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STATEMENT BY

**H.E AMB. JOSEFA LEONEL CORREIA SACKO
COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

AT THE

**12TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN
MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW)**

DATE: 2 JUNE 2020

Honourable Chairperson

Honourable Ministers,

Dr Canisius Kanangire, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)

Esteemed Experts of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Development Partners

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to deliver this statement at the opening of the 12th Session of the Executive Committee of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), taking place virtually.

Honourable Ministers, I wish to commend the members of the AMCOW Executive Committee for the diligence in guiding the work of AMCOW and for taking time out of your busy schedules during the COVID-19 global pandemic to participate in this session. Your participation in this virtual session, **Honourable Ministers** is a living testimony that you take water and sanitation as a high priority in your respective governments.

Honourable Ministers

COVID-19 has awakened the world to the paramount importance of water and sanitation. Today the whole world is calling for maintaining the minimum hygiene standards of washing hands and sanitizing. These preventative measures are also enshrined in the AU Sharm El-Sheikh Commitment on Water and Sanitation; the eThekweni Declaration on Sanitation and the N'gor Commitments on Sanitation and Hygiene. Honouring these commitments would therefore facilitate regional integration and enable us to contain COVID-19 in

Africa. I wish to acknowledge that the Year 2020 has taken us closer to the realisation of the Africa Water Vision for 2025: 'Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socioeconomic Development'.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, according to the World Water Development Report' published on 18 March, 2019 on '*Leaving no one behind*', water use has been increasing worldwide by about 1% per year since the 1980s. This is driven by a combination of several factors, including population growth, rapid urbanization, socio-economic development and changing consumption patterns. It is stated that the global water demand is expected to continue increasing at a similar rate until 2050, accounting for an increase of 20 to 30% above the current level of water use, mainly due to rising demand in the industrial and domestic sectors.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates; with these facts before us, the effective realisation of our Africa Water Vision 2025 is therefore key for the continent to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 – 'The Africa we want'. This vision is also an enabler for the achievement of continental programmes such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA); and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,
As the African Union Commission we recognise that we have not lived up to expectation in the Water and Sanitation sector and have been strategizing on how better to promote this area of our work. Water and Sanitation remains a key priority and we are working on staffing to build the required capacity in the sector. Furthermore, AUC will be coordinating the assessment of the implementation of various Water and Sanitation

commitments for reporting to the AU Assembly. This will be done in conjunction with AMCOW Secretariat, RECs, Member States and Partners. The establishment of the Partners' Coordination forum on Water and Sanitation is also another step to strengthen the Commission's coordination role. This forum met for the first time in October 2019 and aims to facilitate monitoring and reporting, joint planning and resource mobilisation. Furthermore, I am glad to inform you that the 3rd Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in October 2019 made several endorsements relevant for advancing the water and sanitation agenda:

- i) Formalized the Partners' Coordination Platform on Water and Sanitation Programme in Africa.
- ii) Urged Member States to support the Republic of Senegal on the planned 9th World Water Forum.
- iii) Approved the proposal to convene an AU Summit on Water and Sanitation on the margins of the 9th World Water Forum in Senegal.

I would therefore like to encourage your deliberations to explore how this most important resource, water can improve the GDP of our Member States, increase job creation for the teeming population of the African women and youth.

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me conclude by assuring you of the African Union Commission's unwavering commitment to continue supporting the component of AMCOW on water and sanitation for the social and economic development of our beloved continent.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and look forward to the key outcomes of your meeting.

Obrigado! Merci beaucoup! Shukuran! Asante Sana!!!

ⁱ <https://www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2019/>