



United Nations Office
to Support the International Decade for Action
'Water for Life' 2005-2015

Media Information

Zaragoza, Spain, 9 April 2009
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ANNOUNCEMENT

International Meeting on Water and Cooperation in Africa

20–22 April 2009

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

Co-organizers:

Casa Africa / United Nations Office to Support the
International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005–2015

- **Participants: Ministerial level from eight African countries, intergovernmental cooperation institutions, African Minister' Council, African Union, United Nations, international non-governmental organizations, international experts, among others.**
- **Themes: Water governance and cooperation – Reinforcing cooperation tools and mechanisms – Challenges facing the water and sanitation services in Africa.**

Zaragoza, Spain: Casa Africa and the United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005–2015 (UNO-IDfA) are co-organizing the International Meeting on Water and Cooperation in Africa in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, from 20 to 22 April 2009.

Objective

The main objective of the meeting is to reinforce cooperation tools and mechanisms that will strengthen the capacities of African countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to 'halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation'.

On current trends sub-Saharan Africa will reach the water target in 2040 and the sanitation target in 2076. What are the main difficulties African States face in extending their water and sanitation services? And what is the current role of international cooperation in relation to water governance issues in Africa? Sub-Saharan Africa, the region most in need of improved access to water supply and sanitation received from 2002-2007 a quarter of worldwide international aid.

This international meeting provides a platform to allow relevant stakeholders to exchange views in a dialogue on the role of international cooperation in the water governance field in Africa. It will provide a forum for identifying and evaluating existing coordination, information exchange and monitoring mechanisms. It will also aim to identify gaps and key obstacles impeding the achievement of water and sanitation targets in the African region; examine actions implemented by cooperating actors on non-covered needs in the areas of water governance, water supply and sanitation in Africa; and better orientate existing cooperation efforts to enhance their effectiveness in the water and sanitation fields.

The meeting is structured around the following themes: water governance and cooperation in Africa, challenges African States face in extending their water and sanitation services, and key aspects for improving the contribution of international cooperation to the achievement of water and sanitation-related MDGs and the ultimate goal of 'water and sanitation for all'.

Participants

- High-level participants, such as senior government officials, responsible for strategic planning in the water and sanitation sectors and the provision of water and sanitation services for the following African countries: Angola, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia and Senegal.
- Representatives from intergovernmental cooperation institutions from Africa and governmental cooperation institutions from Spain including: the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the African Union (UA), the African Water Facility (AWF), and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID), among others.
- Experts from international, African and Spanish non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representing civil society involved in international cooperation efforts in the water and sanitation sectors including: Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Water Management Institute (IWMI), African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW), the Spanish NGOs Coordination (CONGDE), Oxfam International (OI), the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), among others.
- Representatives from different United Nations agencies and programmes, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

The meeting is open to the media. For further information on registration please contact Ms. Pilar González Meyauri (gonzalez-meyauri@un.org).

About the Organizers

The United Nations Office to Support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005–2015 (UNO-IDfA): In 2003, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the years 2005–2015 the ***International Decade for Action 'Water for Life'***. The primary goal of the Decade is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015. To facilitate the implementation of the Decade's agenda, the City of Zaragoza in Spain hosts the UNO-IDfA.

UNO-IDfA aims to contribute to the efforts of the United Nations in coordinating and ensuring follow-up to the implementation of internationally agreed goals in the areas of drinking water, sanitation and Integrated Water Resources Management, raising awareness and creating an enabling environment for achieving the ultimate goal of water and sanitation for all, and strengthening the capacities of Member States and other relevant stakeholders to address key obstacles impeding the implementation of the water and sanitation agenda.

Casa Africa is a public consortium created within the framework of Spain's Africa Plan. It was established as a result of a joint effort on the part of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC) and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID) among others. Casa Africa was created as a space to facilitate open exchange and meetings among citizens of Africa and Spain. Its objectives are to promote awareness of the respective realities of Spain and Africa, and enhance overall Spanish-African cooperation as well as African-European dialogue between both cultures.