

African Union, African Regional Bodies

Recommendation on the fundamental right of access to water and sanitation

Legislation as at 16 May 2013

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Recommendation on the fundamental right of access to water and sanitation

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African Union

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Commenced

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Noting the workshop organised by the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economy, Natural Resources and Environment of the Pan-African Parliament, WaterLex and WaterAid entitled “Supporting action for sustainable access to drinking water and sanitation in Africa”, held in Addis Ababa from 15 to 16 March 2013;

Recognising that water and sanitation are a fundamental right, essential to the well-being, health, dignity and development of our African peoples and our States;

Conscious that access to drinking water, improved sanitation, and installation of adequate hygiene facilities may reduce disease-related illnesses and mortality as well as have an impact on poverty reduction and socio-economic development;

Concerned by the lack of information related to the poor conditions of access to safe drinking water and sanitation for a large proportion of the population on the continent;

Appreciating the 20 February 2008 statements of Ethekeini, the 1 July 2008 agreement in Sharm el-Sheikh, the 20 April 2012 Sanitation and Water for All High-Level Meeting commitments, the African Water Vision for 2025 as well as the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights adopted on 27 June 1981, the 28 July 2010 Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly A/RES/64/292, and the 10 September 2010 resolution 15/9 of the Council of Human Rights Council of the United Nations;

Recognising the role of universal access to safe drinking-water and improved sanitation for the acceleration of the reduction of poverty on the continent and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in particular the goal to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation;

Emphasising that Africa needs to take immediate steps to mobilise sufficient financial resources to make water and sanitation available for all;

Determined to strengthen the solidarity, cohesion, continental cooperation and development for the benefit of our peoples;

The Pan-African Parliament:

1. Recommends the implementation of the fundamental human right to water and sanitation as a political priority for Africa to ensure access to clean water and improved sanitation for all with special emphasis on the marginalised and most vulnerable populations of society, particularly women, children and persons with disabilities;
2. Requests the adoption of differentiated terms of taxation taking into account the low financial resources of the most vulnerable segments of the population;
3. Urges the Member States to adopt policies and legislation to promote access to drinking water and sanitation for all;
4. Recommends to the Member States to conduct assessments of legal frameworks and existing infrastructure to enable access to water and sanitation in order to improve their policies in this area;
5. Urges the Member States to implement policies of interstate trade for the sharing of information on good practices of access to drinking water and sanitation;

6. Urges national parliaments to strengthen the capacity of parliamentarians to legislate on issues of water, hygiene and sanitation;