



Conference Statement

28 June 2013

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ChinAfrica Forum Water Resources Dialogue No 1

Sustainable Utilisation of Water Resources in Developing Countries

University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa, 26-28 June 2013

The ChinAfrica Water Forum met for the first time in Cape Town, South Africa on 26-28 June 2013, with significant support from both China and Africa. The objective of the Forum is to work towards a lasting partnership between the two regions in the area of sustainable utilisation of water resources in developing countries. Both China and Africa face massive challenges of human development in a changing environment, and have very similar water resources management priorities particularly from a research and development (R&D) perspective. The context for this partnership can be taken from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, where a key outcome was the clear acknowledgment that sustainable development cannot be achieved without widespread collaboration among all sectors of global society, in particular South-South partnerships. The importance of global partnerships in the field to be addressed by the ChinAfrica Forum has been emphasized by the UN General Assembly by declaring 2013 as the 'United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation'.

The ChinAfrica Water Forum can build on important existing initiatives (such as the presidential-led China / Africa Forum), and the China-Africa Joint Research Programme of 2009 among other. Also, a number of African countries already have bilateral agreements with China, in particular South Africa where the first Forum Water Dialogue has been held. The main water decision making body at the continental level, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), is also very supportive of the collaboration initiative.

The excellent presentations from both regions, dealing with the full spectrum of water and human development, soon brought out major similarities in challenges, e.g. the highly variable climate, rapid urbanisation, and environmental degradation. It also became clear that language is no barrier, because both regions operate in the common Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) framework and have common scientific information needs as well as expertise and technologies to address these needs.

Potential areas of collaboration that emerged during the three days illustrate that this partnership can become real and cover a large part of the IWRM spectrum, e.g.:

- Disaster risk reduction – early warning
- Small farmer irrigation development

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- Environmental impact of mining
- Environmental water allocation
- Integrated urban development
- Water pollution control
- Managed aquifer recharge
- Karst processes – understanding and management
- Whole river basin remote sensing
- Education and Training – from single disciplines to mix of skills
- New water technologies for effluent treatment
- Water quality management
- Water resource monitoring and management

A critical starting point must be to invest in young people, who have the desire and the energy to bring change and who represent the future of our respective regions. If they could learn to understand and support each other across geographical and cultural boundaries, we could soon have a mutually beneficial and lasting partnership. Ways in which this could be initiated are student exchanges; lecturer exchanges; training courses, joint research projects and collaboration in the dialogue with decision-makers.

Both regions recognise the critical importance of water as a key enabler to realise sustainable development. Africa has further realized the importance of bringing its scientific capacity as well as the spectrum of scientific disciplines making up IWRM together, to focus on water sector development and have started to put this into practice through the establishment of Water Centres of Excellence in its different Regional Economic Communities. It is already clear that these multi-institution - multi-country centres have a major need for long-term alliances to achieve their ambitious objectives for African development. These centres could thus provide a structure in which China/Africa water and development cooperation could grow towards a significant global development partnership.

Next Steps:

A Working Group for this ChinAfrica Water Forum has been considered and subsequently established during the conference (see Appendix A), as well as a first Working Group meeting being held to decide on these next steps.

- Maintain Secretariat at AGA or UWC and consider organising sub-secretariat in China.



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- Use Aquaknow as broader dialogue platform.
- Inform regional government institutions – AMCOST; AMCOW, SADC.
- Inform regional science institutions – UNESCO-IHP, IAH, IAHS, AMCOW, and SANWATCE.
- Develop strategy and action plan.
- Need to have at least one joint research project where both sets of partners collaborate to solve one or more pressing problems of society.
- Compile jointly a few key training courses at either (or both) under-graduate and graduate levels (e.g. water quality assessment and evaluation, design and operation of monitoring systems, development of water quality guidelines and standards, etc.).
- Discussion on next conference period (once/year, time, venue, etc.) and further cooperation between countries or exchanges.

Regards,

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for ChinAfrica Water Forum
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Appendix A

The working group of the ChinAfrica Water Forum consists of the following members (or institutes):

1. Centre for Hydrogeology and Environmental Geology Survey, CGS, China (Dr X Sun)
2. Chengdu University of Technology (Prof Y Wu or Prof C Tang)
3. China Agricultural University (Prof P Yang)
4. China University of Geosciences (Beijing) (Prof X Jin)
5. China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) (Prof L Li)
6. Chongqing University (Prof Q He)
7. Institute of Karst Geology (Guilin) (Prof J Cao)
8. Sichuan University (Prof C Liang)
9. University of Jinan (Prof W Wang)
10. Africa Groundwater Academy (AGA) (Ms I Wu)
11. CSIR, South Africa (Dr H Pienaar, Dr P Ashton)
12. Namib Hydrossearch CC, Namibia (Mr D Sarma)
13. National University of Science and Technology, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (Mr I Muchingami)
14. South African Department of Water Affairs (Ms L Lusenga or Ms B Young)
15. South African Water Research Commission (Mr D Naidoo or Dr S Adams)
16. University of Stellenbosch (Prof E Cloete)
17. University of the Western Cape (Prof Y Xu)

Chairperson (Interim): Prof Y Xu, UNESCO Chair in Groundwater based at UWC
Secretariat: Iris Wu and Elanda Bates, AGA