



## Press Release:

### International High-Level Panel of sitting and former Heads of State launched, to mobilise Water Investments in Africa

**Dakar, March 29, 2022:** An International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa, which will draw representatives from current and former Heads of State as well as other global leaders, has been formally launched at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

The panel is led by three Co-chairs: **H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal**, as Co-Chair in his capacity as Chair of the African Union; **H.E Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Kingdom of the Netherlands**, as Co-Chair in his capacity as co-host of the UN 2023 International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, and **H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia**, as Co-Chair in his capacity as host country of the Presidency of AMCOW; and an **Alternate Co-Chair, H.E Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania**, in his capacity as Chair of the board of GWPSA-Africa Coordination Unit, which is the host of the Joint Secretariat for the convenors

Announcing the launch of the Panel on March 25 at the closing ceremony of the World Water Forum, H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union, in a statement read on his behalf by Hon. Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation for the Republic of Senegal, said:

“The objective of the Panel is to develop actionable pathways for mobilising USD30 billion annually till 2030, for implementing the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) and to close the existing water investment gap in Africa,” said H.E. President Macky Sall.

The AIP was adopted by African Union Heads of State and Government in February 2021, as part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

“I call on African governments, development partners, development finance institutions, and water sector stakeholders assembled here today to seize the opportunity presented by the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments to elevate the agenda of water to the highest levels of decision making. In the coming few months, I will convene the first meeting of experts here in Dakar, Senegal to prepare for the first panel meeting’, said H.E. President Macky Sall.

*Click [here](#) to read the statement from Hon. Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water Sanitation, during the closing ceremony of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum Dakar.*

H.E. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of The Netherlands and Co-Chair of the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa said, “I applaud the African Union for this investment initiative and the fact that we are doing this together with African leadership. The return on water investment is high because investment into water trickles down into all of the Sustainable Development Goals. Every Dollar invested comes back to us five times over in the form

of protection from floods and droughts, food security, better health, stronger economies and biodiversity,” added H.E. Mark Rutte.

Welcoming the launch of the panel, H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania said, “Addressing the water investment gap in Africa requires bold leadership. We salute the leadership of H.E President Macky Sall for taking a bold step, as Chairman of the African Union, to formally launch the establishment of The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates that Africa needs to invest USD64 billion into water and sanitation annually in order to achieve the Africa Water Vision of Water Security for All by 2025. In reality, only US\$10-US\$19 billion is invested each year, leaving a huge investment gap of US\$45-US\$54 billion a year.

The Panel is convened by the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW), African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, African Development Bank (AfDB), Global Water Partnership (GWP), and Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) - following a Convenor’s Resolution signed on 12 August 2021.

The convenors of the panel have nominated five African sitting heads of states to join the panel from each sub-region of Africa: Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Western Africa, and Southern Africa. The panel will be composed of serving Heads of States from Africa and the developed countries. The convenors of the panel will also be represented in the panel.

H.E. Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs for the Netherlands, and Co-Chair of the Sherpas of the panel said, “Next year the world turns to water for the second UN Water Conference, since 1977, that the Netherlands proudly co-hosts together with Tajikistan. Now is the time to come together. The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa can motivate effective action across governments, civil society, the private sector, and beyond to put their commitment on the agenda for 2023!”

During the opening plenary of the 9th World Water Forum, H.E. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, in a speech read on his behalf by Vice President of Republic of The Gambia H.E. Dr Isatou Touray announced their acceptance to join the panel as a member.

“The Republic of Gambia is honored to have been nominated by the convenors to join the panel along with other distinguished Heads of States and global leaders. Higher frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as drought and flooding in The Gambia will lead to increasing water quantity and quality problems, including salinization in wetland and mangrove ecosystems and loss of productivity of croplands in both uplands and lowland leading to significant developmental challenges compounded by growing population and climatic change. This is why the Gambia is happy to participate in the panel,” said H.E. Adama Barrow.

The formal launch of the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments in Africa on 25 March 2022 was preceded by a High-Level Panel Event on the 23 March during 9th World Water Forum.

During the high-level panel event, H.E. Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD said, “There is no conceivable way that Africa can achieve its developmental agenda without a rapid acceleration of investment into the continent’s water and sanitation infrastructure, systems, financing mechanisms, and institutional framework.”

Mr Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP, welcomed the panel and committed UNDP support to establish an AIP international blended investment facility that will work with existing project preparation facilities in Africa and globally to mobilise water investments. “Guided by the Global Goals, the UNDP and the UN Family are committed to working with all partners and convenors of the Panel to mobilise resources to ensure that there is safe water for all,” said Mr Steiner.

Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of the GCA, one of the panel convenors and member of the panel, stressed that water is at the centre of adaptation. “Adaptation investment in water is not only the right thing to do, it is the economically smart thing to do. The annual cost of adaptation in Sub-Saharan Africa is USD6bn but the annual cost of inaction is USD91bn. This is why GCA jointly with AfDB, has initiated the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme, which will mobilize USD25 billion to scale up climate adaptation actions across Africa,” said Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen.

Ms Janet Rogan, COP26 Regional Ambassador: Middle East and Africa, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) United Kingdom, also addressed the high-level event and urged countries, “to place water at the centre when considering sustainable climate resilient development across sectors.”

Ms Maria Sotomayor, Practice Manager for Africa Region with the World Bank Water Global Practice, assured the Panel Convenors that the World Bank is committed to improving country capacity in implementation and efficiency of water projects and preparing bankable water projects for financing.

At the same high-level event, the Republic of Zambia welcomed the Panel and pledged their support. “The Panel will provide the necessary leadership in mobilization and implementation of water security investments across the African continent and island states,” said Hon. Mike Mposha, Minister of Water Development and Sanitation.

H.E. Howard Bamsey, Chair: Global Water Partnership, who spoke on behalf of the panel convenors at the high-level event, said, “The initiative depends on the support of many international organisations that are part of it, but at its heart, it’s an Africa initiative designed and implemented in Africa to provide a more water secure future for the people of Africa.”

Mr. Alex Simalabwi, Head of the Joint Secretariat for the panel convenors and Executive Secretary of GWPSA-Africa, who moderated the high-level panel event, welcomed the launch of the panel and commended the panel convenors as well as the panel co-chairs led by H.E. President Macky Sall, Chairperson of the African Union, for their leadership and commitment to the African development agenda and urged organisations and governments supporting the Panel to retain the agenda of water investments in Africa at the highest level through to the 2023 UN Water Conference, and beyond towards 2030.

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Read more about the AIP here: <https://aipwater.org/>

