

From H.E. Pascal Houangni Ambouroué, Minister of Water, Energy and Mines, Republic of Gabon / AMCOW President



I am honored and equally humbled to assume the Presidency of AMCOW for the next two years to 2020. While it is an exciting and honoring moment for us as the Republic of Gabon, we are fully aware of the challenges ahead of us during our tenure.

However, we take this challenge as a noble cause as we continue making AMCOW stronger and raising it at its rightful place in the continent and the world at large as the “true voice of Africa on Water and Sanitation issues”.

As I take over the Presidency of AMCOW, I would like to whole-heartedly thank HE Prof Makame Mbarawa (MP), Minister of Water and irrigation of the United Republic of Tanzania, for steering AMCOW over the last two years. It is during his tenure that AMCOW produced its blue-print, the 2018-2030 Strategy to provide strategic direction for Africa’s water and sanitation sector.

I pledge to continue from where the Honorable Minister left and believe that with your collective support AMCOW can focus on the following priorities:

Water security

Africa is the third driest continent, one the most water insecure and most vulnerable to climate change. During the next two years, AMCOW will endeavor to sensitize member states and promote infrastructure development aimed at increase storage, reducing the impact of floods and droughts, and developing our capacity for better planning and forecasting, developing decision support scenarios.

Specifically, while groundwater is utilized by over 70% of our populations for domestic uses, it is the less known, poorly managed both at national and trans-boundary aquifers levels. We need to learn more about the complexity of aquifer systems, the increasing risk of groundwater depletion, the deterioration of groundwater quality, and create the resilience of communities and populations dependent on groundwater sources. During my tenure, I would like to see that AMCOW set up a fully functional Groundwater Desk at the Secretariat to help the continent better understand groundwater resources and strengthen our management and development capacity both at national and continental levels.

Water supply, Sanitation and Hygiene

Sanitation has been for long the poor cousin of water. While we are proud of having managed to raise it at the level of global commitments as part of the SDG6, it is time that this commitment be demonstrated into formulation of clear policies and strategies, increased financial allocations to WASH programmes and dedicated human resources capacity development. More specifically, we need to stand up, all together, and end open defecation in Africa. In this regard, I will work with the Secretariat, member states and relevant partners to ensure that the Africa Sanitation Policy Guidelines (ASPG) providing a framework for the development of Country Specific Sanitation Policies is finalized and adopted. I will also work with AMCOW member states and stakeholders to build a strong advocacy case and establish a high level multi-sectoral platform including ministers of Finance, Agriculture, and Environment, Water resources to devise mechanisms and decide on how water can be managed sustainably for the benefit of a harmonious and sustainable socio-economic development.

Knowledge and Monitoring of water and sanitation progress (WASSMO)

Our technical officers continuously face challenges on availability of good quality data and information during development of feasibility studies for infrastructure development. At our level

and that of the AU Summit, our decision making process continues to suffer from scarcity of evidences or contradictory information from different reports. It is imperative that we strengthen the AMCOW-led Pan-African Water and Sanitation monitoring system into a world class, reliable source of information on water and sanitation in Africa, and establish at AMCOW Secretariat a hub of hubs for knowledge and information on the sector as well as a knowledge and data broker. During my tenure, I will like to mobilise required human and financial resources as well as strategic partnership, and establish and operationalize the Knowledge Management and Monitoring function as a flagship project of AMCOW.

AMCOW Institutional strengthening process

There is a clear and obvious mismatch between the current capacity at the Secretariat and the mandate that AMCOW has as enshrined in our Vision. For us to effectively deliver on our mandate, we need to strengthen the capacity at the Secretariat in terms of Human Resources, Systems and Processes, and improve the effectiveness of different governance organs of AMCOW. During my tenure, I would like to see that the Secretariat is strengthened, more effective and efficient, and contributing more to supporting member states efforts. At the same time, I will endeavor to work with you on enhancing the functionality and effectiveness of different Governance Organs of AMCOW such as the Sub-Regional levels that will enable us work effectively with the Regional Economic Communities and Lake and River Basin Organizations.

Lastly, I continue to urge member states to commit to strengthen AMCOW Secretariat by paying their country contributions and arrears. The financial sustainability of AMCOW Secretariat and our development partners' confidence and trust as well as our resource mobilization capacity depend on that.

Together, we will work to achieve the Agenda 2063, the SDG goal 6 and the Africa 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 co-operation and the environment.

I thank you!