



Document from the 7<sup>th</sup> Africa Water Week,  
held in Libreville, Gabon, 29 October – 2  
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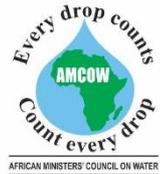
*This material is shared as a learning  
resource to promote awareness and good  
practice in the provision, use and  
management of water resources for  
sustainable social and economic  
development and maintenance of African  
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Title	<b>Promoting Youth Engagement in Water Governance through Youth-Led Research and Innovation</b>
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### Short Summary

The session, “Promoting Youth Engagement in Water Governance through Youth-Led Research and Innovation” which was co-conveyed by UNESCO-IHP and the International Science Council (ISC) Regional Office for Africa (ROA) was held on 30 October, 2018, during the 7th Africa Water Week Conference. It was a great success. Eight young researchers and innovators from the Africa Region participated in the event as speakers. The participation of these eight young water professionals was made possible through the financial support from the UN-Water, World Water Council, International Secretariat of Water, UNESCO and ISC ROA. Additionally, the Government of the Gabon, at the request of UNESCO, sponsored the participation of four Gabonese youths who attended the Africa Water Week and participated in the session. The session provided a platform for the young researchers and innovators to present youth-led research and innovation with special focus on improving the good governance of water in Africa. Fifty three people (30 males and 23 females) attended the session including high level participants of the week and engaged in a lively discussion with the panelists. The main recommendations of the session were adopted as the Youth Declaration of the 7th Africa Water Week, and were presented by one of the moderators during the closing ceremony of the Conference. The declaration calls for the strengthening of water education in Africa, improved representation and participation of youth in decision making processes in the water sector and increased support for the use of youth-led research and innovation products in the governance of the water sector.

The speakers of the session also visited a high school in Libreville and spoke about the advantages of pursuing a career in the water sector. The youth enjoyed our visit to the school.

**YOUTH DECLARATION**  
**Seventh AFRICAN WATER WEEK**  
**Gabon, Libreville**  
 02/11/2018

We, the young people of the 7th Africa Water Week;  
*Considering that* in Africa, 319 million (32%) people still do not have access to drinking water sources (UN-WWDR, 2017). It is expected that, in 2030, the world will face a global water deficit of 40% (UN-WWDR, 2017).

*Mindful that* Africa has the youngest population in the world with the ten youngest countries in the world.

*Recalling that* in 2015, there were approximately 226 million young people in Africa, and this number is expected to increase by 42%, reaching 321 million by 2030 (UNDESA 2015).

*Recognizing that* the youthful population in Africa is an opportunity for economic growth and / or a challenge if Africa does not plan or seize this potential.

*Noting* these elements, we, as young Africans, are committed to stimulating a new vision for the future of the water and sanitation sector. This is justified by the critical mass of skills and potential that we represent. The youth have selected research and innovation as mechanisms through which they can ensure their leadership and contribution to the achievement of SDG 6, taking into consideration, emerging tools such as green solutions, ICT, and the use of knowledge for holistic education, citizenship and good hygiene.

Our research results and innovation motivated our participation in this seventh edition of the African Water Week. The results presented were implemented in different sub-regions in Africa. Youth-led research and innovation in Africa address the valorization of resources available, risk adaptation, promotion of resilience, development of education and strategies for monitoring and prevention. The innovation developed are to be used to achieve the targets of SDG 6 and should scale up existing processes and improve access to water and sanitation in Africa.

Underlining the following key messages:

1. Young people have skills and have developed innovative solutions to facilitate the good governance of the water sector and contribute to the achievement of water security.
2. Young people are willing to collaborate on scientific research, development and innovation to help address water issues in Africa, taking into account new and emerging paradigms and approaches such as ICT, artificial intelligence, green solutions, indigenous knowledge and mixed financing systems.
3. Young people want to be more involved in the decision-making processes through intergenerational dialogue in the water sector, which supports youth-led actions, and promote knowledge sharing and our accountability in Africa.

We, the young people of the seventh Africa Water Week recommend the following;

### **1. Strengthening Water Education**

-Supporting youth-led awareness raising to increase the number and quality of the human resources in the sector and youth accountability in sustainable water management.

-Continued strengthening of the institutions responsible for training children and young people by encouraging the use of innovative teaching tools, such as artificial intelligence, indigenous knowledge, and mentoring and citizen science, while emphasizing the importance of the linkages between research, development, innovation and entrepreneurship in the water sector.

-Integrating water and environmental education into mainstream curricula in schools

### **2. Strengthening the participation and representation of young and young water professionals in regional and global events**

-Promoting intergenerational dialogue between young people and decision-makers including youth representatives in the organization and implementation of major

events such as the African Water Week, and the upcoming World Water Forum to be held in Dakar in 2021.

-Strengthening the representation and participation of young and young water professionals promoted by UN agencies and technical and financial partners such as UNESCO, the International Council of Science (in a gender sensitive manner).

### **3. Increased support for the use of innovations and research products developed by young people in the governance of the water sector**

-Identifying and promoting research conducted by young people to address water-related problems

-Encouraging the application of innovation and research products in the governance of water resources by developing sustainable financing mechanisms to support entrepreneurship and innovation in the water sector. This goal can be achieved by investing in the creation of science and innovation hubs and industrial parks to transform the results of scientific research and innovation into products and services for water sector

We would like to thank AMCOW, and the organizers of the seventh edition of the African Water Week for kindly associating us, young people to this session and the institutions that supported and facilitated our participation.