



**UNESCO/NGO'S CONFERENCE ON ACCESS TO WATER
FOR ALL IN AFRICA**

**COMPILED BY:
DR MARTIN VAN VEELLEN
Federation of African Engineering Organisations President**

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Author: Dr Martin van Veelen

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Approved for FAEO by:

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Dr Martin van Veelen
PRESIDENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Conference was organised by the ONG Comité de Liaison UNESCO (International Forum of NGOS in partnership with UNESCO).

Access to safe drinking water for all in Africa is a human and economic imperative in the context of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. It has an impact on poverty, illiteracy and health. Africa is rich in water, especially when the 660 000 cubic km of groundwater is taken into account. The objective is therefore to identify the processes and obstacles to realise the goal. A declaration was prepared at the conclusion of the Conference.

2. OPENING

The conference was attended by various dignitaries and was opened by the Minister for education, Côte d'Ivoire, Mme Kandia Camara. A video transmission from Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General: UNESCO was televised. Another presentation was made by Ms Lalla Ben Barka, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Africa. She emphasised two priorities: Africa and Gender Equality. There is a brochure on the programme and priorities for Africa.

Another organisation that was represented was the World Federation of Scientific Workers.

A question to be asked is why we as Engineers are not specifically involved in a subject that is essentially an engineering issue, namely water supply.

3. PAPERS

A number of papers were presented at the conference. The most important points from each paper are given below.

3.1 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WATER SECURITY FOR ALL IN AFRICA: MR ABOU AMANI, REGIONAL HYDROLOGIST FOR AFRICA.

***Programme Specialist,
UNESCO Office in Nairobi Kenya***

One third of MDGs depend on water. Water is the key to sustainable development in Africa. There are a number of actions/organisations involved in water supply:

- Africa Water Vision 2025
- Africa Ministerial Council on Water
- African Groundwater Commission
- Water Basin Authorities

Africa has much water, but it is not distributed evenly and water losses during transmission and distribution are high.

During the discussion session M van Veelen made the following comment:

Water is distributed unevenly. We need to take water to people, which requires money. Shortage is money, not water. Sustainability needs to take into account assurance of supply and reliability, not only access.

3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT RC-IRBM AND NWRI, KADUNA, NIGERIA. MR OMOGBEMI O YAYA.

*Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management (RC-IRBM),
Kaduna, Nigeria*

Not presented.

3.3 WEALTH, ENVY AND CONFLICTS AROUND WATER IN ETIOPIA. MRS AÏCHA DABALE.

Vice President of KARERA – Femmes de la Corne de l’Afrique, Ethiopia

Not presented.

Mr Michel Tozan (Ivory Coast) made some pertinent points:

- AMCEN: African Ministerial Council on the Environment is a role player.
- Ivory Coast has 12 rivers, of which 8 are shared. There are six hydropower plants.
- Spiritual value of water to Christians needs to be appreciated.
- Spiritual value of water to Muslims needs to be appreciated.

3.4 CONTRIBUTION OF WASTEWATER IN THE POLLUTION OF ECOSYSTEMS, RIVERS AND LAKES AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH RISKS. MR GUÉLADIO CISSE.

Research Group Leader, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute

There are four sources of wastewater: Domestic, Agriculture, Industrial, and Storm water. The main role of NGOs is awareness raising and intervention between role players.

3.5 INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM) DEALING WITH POLLUTION. MR PHILIPPE VAILLANT.

*Urban Planner, Researcher, Lorraine University, France
Member, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP)*

It was all French to me.

3.6 DOMESTIC POLLUTION, A DAILY CHALLENGE. MRS NICOLE HODONOU.

*Socio-economist Consultant,
Association Miva FED Cote d'Ivoire – Organisation de Solidarite
Internationale et de Cooperation, femmes, Education, Culture et
Developpement – France/Afrique*

The presentation focussed on Abidjan. The lagoon is polluted by Household and Industrial pollutants.

3.7 DOMESTIC POLLUTION'S CONSEQUENCES ON HUMAN BEINGS AND HEALTH. MRS MARIAM TRAORE KONATE.

Soroptimist International

Domestic use is mainly in the form of household tasks performed by women. This includes some irrigation of vegetable plots. The use of pesticides and fertilisers for gardens is a cause of pollution.

3.8 WATER RESOURCE SHARING IN THE INNER NIGER DELTA, MALI. MR BAKARY KONE.

Nationale Coordinator (Mali), Wetlands International Africa)

The main problem is variability in flow. There are two million people, mostly fishermen. Also production of rice and cattle farming. There is a very big bird population. During periods of low flow there is conflict between the different user groups. Schools are used as centres of information to distribute the message on what the plan is.

3.9 ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH EDUCATION. MRS DANIELLE PERUCHON.

Statement was made that 75% of women are illiterate. The paper did not address water specifically.

*President of the French National Committee,
World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP)*

3.10 ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER: A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT AND A FACTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA. MRS JOCELYN MILANDOU.

*Vice-President of the Supreme Court of Congo
Vice-President, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers
(IFWLC)*

National President of Women in Legal Careers (AFJC), Congo

Presentation focussed on some projects in the DRC.

**3.11 WATER MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS: PUBLIC SERVICE/PRIVATE SERVICE.
MR CHEIKHOU SYLLA.**

***Professor of Public Law, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal
National Secretary, Syndicat unique et democratique des enseignants
(SUDES)***

The presentation focussed on Senegal.

**3.12 GENDER, WATER AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS):
THE DIATOKRO EXPERIENCE. MRS EUPHRASIE YAO.**

***Co-Director, UNESCO Chair “Water, Women and Decision-making” (Cote
d’Ivoire),
Charge of gender and development activities***

The water supply infrastructure was improved, but the community was not able to maintain it properly. Women and children were involved in the subsequent process of water supply infrastructure development. This took the form of education and training, including financial and accounting training. It is a singular success story; the villagers are very proud of what they accomplished and are very aware of the value of the service that is provided.

**3.13 SUPPORT TO THE DROUGHT RISK MANAGEMENT IN WEST AFRICA
THROUGH THE PROVISION OF CLIMATE INFORMATION –
AGRHYMET/UNESCO INITIATIVE FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS. MR ABDOU ALI.**

Senior Hydroclimatologist, Regional Centre AGRHYMET (CRA), Niger

Project AGRHYMET/UNESCO is for information dissemination. There are 13 members and information is shared by means of a website. Can also make long term weather predictions.

**3.14 FEMINIZATION OF WATERPOINTS MANAGEMENT IN RURAL AREAS:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES. MRS SOLANGE SANOGO KONE.**

***Coordinator of the Association de soutien a l'autopromotion sanitaire
et urbaine (ASAPSU), Cote d’Ivoire***

Water point management is mainly the responsibility of men, but they are not necessarily in a hurry to repair the pump when it breaks down. It would be better if it

was the responsibility of women, who after all have a vested interest in the functionality of a water point.

3.15 PRACTICES OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATIONS OF MIGRATION BACKGROUND IN FRANCE: INITIATIVES WITH MEKONG POPULATIONS. MRS BRICE MONNOU.

Director, Femmes et contributions au développement (FECODEV), Benin

FECODEV is an organisation of expatriate women which undertakes water related projects.

3.16 THE CHALLENGES OF SHARING WATER RESOURCES: DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION. MS LENA SALAME.

*Programme Specialist, Water and Sustainable Development Section
Natural Sciences Sector, UNESCO*

Water demand is ever increasing. Not only because of an increasing population, but also due to an increase in the per capita use of water. At the same time the variability in run-off increases the risk of insufficient water. This causes competition for water and conflict.

There are a large number of shared river basins, and even more shared groundwater basins. There is therefore a need to have laws in place that will prevent conflict. The laws must address both quantity and quality, surface water and ground water.

What is also needed is an agreed form of dispute resolution. The international court should be a last resort.

The very basis for all of this is complete and reliable information (own comment).

3.17 MOBILIZE THE POTENTIAL OF THE DIASPORA FOR A LASTING PEACE IN AFRICA. MRS KHADY SAKHO NIANG.

President, Forum des organisations de solidarite internationale issues des migrations (Forum)

I could not really grasp what the thrust of this presentation was.

4. DISCUSSION SESSION AND CONCLUSION

The discussion was mostly about the issues that were raised during the presentations. Delegates who made contributions shared their own experiences and knowledge.

- **Moderators: Mrs Aicha Bah Diallo and Mrs Martine Levy,
Coordinators of the Working Group Africa Forum of the NGO-UNESCO
Liaison Committee**

5. YAMOUSSOUKRO DECLARATION

The following declaration was accepted at the closing of the conference:

We, participants in the NGO Forum,

In the knowledge that Africa is water rich and that technology has the capability of cleaning it and distributing it to all,

Considering that universal access to drinking/potable water is a condition of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of extreme poverty eradication, education, health,

1. *Wish for all to have access to the minimum amount of water for drinking, cooking, bathing, i.e. 20l of free clean water per person per day;*
2. *Consider that, for the MDGs to be achieved, the MDGs post 2015 should include legally binding clauses, which all governments should abide to. Non-government Organisations (NGO) will have to use that in order to work together with communities and in partnership with all role-players;*
3. *Are determined to be effective in order to finally eliminate thirst, disease and death due to dirty and contaminated water, or due to lack of water.*
4. *Call on all governments to implement the recognition of the right to universal access to potable water, through institutional arrangements and relevant practical interventions;*
5. *Invite governments to support the work of the intergovernmental working group, which was established by the United Nations Human Rights Council on 26 June 2014, on a legally binding instrument regarding multinational companies and other businesses, and human rights;*
6. *Finally, we appeal to civil society as a whole to support this plea, sensitise local role-players, and actively contribute to the realisation of these goals for humanity.*

6. ASSESSMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference was mainly attended by NGOs and a few scientists. The accessibility to water was mostly seen from the point of view of the end user, and not really the supply chain. Conflicting and competing uses were not considered in much depth. Nonetheless, it is good for us as engineers to listen to the end user so that we can get a better understanding of what they perceive as a sustainable service. We will

however have to find a way to interact meaningfully. The Engineer's language is not the same as the NGO language.

The Yamoussoukro declaration provides part of what can be seen as the definition of sustainable water supply, namely 20l of clean water per person per day at no cost to the user. However, it does not provide a maximum walking distance, or a maximum elevation difference from the home to the supply point. Added to this should be a minimum flow (maximum time to fill a jerrycan of water). This will allow the engineer to design the supply and distribution system.