

ANEW influence at the African Union

ANEW worked with the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union Commission to facilitate discussions at a pre-summit meeting ahead of July's AU summit in Egypt, around how to influence the African Heads of State. Geof Khwarae was among the ANEW delegation at the pre-meeting and Jamillah Mwanjisi, the Executive Secretary of ANEW was a representative at the AU Summit itself. The meeting resulted in a CSO declaration at the opening ceremony of the AU summit. But the event lacked a clear roadmap for the future when it ended days later.

When the African leaders adopted *Water & Sanitation* as the theme for this year's summit, we were all excited. This was the first time that water and sanitation was the focus of a high level political agenda and civil society was given an opportunity to directly address the Heads of State and governments in Africa.

This was made possible due to countless efforts of different stakeholders at the continental and global levels, who for many months have been advocating for high level political commitment on water and sanitation in Africa.

However, the preparation and excitement didn't help the heads of states to stay focused on the theme. The political dilemma in Zimbabwe and Presidents Mugabe's conflicts with his political opponent took the centre stage. The politicians and the media were so focused on Zimbabwe that very few people remembered that water and sanitation was the theme of the summit.

The heads of states used a few hours on the first day of the summit to discuss the water and sanitation issues. President Jakaya Kikwete, the Chair of African Union and President of Tanzania ended his speech by mentioning the impact of poor sanitation and unsafe water to people's health and development.

All the other leaders that followed also talked about the importance of safe and clean water and proper sanitation for the public's general development. What we lacked however was how they are going to conduct their business differently to rescue the water and sanitation crisis in Africa. Day two of the summit was mostly a closed meeting discussing Mugabe.

IN A BOX

CSO STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

CSOs' commitments

- Work with governments and communities to ensure that water, as a scarce and diminishing resource, is managed sustainably and equitably
- Contribute to improved governance in water and sanitation through constructive independent monitoring and analysis
- Improve our own accountability to the community, through establishing best practice principles, improving civil society coordination, etc.

CSO recommendations

The African Union:

- To institutionalise water and sanitation in the AU, reflecting weaknesses identified in the audit report:
- To establish a water and sanitation champion at the AU (an Economic, Social and Cultural water and sanitation sub-committee and a department at the commission)
- AU to recognise AMCOW as one of its technical committee
- Watsan stays on the AU's agenda, as well as those of heads of state and regional bodies
- To declare water and sanitation as a basic human right

To Member States:

- Endorse the eThekweni declaration on sanitation
- Develop national investment plans for water and sanitation with clear budgets, clear institutional responsibilities, an effective performance monitoring system, and resources devolved to the local level institutions with the responsibility for delivering services

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