



CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT - AFRICASAN + 5,

**Durban, South Africa
(18th – 20th Feb 2008)**

Introduction

The civil society in many parts of the world has been instrumental in water development, through its direct involvement in water supply and sanitation, campaigns for national legislation, public awareness and empowerment of individuals and communities. In 2003, ANEW (African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation) was formed as an umbrella body for all the African CSOs dealing the different facets of Water and Sanitation, particularly advocacy. The primary aims and objectives of ANEW are to:

- Provide a vehicle for a collective voice for African CSOs and the communities they serve,
- Strengthen the capacities of member CSOs in organizational development, advocacy and communication skills,
- Strengthen and assist members of the network in their actions for sustainable and equitable management of water and sanitation,
- Network and form alliances with other networks and organizations that have similar aims and objectives,
- Contribute to the political prioritization of water and sanitation with a view of assisting national states to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015,
- Facilitate a participatory approach to water governance, and
- Monitor and evaluate the progress on the international commitments on water and sanitation.

Under ANEW, Water and Sanitation CSOs in Africa have gone a long way in the provision of potable water and adequate sanitation facilities, especially in rural and urban informal settlements. In future, the involvement of civil society organisations in water policy making will provide the opportunity for the lessons learnt from the implementation of these programmes to significantly benefit the African population. Indeed, in recognition of the above, AMCOW signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ANEW in 2007. What now remains is the actualization of this important partnership. ANEW is also committed to working with other water and sanitation stakeholders in Africa.

Preamble

We members of African Civil Society, having met during the AfricaSan + 5 conference on Sanitation and Hygiene, held from 18th to 20th February 2008 in Durban, South Africa, reaffirm our commitments to partnership towards the attainment of the MDGs and JPOI targets on water and sanitation in Africa;

Recognising that sanitation is a basic need and a fundamental human right necessary for human dignity and health;

Recognising that the development of sustainable sanitation solutions is a prime responsibility of our African Governments;

Acknowledging the primary role of achieving the Water and Sanitation MDG targets (10 and 11) in the attainment of practically all the other MDG targets;

Realizing that attainment of the MDGs is only the beginning of a long journey towards having ALL Africans enjoying sustainable Water and Sanitation services;

Recognising the commitments of the Heads of States and Governments, at the Millennium and WSSD Summits and AfricaSan and their acknowledgement of the valuable role of CSOs in order to achieve the MDGs;

Acknowledging the urgent need for decentralization of governmental structures which provide sanitation to the lowest practical levels in their respective countries;

Hereby express the following concerns:

That:

1. The majority of African countries are still off track in the attainment of the sanitation MDG target. With only 8 years to go before 2015, such countries must immediately shift gears and embark on a 'business **unusual**' mode of operation;
2. In our opinion, the above state has been brought about by low prioritization of sanitation in the different African countries, low investments in sanitation, inadequate devotion of resources for the development of sustainable sanitation solutions and inadequate involvement of the civil society,;
3. One way of making steady and rapid progress is to accord due significance to hygiene and sanitation promotion for example in schools. It is well understood that hand washing can eliminate the incidence of > 40 % of some of the well known killer diseases e.g. diarrhoea. NB. Targeting school children is one of the well known strategies of conveying messages to local communities;

4. All African governments should declare their countries as being Open Defecation Free
5. Another important aspect is the implementation of sanitation programmes using appropriate technological options which are acceptable to the recipient communities;
6. Communities should participate fully in all the phases of technology i.e. design and selection, implementation and evaluation. One size does not fit all! Furthermore, sustainability should not be limited to technology. Rather, it should embrace a holistic approach including hygiene and health;
7. The management and use of sanitation has not adequately recognized the central role that is played by women;
8. The management and valuation of sanitation has not adequately taken into consideration the contribution of indigenous knowledge systems, capacity building of stakeholders and local enterprises;
9. African governments should acknowledge sanitation as a basic human right and accord it commensurate attention and resources;
10. African governments should implement the three ones i.e. one sanitation policy, one coordination mechanism and one implementation process;

We commit ourselves to the principles of partnership, capacity building and open scrutiny, transparency, accountability, information and knowledge exchange;

We further commit ourselves to combine the existing means at the local, national and regional levels (local collectivities, civil society and private sector) to share and partner in action (costs, risks, results, impacts) in the spirit of solidarity;

In pursuance of the above, we urge all African Governments and their partners in development to further re-commit themselves to the challenges posed by the requirements of attaining the Sanitation MDG target. We specifically call upon our partners to recognize important role played by civil society in awareness raising, capacity building and in implementation at all levels and up-scaling Water and Sanitation programmes in Africa.

Water is life; Sanitation is dignity and health!