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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone : 011-551 7700 Fax : 011-551 7844
website : www.africa-union.org

**Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Africa Process to the 6th World Water
Forum**

STATEMENT

DELIVERED BY

HER EXCELLENCY TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,

COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE,

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

MRS RHODA PEACE TUMUSIIME

UNECA Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

13 February 2012

- Your Excellency, Honourable Samuel Sipepa Nkomo, Minister for Water Resources and Development of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chair of the World Water Forum Africa Process Steering Committee;
- Representatives of other AMCOW Vice Presidents;
- Hon. Eng. Gersome Rene, Deputy Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania
- Dr. Josue Dionne, Director at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa,
- Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel Director at African Union Commission
- Distinguished members of the Steering Committee;
- Distinguished partners of the Africa Region Process
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour of conveying to you greetings and best wishes from the African Union Commission.

I am glad to address you at this Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Africa Preparatory Process to validate the proposed target solutions and action plans prior to their unveiling at the 6th World Water Forum.

It is gratifying that we are gathered here today under the auspices of the African Ministers' Council on Water. We are pleased with AMCOW's execution of its mission to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy for the protection, management and wise utilisation of all Africa's water resources for sustainable social, economic and environmental development; and for the maintenance of Africa's ecosystems in furtherance of both the vision of the African Union and the goal of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

We are all aware that AMCOW embodies the collaboration and commitment of African governments, regional institutions, civil society groups, development cooperation partners and financial institutions towards the African Water Vision 2025 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”.

It is also encouraging to note that the design of AMCOW's policy objectives and its current triennial workplan 2011 – 2013 are founded on efforts to accelerate the achievement of the aspirations of the African Water Vision 2025, which was in turn conceptualised at the inaugural edition of the World Water Forum in Morocco in 1997. As you would recall, the Abuja Declaration 2002, which formally established AMCOW, was a culmination of a long process to forge and formalise a coordination structure for water policy dialogue and formulation in Africa to attain the Vision.

In the years since Morocco and Abuja, major political commitments have been made towards alleviating some of the challenges facing the water sector in Africa. As a result, there has also been a significant increase in the level of awareness of:

- regional water security;
- transboundary water resources management;
- hygiene and sanitation;
- climate change; and
- water related disaster risk management issues.

As you know, these are also the key issues around which the 9 targets of the Africa Regional Process are centred.

I am convinced that it is on the basis of the above that the Africa Regional Paper at the 5th edition of the World Water Forum in essence highlighted the fact that the point had been reached where there needs to be greater convergence between the high level commitments and delivery through concrete unambiguous actions, strengthening and scaling up of existing mechanisms and initiatives, and refinement of strategies to close gaps.

It is worth noting that for the 6th edition of the World Water Forum, the Africa Region Process accords due cognisance to the selfless contributions by the various partners and stakeholders in bridging the gap between policy and action on water issues, as well as celebrating the achievements to-date. I also wish to point out that the 9 targets identified for Marseilles by African stakeholders meeting in Cape Town in March 2011, speak to and are consistent with the commitments made by the AU Heads of State and Government in the *Sharm and El Sheikh Declaration on Water and Sanitation*; the *Tunis Declaration on Accelerating Socio-economic Growth through Water Security*; and the *EThekweni Declaration on Sanitation*, among others. More importantly, the set targets aim to consolidate the gains and

achievements of AMCOW and partners in implementing those political commitments, as well as the Forum Solutions.

It is my understanding that the proposed Action Plans place emphasis on scaling up existing solutions or adopting new ones to accelerate progress. They also place emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and reporting. AMCOW and its structures have a greater responsibility now to ensure that the solutions identified are regionally shared, owned and implemented at national and local levels. Additionally, it has a responsibility to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place in each country to monitor the extent of progress for their own decision-making, and for reporting back to the highest policy organ, the Assembly of the African Union.

We consider this steering committee meeting as a key first step in that process and it is only befitting that it is held in Addis Ababa which is also home to the AUC. The efforts of the partner institutions and everyone that has contributed to the Africa preparatory process thus far are much appreciated.

As I wish you successful deliberations, allow me to reaffirm the AUC's commitment to support the process of implementing the solutions. It is my opinion that the time for action is long overdue and therefore we must urgently act .

Thank you for listening to me.