

Ekurhuleni Declaration

on

Water and Sanitation for Cities

*on the occasion of World Water Day, 22 March 2017
as outcome of the Local Climate Solutions for Africa (LoCS4Africa) 2017 Congress*

Global Context

We, local and subnational governments, our networks and partners convening at **the 4th pan-African Local Climate Solutions for Africa Congress** hosted by ICLEI Africa and the City of Ekurhuleni on the occasion of World Water Day in Ekurhuleni, South Africa from 22 to 24 March 2017,

applaud the new global ambition and associated trajectory for sustainable development committed to since LoCS4Africa 2015 through, *inter alia*, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), the Paris Climate Agreement (2015) and its rapid ratification (2016), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda providing a global framework for financing sustainable development (2015), and

recognise the priority set for water and sanitation in the New Urban Agenda as main Habitat III outcome (2016) with its focus on integrated sustainable urban and territorial development, and

welcome the 2017 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR) focusing on wastewater as “untapped resource” released on World Water Day, 22 March 2017 in Durban, South Africa, and demonstrating that improved wastewater management is essential in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Regional Context

In the context of the LoCS4Africa 2017 Congress theme **‘Water for Cities’**, we

recognise ‘Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want’, noting in particular

- Aspiration 1.10 referring to cities and other settlements as hubs of cultural and economic activities with modernized infrastructure and affordable access to affordable and decent housing including the basic necessities of life such as water and sanitation, and
- Aspiration 1.18 calling for an Africa which provides for equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for socio-economic development, regional cooperation and the environment, and

welcome the commitments of the Common African Position (CAP) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably under Pillar Three and Four:

- Par 46 calling for evidence-based urban policies and the provision of equitable, quality services supported by a monitoring and regulatory framework and to be achieved through public and private partnerships; the strengthening of municipal revenue generation and collaboration between municipalities, scholars, ministries and civil society;
- Par 52 on the need to ensure availability of safe water supply for all and closing the sanitation gap, while highlighting concerns about the challenges posed by climate change, desertification and land degradation, natural disasters such as drought and floods, loss of biodiversity, management of water and chemicals, coastal erosion, marine pollution and rising seas levels that threaten the existence of coastal mega-deltas and Small Island Developing States;
- Par 55 on the need to ensure universal and reliable access to safe water in a sustainable manner, especially access to safe drinking water in urban and rural areas by: enhancing the protection and judicious management of water resources to safeguard water quality, and assurance of access to these resources for all uses; ensuring effective conservation and management of catchment areas; minimizing wastewater discharges; and improving wastewater and water quality management systems as well as sanitation and hygiene services in rural and urban areas, and
- Par 58 which recognizes climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time, emphasizing deep concern with the vulnerability of developing countries, in particular in Africa, to the adverse impacts of climate change, and recognizing that adaptation to the phenomenon represents an immediate and urgent global priority.

We acknowledge the ‘Africa Water Vision 2025: Equitable and Sustainable Use of Water for Socio-Economic Development’ which envisions an **Africa where there is an equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, regional cooperation, and the environment.**

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Water for Cities - The Pivotal Role of Africa's Local Governments

The attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015, hinges on progress made on the urban goal, SGD 11, and the ability to localise all 17 SDGs, including SDG 6 which sets ambitious targets for ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

We, local and subnational governments, our networks and our partners, convening at **the 4th pan-African Local Climate Solutions for Africa Congress**,

recognise and advocate urgent and collective action on:

1. the delivery of safe and adequate water supply and sanitation locally, for our growing urban communities, especially addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, women, the elderly and youth, within the context of rapid and unprecedented global change, including climate change;
2. addressing rapid urbanisation and the resultant backlogs in the provision of urban water and sanitation infrastructure in our cities, overcoming operation and maintenance challenges;
3. leapfrogging traditional approaches to our urban infrastructure and planning to enable the transition towards innovative, decentralised and nature-based solutions which would contribute to sustaining the ecosystems underpinning the services upon which we all depend;
4. developing, enhancing and implementing effective integrated local strategies and action plans to urgently address growing water scarcity which adversely affects equitable access to food and energy security, economic development and the health and well-being of our urban communities;
5. improving access to local water and sanitation information, knowledge management, tools and mechanisms, such as incentivised rain water harvesting systems and other mechanisms, in order to build local resilience, addressing climate change and enhancing disaster response mechanisms, in particular for those most vulnerable to associated risks such as flooding and drought;
6. addressing capacity and skills shortages; fostering partnerships focused on the mainstreamed implementation of local solutions;
7. enabling horizontal alignment and vertical integration to ensure systemic and sustainable water management and sanitation action;
8. improving access to water and sanitation financing for cities;
9. building strong leadership, enhancing public awareness and community participation to collectively and inclusively design our common urban future; and
10. fostering transparent and accountable local governance as a major lever for Africa's local governments and the communities they serve to contribute effectively towards the attainment of the SDGs.

We therefore call on the co-hosts of LocS4Africa 2017, ICLEI Africa and the City of Ekurhuleni, to present this Declaration to the Chairperson of the African Union, the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and the Secretary General of the United Nations;

Further call on ICLEI Africa supported by the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A), C40, their members and other city networks to promote, advocate and disseminate this Declaration through relevant regional and international platforms such as World Water Week 2017, Africa Water Week 2018, the ICLEI World Congress 2018 and AfricaSan to mobilise local, regional, national and global action for Urban Water and Sanitation Solutions for Africa; and

Confirm that this Declaration represents the commitment to take local action on water and sanitation in Africa of the local government leadership, their networks and partners gathered at LocS4Africa 2017.