

**STATEMENT DELIVERED AT THE POST 2015 THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS ON:
WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT & WATER
QUALITY
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
FEBRUARY 27, 2013**



Mr. Gábor Baranyai, Deputy State Secretary for EU Sectoral Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hungary, on Water for Peace;
Ms. Ruth Beukman, Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership - Southern African Regional Partnership, on Governing and Managing Water Resources for Sustainable Development;
Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation;
Mr. Michel Jarraud, Chair to UN-Water, Secretary-General of WMO
Mr. Sven Alkalaj, Executive Secretary, UNECE;
Mr. Bert Diphorn, Director for Human Settlements and Financing Division, UN-HABITAT;
Ms. Maria Neira, Director, Public Health and Environment, World Health Organization;
Mr. Peter McCornick, Deputy Director General for Research, International Water Management Institute, on Water for Food;
Mr. Joppe Cramwinckel, Director for Water, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, on Water for Energy, Energy for Water;
Mr. Michael H. Glantz, Director, Consortium for Capacity Building, University of Colorado, on Climate Change and Water-related Risks;
Mr. Anada Tiéga, Secretary General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, on Water for Nature, Nature for Water;
Officials of the Convening Government, the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SADC):

The President of Liberia, HE Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Attorney Samuel Kofi Woods, Minister of Public Works have requested me to extend warm greetings and express thanks and deep appreciation for the invitation extended by the Government of Switzerland to participate in the final sub-thematic consultations for setting an international agenda for the “World We Want, beyond 2015”. Thanks for hosting this segment and the warm hospitality and support provided the participation of Liberia, representing the rest of Africa in this instance. Her Excellency’s final greetings and appreciation go to fellow co-chairs who have worked assiduously and followed through during the series of consultations.

I am indeed humbled to represent the President of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is also Goodwill Ambassador for Water, Sanitation & Hygiene for Africa and Co-chair on the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the ongoing Post 2015 MDGs sub-thematic Consultations on Water: Water Resources Management (WRM), Wastewater Management & Water Quality. Her absence in this very important milestone meeting is certainly unavoidable due to pressing state matters. Immediate intervention in these pressing issues has also made the participation of Atty. Samuel Kofi Woods, Minister of Public Works impossible.

You will however remember that on the 28th and 29th of January 2013, under the Co-chairperson of Her Excellency, the world converged on Monrovia, the capital City of Liberia to increase voices from a broad range of stakeholders to build a consensus around key future challenges in water, sanitation & hygiene and the need for a new global water goal in the post-2015 development agenda. ***Of course the weather condition of Monrovia is just about the very opposite for Geneva!*** The sub-thematic engagements which galvanized participation of over 50 countries, development partners, civil society organizations and a host of ordinary citizens of Liberia resulted in what is now known as the ***“Monrovia Declaration for the High Level Panel on Post MDGs Development Framework”***. Held under the auspices of the African Union (AU) and the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) key outcomes of the deliberations, lifted the voice of Africa as a continent of immense resources and potentials for transforming the standard of living of its population, although has borne the worst brunt of water-borne, water related and sanitation related illness. Sadly also a continent that has seen the lives of its unborn and young population wasted needlessly.

The statistics are revealing: About 1.2 million people lack access to safe drinking water and only about 17%; while about 11,900 people die each year in Liberia as a result of poor water and sanitation. Of water-related, water-borne and sanitation related diseases under five death 2,600 Liberian children die each year. Only 12% of Liberian women have access to safe sanitation in Liberia. The continental image is also very bleak for Africa, as 31% of its population lack access to safe drinking water and about 230 million people defecate in the open. About 3.4 million deaths are attributed to poor or inadequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene annually while 50% of patient load on hospital beds are due to water and sanitation diseases.

On behalf of Her Excellency, we have come to this forum to re-affirm the commitment of the Liberian leadership in exerting every effort to drive a new agenda that will afford every citizen, irrespective of color or creed, nationality or economic or political status the ability to

access the vital and basic right to water, sanitation and hygiene. Part of this commitment is to ensure the participation of Liberia in the remaining sub-thematic consultations that will lead to the final summary statement to the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons in The Hague, Netherlands on March 21st and 22nd, 2013.

As a way of ensuring that the two days of active interaction in Geneva, Switzerland, we wish to present the key messages of Africa voice as stated in the Monrovia Declaration:

“The post 2015 development agenda for Africa as relates to the water management should be premised on the [Africa Water Vision 2025](#);

[Water](#) is essential in the future development framework in order to attain vital economic, health, educational, agriculture/food and energy benefits;

[Water](#) is also a pre-requisite for maintaining ecosystems services and supporting resilience to climate change;

Universal [access to sustainable safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene](#) in our time is a crucial requirement;

Making fundamental changes in African [water resource management](#) is the basis of water security and sustainable development;

[Wastewater](#) is not wasted water – it is a resource in environmental and economic terms;

We can and [we must prevent the polluting impact of wastewater](#), ensuring its re-use at appropriate quality, and reaping the financial, health and environmental benefits.

A collective global action and response is required now. Africa has had its share of feasibility studies and planning. Liberia has benefitted immensely from our membership in the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) global initiative and our recent engagement with Water and Sanitation for Africa (WSA). This has laid the platform for jump starting the post 2015 global agenda. We want action now and not studies as our waiting population is restless and cannot wait.

The evidence for action is clear - a healthy human society has direct impact on the wellbeing and productivity of succeeding population as well as sustaining freshwater eco systems, water and sanitation are human rights and increasingly widely recognized as such and essential for ensuring food and energy security. The rights to water, sanitation and hygiene can only be achieved if the cross sectorial inter linkages are taken into account and the wider benefits established.

We should not forget the lessons learnt from unfinished business or the 2015 MDGs implementation. Therefore the basis for action should include striving to meet those goals that can be achieved with the remaining length of the race to the finish line as every minute counts as we are “doctors in a theatre” heeding emergency calls.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the essence of the Monrovia Declaration; this is the Voice of Africa.