He led the AMCOW office until 2007, when he left to compete for Deputy Governor of Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Barrister Shagari was instrumental in securing the enduring offer of his country, Nigeria, to host the Secretariat of AMCOW supported by substantial offers of financial support to the Secretariat. He played a crucial role in mobilising confidence in the fledgling Council of Ministers by establishing lasting partnerships.

He has since remained passionate about the continued growth and development of AMCOW. On 12 June 2020, Barr. Mukhtari accepted the honour to have AMCOW's newly created information and knowledge resource centre named after him. By November 2021, he Chaired the launching of AMCOW's Knowledge Hub of Hubs, which is a component of the Mukhtari Shehu Shagari Resource Centre (MSSRC) domiciled within the AMCOW Secretariat.



Mr. Halifa Drammeh (a.k.a. The Emperor)

Halifa, Gambian, was a Deputy Director at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with solid African convictions. He worked hard through his life for the African Cause. He fought to keep AMCOW independent of any agency. Halifa convinced His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo to host the Secretariat of AMCOW in Abuja. He facilitated the provision of the seed money of USD20,000 to convene the five key Ministers from the five African regions for the first preparatory meeting. He was instrumental in getting AMCOW accepted as the Special Technical Committee of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Halifa supervised the selection of the first substantive Executive Secretary, Mr Bai-Mass Taal.



HE Edward Lowassa – Tanzania (Prime Minister of Tanzania, former Minister of Water)

Edward Lowassa was appointed Minister of Water and Livestock Development following the 2000 general elections. During his tenure, he made his mark as a hardworking minister. He was there from the beginning of AMCOW – among the distinguished personalities who catalysed the establishment of AMCOW.



Ronny Kasrils, – South Africa

He was the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry from 1999 to 2004 when he got appointed as Minister of Intelligence Services.

His Excellency, Kasrils is one of the leaders who contributed to shaping the AMCOW today. With 12 of his then fellow African Ministers, he hosted the 1st AfricaSan conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, just before the World Summit on Sustainable Development. That event helped increase opinions that achieved the inclusion of sanitation as a specific MDG (Millennium Development Goal) target.

The seventh Ordinary Session of the African Ministers' Council on Water was held in Midrand, Johannesburg, the same day his beloved wife, Eleanor, got laid to rest. On that day, South Africa was again conferred with the role of AMCOW Presidency in the person of H.E. Ms B Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs.



Hon. Ms Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda (Late)

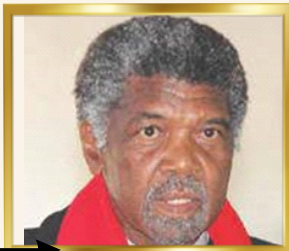
After Barr Mukhtari Shehu Shagari of Nigeria, her Excellency Mutagamba (Late) was the second AMCOW President. Mutaganba, from Uganda, held office from 2004 to 2012. One of her significant milestones includes the establishment of the African Water Facility (AWF) and the further strengthening of collaboration of AMCOW with external and internal African stakeholders.

Also, she was the coordinator of the Global Women Leaders Forum for Water and Sanitation from 2005 to 2012 and Vice-chairperson of the United Nations Task Force on Integrated Water Resource Management. During her time as AMCOW President, Mutaganba championed the development of AMCOW's Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender after the first Africa Water Week in Tunis in 2008.

H.E. Mutagamba was known for her work for the cause of water-related issues and the Global Water Harvesting Network.

She lived up to 64 and passed on 24 June 2017 at Case Medical Centre in Kampala.

Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda and Barr Mukhtari Shehu Shagari referred to passing away as "a great loss to Uganda and Africa, respectively."



His Excellency Mr Monyane Moleleki - the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr Monayane was Minister of Natural Resources of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The first president of the Governing Council of the Africa Water Facility.



Hon. Martha Karua was the Kenyan Water Minister at that time is still active in National Politics in Kenya

Hon. Martha Karua was Kenya's Minister for Water Resource Management and development and one of AMCOW's founding leaders.

She and her friends, Hon. Edward Lowassa, then Minister for Water and Livestock Development in Tanzania, and Hon. Maria Mutagamba, Uganda's Minister of State for Water Resources, jointly launched the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative at a special event on 16 August 2004, during the Stockholm Water Week.

PICTURES OF AMCOW PATRONS HONOURED DURING AMCOW AT SEVEN IN NOVEMBER, 2009



The AMCOW Member States and host Country

The AMCOW Member States include the 55 countries of the African Union across the five sub-regions of Central Africa, Eastern Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria Hosts AMCOW

On 17 February 2006, AMCOW and the Federal Republic of Nigeria signed a hosting agreement in Uganda by the Nigerian High Commission. In 2010 His Excellency, the President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, signed the Instrument of Ratification domesticating AMCOW IN Nigeria, allowing AMCOW its Secretariat to be vested in Nigeria with the judicial personality, which enables AMCOW to have the following capacities:

- i. To contract
- ii. To acquire and dispose of immovable and movable property, with or without cost; and
- iii. To institute legal proceedings of Article IV (1) in its hosting agreement.

Details of the Agreement are covered in the complete Hosting Agreement.

Significant milestones

Some of the earlier milestones achieved by AMCOW include:

1. The establishment of a ministerial mechanism supported by a network of senior water officials for systematic consideration of water policy challenges in Africa;
2. Providing support to regional integration processes; adopting a triennial work programme that provides strategic direction for national, regional and international cooperation;
3. Providing political support and leadership for the implementation of significant water initiatives; compilation of key water portfolios for the five sub-regions of Africa, the establishment of the African Water Facility (AWF), which is hosted and managed by the African Development Bank, and establishment of a Trust Fund under UNEP.





Chad: natron

Natron is unloaded along the eastern shore of Lake Chad near Baga Sola, Chad.

© Jacques Jangoux/Peter Arnold, Inc.

Recent progress timeline



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The journey so far... →

Some recent developments in AMCOW:

- AMCOW launched the Pan African Groundwater Program (APAGroP) in 2019 to respond to the Libreville Multi-stakeholders' Declaration on Achieving Water Security and Safely Managed Sanitation for Africa, which emerged from the 7th Africa Water Week, held in Libreville, Gabon.
- In November 2020, AMCOW launched a web-based open access knowledge hub and a Special Library for collecting and sharing Africa's water and sanitation sector information and knowledge. It named the Resource Centre after the first AMCOW President as Muhktari Shehu Shagari Resource Centre (MSSRC).
- In June 2020, AMCOW launched the second phase of the Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring (WASSMO) project with the financial support from the African Development Bank/Africa Water Facility, running from April 2020 to April 2022.
- AMCOW produced the African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG) funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). This effort has begun a journey to raise the enabling environment for Africa's sanitation to global and continental standards.
- In 2021 AMCOW conducted a second round of the AfricaSan Ngor Commitments monitoring process. The activity supports improvement of sanitation and Hygiene in Africa.

AMCOW, in partnership with the African union commissions, and the African development bank organized binnial African water week and the African San event in 2021. These versions - AWW8 and AfricaSan6 were combined virtually into one African Water and Sanitation Week because of the COVID 19 restrictions across the globe.

AMCOW events, initiatives, projects

This chapter highlights some of AMCOW's events, initiatives and projects.

Events

Africa Water Week

African Heads of State and Government, at the second Extraordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, held from 27-28 February 2004, in Sirte, Libya, adopted the Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Water in Africa (Ex/Assembly/AU/Decl.1 (II)), in which they declared support for AMCOW and its role in developing plans and policies related to the management of all water resources in Africa. They also recommended integrating AMCOW into the AU as one of its Specialized Technical Committees.

AMCOW-6: The sixth Ordinary AMCOW Session (AMCOW-6) took place from 30-31 May 2007, in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. The meeting focused on strengthening regional and international cooperation and solidarity to address the African water and sanitation crisis and achieve the water and sanitation-related targets under the MDGs and the water-related targets set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The ministers adopted a meeting report summarising their discussions and the Brazzaville Declaration containing ministerial decisions on future work. Key issues addressed in these decisions include governance, institutional and operational matters, financial problems and means of implementation, partnerships, and other initiatives. Ministers endorsed the proposal to launch and institutionalise an annual African Water Week (AWW) and agreed that AWW-1 would be held in Tunisia and that AWW-2 would be held in Kenya.

The first Africa Water Week

The first version of the Africa Water Week (AWW-1), convened from 26-28 March 2008 at the Sheraton Hotel in Tunis, Tunisia. The theme of the conference was, 'Accelerating Water Security for the Socio-Economic Development of Africa'.

The conference aimed to:

Provide a forum for critical Africa's water sector actors to discuss the opportunities and challenges of achieving water security for Africa's socio-economic development, Take stock on the status of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that of other related targets on Africa's water, and Develop recommendations for consideration by the 2008 African Union (AU) and G8 summits and the 2009 Fifth World Water Forum (WWF-5). Over 540 attendees, including 30 ministers, met in plenary and several parallel working groups to deliberate on various topics ranging from policy and practical constraints to social, economic and cultural conditions and institutional and financial matters.

So far, AMCOW collaborates with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank to organise the AWW up to the Eight conferences.

The Eight Africa Water Week was held virtually because of the COVID 19 pandemic. It was convened under the topic "Water Security for Public Health and Human Development" with 3,196 participants from 108 countries, a Windhoek Resolution to be presented at the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, 2022



AfricaSan

The first AfricaSan Conference was organised in Johannesburg in 2002. It was born from an engagement between His Excellency Ronnie Kasrils, Minister of Water and Forestry in South Africa, the Executive Director of Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), and the Principal Regional Team Leader of Water Sanitation Program (WSP) Africa.

They met in 2001 and discussed how to build political momentum for the neglected topic of sanitation in Africa, with the idea of organising a regional sanitation conference as a joint initiative of the WSSCC and WSP for Africa. One hundred fifty decision-makers and sanitation experts (including 11 Ministers) attended the first AfricaSan meeting. Its main achievement was to build political momentum for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (and subsequently the U.N.) to adopt a specific MDG target on sanitation. Today, AfricaSan has led to other continental sanitation movements like the Latin American Sanitation Conference (Latinosan) and South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN).

The vision of the first AfricaSan movement.

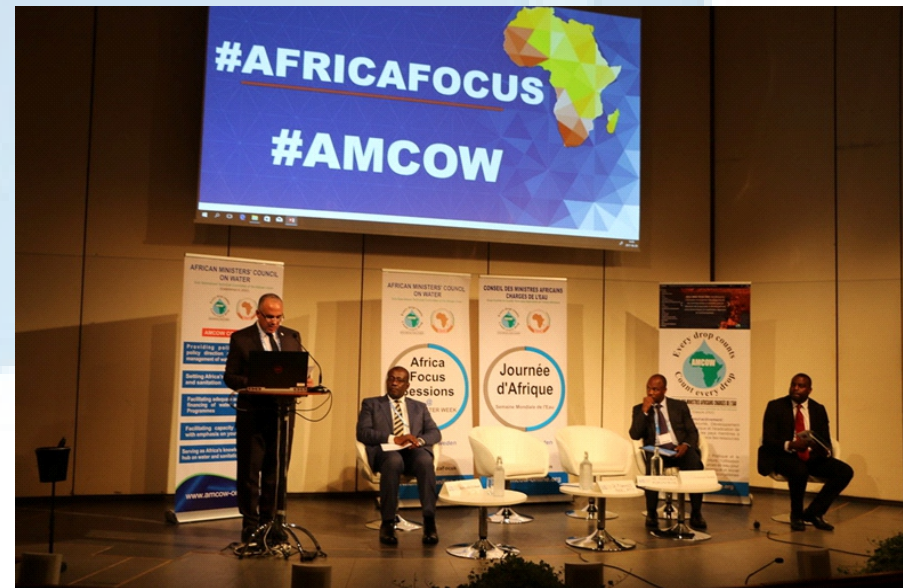
The conference from the beginning was not an avenue for technical exchanges between practitioners; the pioneers recognised that developing momentum for sanitation needed a blend of political support, technological advance, and knowledge exchange. They envisioned that Governments should lead Sanitation improvement whilst engaging the private sector, civil society, consumer/community bodies, the research community, finance institutions and development agencies. The first AfricaSan aimed at achieving the following:

1. To provide a platform specifically for sanitation leaders in developing countries- since there is no other
2. To generate political momentum for sanitation and
3. To provide a forum for technical discussion to highlight best practices and support problem-solving.

Africa Focus Day

Every year, during the Stockholm World Water Week events, AMCOW hosts and organises a special session on the sideline of the main SWWW activities focusing on African water and sanitation issues. The event is called Africa Focus Day. Usually, sitting Presidents of AMCOW, who are usually present will launch or declare the meetings open.

During this occasion, the World Water Week accords Africa a voice and space through the Africa Focus Day to express itself on the challenges that confront the Continent in water resources management.



Initiatives and projects

Africa Water Facility

Under the initiative of AMCOW, the African Water Facility (AWF) got established in 2004 to mobilise resources to finance water resources development activities in Africa to help African countries achieve the objectives of the Africa Water Vision 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It was operationalised in 2006 and has since developed a grant portfolio of 117 projects in 52 countries, including the most vulnerable countries. It is hosted and managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Governance of AWF

The Governing Council decides the general policy and direction of the AWF. It is made up of 13 members appointed by AMCOW, donors to the fund, the African Development Bank, the African Union, and UN-Water/Africa.

The Governing Council meets twice a year and is made up of:

- Five members appointed by AMCOW
- Five members appointed by donors
- One member appointed by the African Development Bank
- One member appointed by the African Union (represented by NEPAD Secretariat)
- One member appointed by UN-Water/Africa
- The Chairperson is appointed by the Governing Council and serves a one-year term.



The African Groundwater Programme

AMCOW's Executive Committee (EXCO) met from 24-28 November 2008 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme "*Carrying forward the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration and Commitments on Water and Sanitation (adopted by the African Union Summit, Egypt, June 2008).*" The meeting resolved to strengthen AMCOW's initiative on sustainable management of water resources, to implement its roadmap for the African Groundwater Commission. The idea was to establish a mechanism for representing groundwater better in Africa's major strategic programs around water.

During the Africa Water Week in Tanzania in 2016 and Gabon 2019, stakeholders analysed positions resulting from several consultations. They suggested a Pan-African Groundwater Program initiative as a knowledge brokering and supporting facility to hold the gap for the original plan of a groundwater commission for the Continent.

AMCOW Pan African Groundwater Programme (APAGroP)

Later in 2019, AMCOW launched the AMCOW Pan African Groundwater Programme (APAGroP) in Nairobi. The conference gathered stakeholders from all parts of Africa, representatives of regional organisations (e.g., ECOWAS, IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development), regional groundwater-related institutions (e.g., OSS, SADC-GMI), organisations sponsoring/implementing groundwater programmes in Africa (BGR, BGS (British Geological Survey), IWMI (International Water Management Institute), UNESCO), academia and financial institutions.

The successful Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater (UPGro) programme supported the workshop as a part of a programme's rounding off legacy and ownership activity.

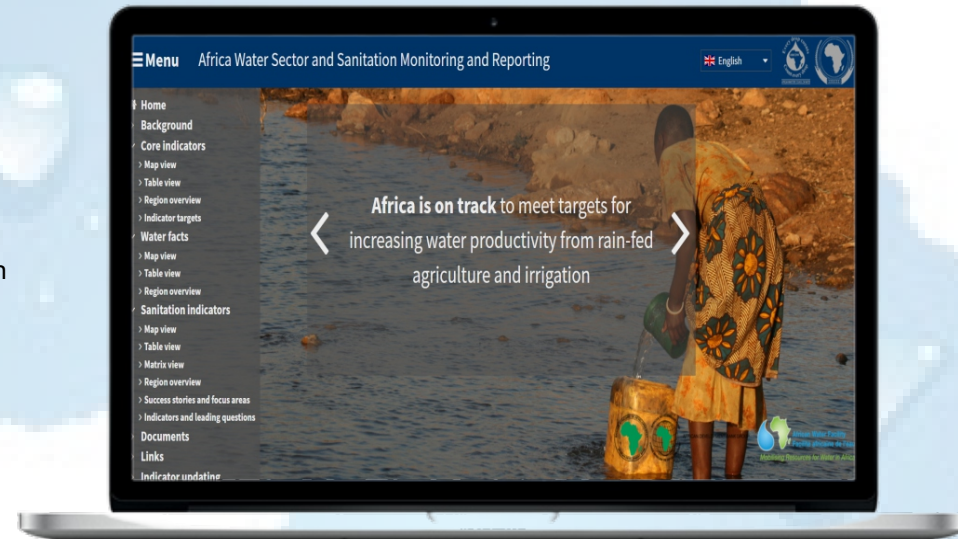
After the AMCOW Pan-African Groundwater Program (APAGroP) launch in Nairobi, Kenya, on 1 and 2 October 2019, follow-up Working Group meetings took place on 22 and 23 February 2020 Kampala, Uganda. The event was followed by groundwater sessions at the African Water Association Congress and Exhibition (AfWA 2020). Representatives from Resilient Waters and the Southern African Development Community Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI) attended the meetings.

African Water and Sanitation Monitoring (WASSMO) System

The African Union Heads of State and Government Summit of July 2008 mandated the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) to monitor progress and report annually on Africa's water and sanitation sector status. With financial support from Africa Water Facility (AWF) through the Africa Development Bank, AMCOW developed a web-based reporting system, the Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring and Reporting System (WASSMO), in October 2015.

WASSMO is the first-ever continent-wide automated web-based system that exclusively captures data on water and sanitation across the 55 Member States of the African Union using harmonised progress indicators. It allows AMCOW to monitor progress and report on the implementation of the African Union commitments expressed in the 2008 Sharm El-Sheikh Commitments on water and sanitation considering several international agreements, the Africa Water Vision 2025, and the Africa Agenda 2063, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation.

Since the project's inception, AMCOW has completed the first round of Monitoring and will finalise the second phase by 2022.



<https://www.africawat-sanreports.org/IndicatorReporting/home>



Mukhtari Shehu Shagari Resource Centre

The Mukhtari Shehu Shagari Resource Centre is an AMCOW platform for storing and sharing homegrown information and knowledge about Africa's water and sanitation sector. It was named in honour of the first President of AMCOW, Barrister Mukhtari Shehu Shagari (CFR) and comprised of a Special Library domiciled at the AMCOW Secretariat in Abuja and a virtual Knowledge Hub with the web address:
<https://knowledgehub.amcow-online.org/>

The online knowledge hub

In November 2020, the AMCOW Secretariat launched the Knowledge Hub, with Barr Mukhtari as the Chair of the occasion.

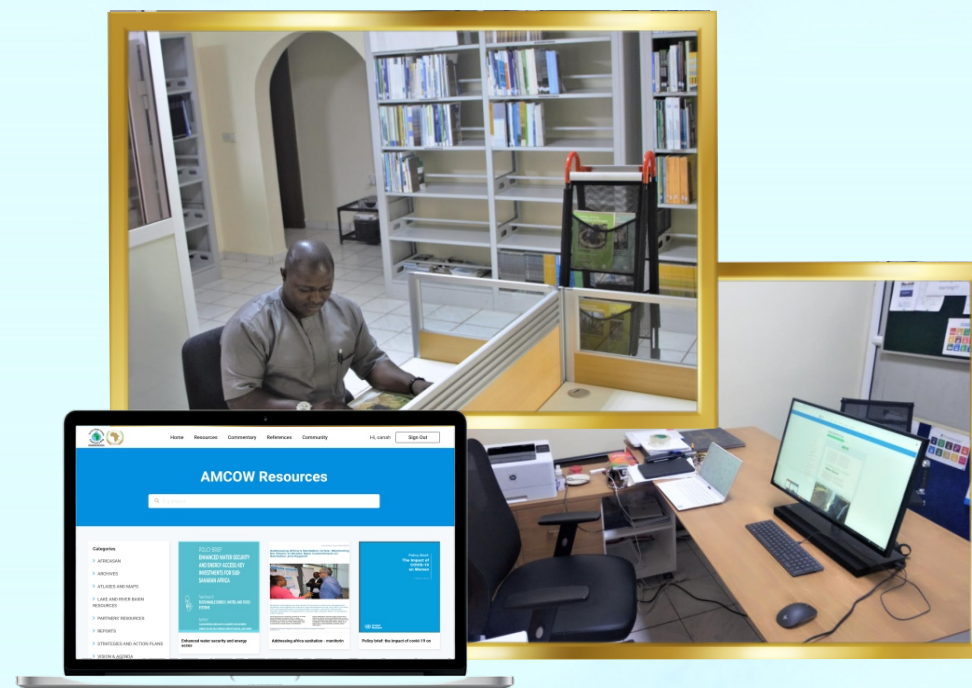
The virtual platform is described as a hub of hubs because of AMCOW's dream for a one spot centre for housing and sharing information and knowledge about Africa's water and sanitation development – produced either by Africans or non-Africans.

Water and sanitation library

At the creation of the Resource Centre, the Library started with over 1600 volumes of information and knowledge materials, classified with a blend of the Library of Congress Classification Scheme SCCS, and a locally developed cataloguing style to fit the mix of both development and academic resources contained in it. Also the library is equipped to run digitising service.

AMCOW created this platform, MSSRC, first to respond to the commitment made by the African Union's Heads of State and Governments in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2008 – to enhance information, knowledge and capacity development in the water and sanitation sector. Therefore, AMCOW believes that the hub will strengthen the quality of information, reporting, evidence-based decision and policy development in the sector.

Also, it will provide resources that can build capacity among water and sanitation professionals and youth across the Member States, Regional Economic Communities and River and Lake Basin Organisations.



African Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG)

AMCOW launched the African Sanitation Policy Guideline (ASPG) in 2021 and presented it to its Member States and partners. The purpose is to strengthen enabling environment for Africa's sanitation – improving the sanitation and hygiene policy environment through the review, revision, and development of sanitation policies and associated implementation strategies.

The ASPG is changing how sector stakeholders think about sanitation. Through the ASPG, AMCOW seeks to improve Africa's sanitation policy environments to align with continental and global standards – the Ngor Commitment on Sanitation & Hygiene and the SDG 6.2, respectively.

The Birth of the ASPG idea

AMCOW conceptualised the ASPG idea during a discussion between it and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on lessons on the recently completed work policy development in four countries supported by AMCOW and funded by the Foundation. AMCOW's side was the then Executive Secretary 2016-2021), Dr Canisius Kanangire and Mr Kitchinme Bawa (Sanitation Project Manager). On the other side was Jessica Brinton, then Senior Program Officer, Program Advocacy and Communications, Global Policy, and Advocacy Division) at BMGF. The discussion was on how to influence the sanitation policy and strategy in more countries with less effort and direct involvement of AMCOW in the leg work. They envisaged a framework to help African countries transition from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which ended in 2015, to the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030. A framework that will generate dialogue on sanitation towards catalysing more action.

In the beginning, it appeared vague, but as time went on, it became clearer and what is today known, and the African Sanitation Policy Guidelines today, was born.

The Guidelines guide the process and suggest sanitation policy components for policymakers at national and sub-national levels and other stakeholders involved in supporting policy reform initiatives and developing implementation strategies.





<https://www.freepik.com/photos/women-friends>
Women friends photo created by wirestock - www.freepik.com

Youth and Gender Inclusion program

AMCOW is keen on facilitating the inclusion of youth and women in Africa's water and sanitation sector. At the First Africa Water Week in Tunis in 2008, the idea of developing the "AMCOW Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Africa's Water Sector" was born – having observed that the awareness of Gender in the water resources and sanitation sector was low. In 2011, AMCOW developed its first Gender Policy and Strategy, launched under Mrs BEE Molewa, MP., Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa and then President of AMCOW, 2010 – 2011.

Since Tunis, over 40 African countries endorsed the initiative with the hope that it will impact decisively on the sector and the lives of women, men, and children who access and manage water services in Africa.

Later in 2013, AMCOW launched its first "Policy and Strategy for Youth in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Africa," aimed to mainstream active engagement and participation of women and youth in the water and sanitation sector.

Subsequently, AMCOW has developed its overall Strategy 2018 – 2030 and included Gender equality and youth empowerment as one of its cross-cutting priorities.

From these previous gender and youth policies and strategies, AMCOW has incorporated gender-equality and youth engagement issues into AMCOW's Strategy 2018-2030 as cross-cutting priorities. Also, it has appointed focal points to handle Youth and Gender programmes at the Secretariat along with a six-month secondment with a Climate Change, Gender, and Social Inclusion Specialist from the Global Water Partnership (GWP) to the AMCOW Secretariat.

By 2022, AMCOW Secretariat drafted a newly integrated Youth Gender and Social Inclusion Strategy to contribute to the overall growth and realisation of Africa's water and sanitation sector goals.



Looking forward

My Vision for AMCOW by Dr Rashid Mbaziira

The current AMCOW Executive Secretary, Dr Rashid Mbaziira has put together a vision for the next few years of his service at the Council. These ideas presented in the slides below will guide AMCOW's immediate and near future.

1 AMCOW's mandate

VISION
Political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in water mgmt. for dev't and ecosystems

MISSION
Equitable sustainable mgmt of water resources for prosperity, development and cooperation

GOALS

2 My Vision for AMCOW

An effective mandated organ of the African Union's efforts to assure water security in Africa

My Vision
Political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in water mgmt. for dev't and ecosystems

Mission
Equitable sustainable mgmt of water resources for prosperity, development and cooperation

Goals

3 My Vision for AMCOW

1 Relevance to the MS, AU and partners
2 Financial security
3 Post-2025 Africa Water Vision aligned with AU Agenda 2063

Targeted outcomes and impact

- ↑ of people without access to water and sanitation
- Water availability to contribute to COVID-19 response
- ↑ Open defecation
- ↓ Sector funding and investment
- ↓ AMCOW financial security
- ↓ PIDA-PAP implementation

4 Translating AMCOW's Mission into Action in next the 4yrs

Pillar 1: Leverage
Leverage political convening power for stronger engagement of Member States.

Pillar 2: Mobilise and facilitate
Mobilise and facilitate partnerships for action on water security and sustainable sanitation.

Pillar 3: Broker and network
Broker and network knowledge and information for evidence-based policy advisory systems.

Strategic Themes

- ST-1: Leadership and coordination of inclusive governance arrangements
- ST-2: Catalysing improved sector financing - promoting the principles of valuing water
- ST-3: Advocacy for national level domestication of continental policy initiatives
- ST-4: Water and sanitation for all
- ST-5: Sustainability mgmt water resources
- ST-6: Investing in water security and climate resilience
- ST-7: WASSMO functionality at all levels
- ST-8: Transition to the post-2025 Africa Water Vision
- ST-9: Knowledge and information management and dissemination

5 Pillar 1: Leverage Convening Power

- WP-1: Provide leadership and coordinate the Water and Sanitation sub-committee of the AU Specialised Technical Committee on ARBE
- WP-2 (a): Institutionalise strategic operational arrangements with RLEOs in collaboration with ANSO
- WP-2 (b): Operationalise agreed AMCOW host arrangements with RECs
- WP-3 (a): Update AMCOW Governance Framework arrangements, incl. engaging the Ministers responsible for Sanitation Affairs
- WP-3 (b): Annually convene meetings of sub-regional ministerial and technical experts committees in collaboration with RECs and
- WP-4: Advise and sensitisation on the principles of valuing water, and economic accounting for water
- WP-5: Promoting cross-sectoral prioritisation of development options in Africa on the basis of the water, food and energy security nexus "WATERFOOD"
- WP-6: Inject new approaches into AMCOW's resources mobilisation efforts, incl. successful completion of an EU Pillar Assessment
- WP-7: AMCOW communications, visibility and media engagement function
- WP-8: Mobilisation and coordination of support from non-government and civil society organisational partners
- WP-9: AMCOW's engagements with Member States and at the global level

6 Pillar 2: Mobilise and Facilitate Partnerships

- WP-10: Integrated urban water and sanitation management - AWAS, KCEI, Africa, ADB, WB, KfW
- WP-11 (a): Improving access to water and sanitation services for the poor - WaterAid, Oxfam, OVC, World Vision, Water for People, CLTIP, etc.
- WP-11 (b): Results based rural water supply and sanitation finance
- WP-12: ASPG roll-out, and strengthening WASH Systems - UNICEF, VISA/AA, ANER, WaterAid
- WP-13 (a): Cooperation on water mgmt. within the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus framework - ADB, RLEOs
- WP-13 (b): AMCOW pan-African Groundwater Programme (APAGP/P)
- WP-14: PIDA-PAP transboundary water projects and related regional integration projects - GWP-SA
- WP-15: Improving environmental integrity through wastewater and water quality management (WWQM) - UNEP
- WP-16: The Africa Water Investment Programme- GWP, ADB, WB
- WP-17: Resilient WASH Programming - UNICEF, GWP
- WP-18: Promoting circular systems for urban water cycles and productive sanitation - AFWA, SEL, Norges Ivi

7 Pillar 3: Broker and network knowledge

- WP-19: Update of indicator framework and system functionality for broader reporting scope incl. MCoR commitments/ASPG/PIDA-PAP water projects and sector finance
- WP-20: Refresher training of National Focal Persons and continuous capacity development support to Member States
- WP-21 (a): Support for system capacity development at country level
- WP-21 (b): Support for establishing systems linkage with RLEOs, RECs, AU, CAADP, External report, and Global SDG reporting systems
- WP-22: Evaluation of MS progress on achieving the Targets of the AW2025
- WP-23: Dialogical processes for a post-2025 Africa Water Vision and implementation framework
- WP-24: AU consultation processes leading to the adoption of the post-2025 AWV as a continental implementation framework of Agenda 2063
- WP-25: The Africa Water Week and African platforms
- WP-26: Full operationalisation of the AMCOW Knowledge Hub
- WP-27: Human Capacity Development for junior professionals and

8 Next Steps

- Get an indication of partner interest in specific Pillars and/or Strategic Themes
- Preparation and discussion of targeted Concept Notes
- Preparation of detailed funding agreements
- Launch and implementation of initiatives

Picture Story

Here are pictures of some past Presidents and Executive Secretaries. The list is incomplete and will be updated in the next edition of the AMCOW Story. AMCOW Secretariat is still compiling stories of some of its past activities and stakeholders.



Mrs BEE Molewa, MP. Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa

Molewa became the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs of South Africa on 31 October 2010. During her time in office as AMCOW President, she oversaw the launch of the AMCOW's First Policy and Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender in Africa's Water Sector, as a common framework for addressing Gender in the sector. She served as President of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), 2010 – 2011. Molewa passed away on 22 September 2018.



HE AMCOW-6 President Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, Republic of Congo,

His Excellency Bruno Itoua was appointed to the Government as Minister of Energy and Hydraulics on 7 January 2005 to 2011, Congo Republic. As Minister of Energy and Hydraulics, Itoua was responsible for overseeing some significant projects intended to increase the water supply. He was the 6th President of AMCOW and handed over to the 7th President of AMCOW, President Buyelwa Sonjica, South Africa.



Buyelwa Patience Sonjica – Seventh AMCOW President from South Africa

Buyelwa Patience Sonjica was a South African politician who served as Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs from May 2009 until November 2010. During her tenure as AMCOW's President, the Africa Water Atlas was released. In her Preface on the document, Ms Patience expressed hope for the paper to provoke discussions across the Continent on how Africa can manage its water resources and achieve sanitation targets to the benefit of all.



Prof. Ja'afar was appointed by the first President of AMCOW, Barr.

Mukhtari, as an Interim Executive Secretary. He witnessed the formation of AMCOW, the representation of Africa at every world water event, bringing African water issues to global attention, and the presentation of water issues to the highest political level in the African Union.

Mr Ja'afar coordinated AMCOW Secretariat's attendance at the AMCOW-AU Summit with the Libyan Leader, Muammar Ghaddafi in Sirte, Libya, in 2004.



Bai-mass Taal

Mr Bai-Mass Taal was appointed to the position of the first substantive Executive Secretary of the African Minister' Council on Water (AMCOW) on 10 May 2008. He established the first Secretariat of AMCOW moving it from its former location where it was housed under the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation of Ministry of Water Resources. Mr Bai Mass is a top-class environment and water specialist, he has served as a cabinet minister in his country, The Gambia, first as Secretary of State for Fisheries, Natural Resources, and the Environment from 2004-2005 and later as Secretary of State for Fisheries and Water Resources from 2005 to 2006.

Under Mr Bai Mass visionary leadership AMCOW was domesticated in Nigeria and became internationally recognised as a global brand. During his tenure, AMCOW developed solid strategic initiatives and partnerships that have improved funding and attention to water matters in Africa. Some key initiatives are African –European Union Partnership on Water, Africa Wate Facility, African Water Development Bank Rural Water Initiatives, Africa Water Week, AfricaSan conferences, Africa Focus Day at WWW (World Water Week), the establishment of WASSMO, Africa –G8 Water Action Plan, Institutionalising of AMCOW within African Union and several others. Projects implemented include EU (European Union) Giz Support, USAID (United States Agency for International Development), AfDB, BMGF, DAI, French Govt Support, World Water Forum Regional Coordinator, World Bank, WSS, etc.



Bio: Dr Canisius, from Rwanda, is the second substantive Executive Secretary of AMCOW.

He held office from 2016 to 2021. During Canisius' term in office, he oversaw the institutional strengthening of the Secretariat. He established requisite systems and processes that position the Secretariat into a World Class better-resourced entity with more professionals. Dr Canisius led the development of several service instruments for the Secretariat, including the AMCOW Strategy 2018-2030 and Strategic Operational Plan (SoP) 2020-2024, the African Sanitation Policy Guideline (ASPG), the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA)-Institutional Support Strengthening grant (SIDA-ISS). Also, he led the development of the AMCOW Knowledge Management Strategy 2017 and the Mukhtari Shehu Shagari Resource Centre – comprising a physical library and the virtual knowledge hub.

Before he was appointed AMCOW ES, Dr Kanangire served the East African Community as the Executive Secretary of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC, 2011-2016), an Inter-Governmental Institution mandated to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication in the Lake Victoria Basin. He served at the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) as the Head of Strategic Planning and Management/Deputy Executive Director (2009-2011) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as the Regional Project Manager for the Nile Basin Applied Training Project (2004-2009). He also served as the Scientific Chairman of the Nile Basin Research Program, a post-doctoral research program for Nile Basin scholars managed by the University of Bergen, Norway (2006-2010)

Meet AMCOW's Current Team



Dr. Rashid Mbazira
Executive Secretary



Thomas Ephraim Banda
Director of Finance & Administration



Dr. Tanko Yussif Azzika
Senior Policy Advisor



Kitchinme Bawa
Sanitation Project Manager



Prof. Moshood N. TIJANI
Groundwater Desk Officer and
Climate Change Lead



Patrice Leumeni
Monitoring & Evaluation Officer



Osuorji Genevieve Ifeoma
IT/Database Officer



Obinna Richfield Anah
Knowledge Management & Information
Sharing Officer



Comfort Kansho
Africa Sanitation Policy Guidelines
(ASPG) Support Officer / Gender Focal Point



Emmanuel Chimezie Uguru
Monitoring & Evaluation Support Officer
/ Youth Focal Point



Edward Ngida Kutju
Management Accountant



Emmanuel A. Fagade
Accountant



Bala M. Taham
HR / Procurement Specialist



Jennifer Chika Mbama
Personal Assistant to the Executive Secretary



Joe O. Adeleye
Administrative Support Officer



Elizabeth Iwuchukwu
Receptionist

Other solid pictures of EXCO and GA meetings



Second African Water Week (AWW-2)
9-11 November 2009 | Johannesburg, South Africa



Nigeria's Minister Of Water Resources Chats With AMCOW President And Deputy Governor Of Sokoto State (who Was Also Minister Of Water Resources And One Time President Of AMCOW)



Bruno Itoua, President of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), being interviewed on the conclusion of the First African Water Week.
First African Water Week
26-28 March 2008 |Tunis, Tunisia



Letitia Obeng, Co-Chair presided over the session
First African Water Week
26-28 March 2008 |Tunis, Tunisia



AMCOW-7's Bureau
9-11 November 2009 | Johannesburg, South Africa



African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) at 7
9-11 November 2009 | Johannesburg, South Africa



African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) at 7
9-11 November 2009 | Johannesburg, South Africa



African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) at 7
Halifah Drammeh with Taibi Rachid, Minister for Water Resources, Algeria



Trevor Manuel, Minister in the Presidency, South Africa, Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister for Water Affairs and Environment, South Africa, Halifah Drammeh, UNEP and UN-Water/Africa, Christine Walters, Johannesburg Mayoral Council



Buyelwa Sonjica,
Minister for Water Affairs and Environment, South Africa



Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua,
AMCOW-6 President, Republic of Congo



The dais during PANAFCON II L-R: Olushola Sodeko, AU; Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, AMCOW-6 President; Bai-Mass Tal, Executive Secretary, AMCOW; and Halifah Drammeh, UNEP and UN-Water/Africa.



AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER

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