



— THE WATER — DIPLOMAT

Africa 21, Dakar, Saturday 21 August 2022

During the week of 15-19 August 2022, the Africa 21 Association and its partner, The Water Diplomat, organised a workshop on water issues in Africa with journalists from the sub-region. Sixteen journalists were invited to attend face-to-face and nearly 97 journalists from 14 African countries registered to participate online.

The objectives were to provide journalists with essential knowledge on water policy and management, to foster the conditions for debate and to put them in touch with the actors and organisations involved in the issue. These objectives were largely met, as evidenced by the dozens of articles published for the occasion, and a competition on water issues, the results of which will be announced on 21 September 2022.

Learning to manage water resources in an increasingly complicated context

As Dr Aïda Diongue-Niang of the IPCC reminded us, the impact of climate change on water resources in Africa is already very visible. According to her, "Africa needs transformational measures; to achieve this, all elements of society must be involved. (...) Policy responses must be made, based on science and endogenous knowledge. States must support and promote the continent's scientists so that they can participate in the massive development of data on climate change. She called for Africa to address these issues and turn them into an opportunity for the continent at COP 27 and beyond.

Water knows no boundaries

As Dr Babacar Barry, Scientific Advisor of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, said, "water is important for the development of our countries, (...) without water our countries cannot take off. Water can be a problem and cause conflicts, (...) but it can also be a factor in bringing people together (...). Water knows no borders".

"We must promote water security for all", said Amina Mohamed, UN Under-Secretary-General, during the African Water Week on 19 November 2021. "This includes transboundary water cooperation, which can help build peace and prevent conflict. For her, the only remedy is "to encourage all governments to adhere to, implement and respect the two water conventions".

But much remains to be done, according to Dr Komlan Sangbana, the West and Central African focal point for the UNECA water conventions. At present, only two countries in Africa have operational arrangements covering all transboundary waters out of the 48 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Secretariat of the Conventions therefore calls for a massive appropriation of these instruments by African States.

Faced with the double challenge of the scarcity of water resources and the increase in demand linked, among other things, to the phenomenon of urbanisation on the continent, it is essential to find





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sustainable solutions. "We need to rethink the use of water from a circular economy perspective in order to provide services in a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient manner," insists Dr Barry.

For Thierry Amoussougbo, Head of Training and Research at the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (UNECA), journalists have a key role to play: that of informing, educating and raising awareness. In conclusion, he called for those who had attended the workshop to become ambassadors for water on the continent.

New York in focus

Africa 21 and The Water Diplomat will organise until March 2023, 4 new meetings: Nairobi, Rabat, Geneva and Pretoria, with the final objective of inviting the best journalists from the various training courses to the ten-year water summit in New York, scheduled for 22-24 March 2023.

This objective is both a challenge and a consecration.

In order to sustain this new dynamic, Africa 21 and The Water Diplomat will launch a "Water Dialogue". This wider dynamic will allow African journalists to follow the major international conferences on water in a qualitative way, as it is unthinkable that the African press be absent from these important moments for the future of African states.

You can find the whole workshop by following the link below: <https://www.africa21.org/projet/atelier-pour-journalistes-dakar-2022-sur-les-enjeux-de-leau-dakar-du-15-au-19-aout-2022/>

Would you like to know more? Do not hesitate to contact us by emails: info@africa21.org or info@waterdiplomat.org

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