

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

Honneur-Fraternité-Justice



MINISTRY OF FINANCE

**MINISTRY OF HYDRAULICS
AND SANITATION**

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING
WASHINGTON, 23 APRIL 2010**

MAURITANIA STATEMENT

We would like to take the opportunity of this first High Level Meeting in Washington to address our deepest thanks to UNICEF and the conveners for hosting this important event.

Mauritania is located in the North West of Africa, between the 15th and the 27th parallel North; with the Atlantic Ocean as a western limit, it stretches over a 720 km coastline. This scarcely populated (2.9 million in 2006) desert country covers an area of 1,085,000 km². Farmable land is less than 1% of the domestic territory and the extent of cultivated areas varies, depending on rainfall. The major part of the country receives less than 300 mm of rain per year. Water abstraction is distributed as follows: 88% for farming, 9% for domestic use and 3% for industrial use. Recurring droughts have contributed to massive rural migration to urban centres and led to a multiplication of rural localities. This movement has generated a growing pressure upon existing drinking water and sanitation facilities. According to data from UNDP's Human Development Report for 2007, Mauritania's human development index is 0.55, which ranks the country 137 out of 173.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania adopted the following Declarations:

- ✓ The Millennium Declaration in 2002, aiming "to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation";
- ✓ The Declaration of eThekweni (February 2008), with the commitment of African countries to allot at least 0.5% of their GDP to Sanitation;
- ✓ The Paris Declaration (2005) on aid effectiveness.

In 2001, a Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (PRSF) was developed as a reference for the strategic orientation of various sectors including the Water sector. Introduced in the PRSF, the multisectoral strategy for universal access to basic services was adopted in 2001; its global objective is to implement mechanisms to ensure better effectiveness of the State's contribution to investment and development in the areas identified by the Agency for the Promotion of Universal Access to Services (*Agence pour la Promotion de l'Accès Universel aux Services* - APAUS). A PRSF plan for 2006-2010 was implemented and yielded significant results regarding the improvement of access to drinking water. A new PRSF plan for 2011-2015 is under way. The Hydraulics and Sanitation sub sectors are experiencing a serious lack of human resources, which is mainly related to structural adjustment policies. This affects the implementation capacity of these sectors.

Since 2005, a consultation has been initiated with the various stakeholders in order to ensure a better visibility and strengthen the coordination of the Water sector. A sectoral review for rural areas was organized in June 2005 and issued recommendations to improve the sector's performance. Consequently, a Donors Round Table was convened in 2006 for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), among other topics. In 2007, a sectoral review of

public expenditures was organized and in 2009, the National Water Council was established, in compliance with the Code of Water promulgated in 2005.

As the Sanitation issue was only considered quite recently, the Sanitation sub sector is lagging behind the other basic sectors. The Sanitation Department was created in 2006. The National Sanitation Bureau (*Office National d'Assainissement* - ONAS) was created in April 2009. The Sanitation Master Plan for the City of Nouakchott was carried out; the works of the first phase, covering 4 Moughatas (prefectures) out of 9, should start before the end of the year. Five other cities will have their Master Plans developed in the following months.

This reflects the importance that the Government of Mauritania attaches to the issue of sanitation in view of reaching the MDGs.

The evolution of the sector and the Government's commitments made it necessary to revise the "Development Strategy for the Water and Sanitation Sector" issued in 2006. Thus, another strategy was developed in September 2009 for bringing the government's action in the Water and Sanitation sector around six strategic areas:

- Improve access to drinking water;
- Identify and protect water resources;
- Promote greater use of surface water;
- Improve sanitation conditions;
- Promote Public Private Partnerships;
- Strengthen the stakeholders' capacities in the sector.

Situation of access to drinking water

The national objective needed to reach the MDGs is to increase the national coverage rate from 40% in 2004 to 68% in 2015:

- a) Regarding urban hydraulics, the target is to increase the access rate to drinking water from 30% in 2004 to 65% in 2015. Considering the population growth in urban settings, the coverage rate decreased from 34% in 1990 to 30% in 2004. Reaching the MDGs in urban areas will depend on setting up adequate financing for the production and distribution on the one hand, and on the population growth on the other hand, especially in Nouakchott.

- b) Regarding rural hydraulics, the target is to increase the access rate to drinking water from 49% in 2004 to 74% in 2015. The coverage rate has increased since 1990 despite the population growth related lag. The coverage rate was an estimated 40% in 1990, 49% in 2004 and 51% in 2008.

Situation of access to sanitation

The national sanitation coverage rate was 36% in 2004.

- The target of urban sanitation of waste water needs to rise from a 55% coverage rate to 77% in urban areas to reach the MDGs.
- The target of rural and semi-urban sanitation of waste water is to rise from a 20% coverage rate in 2005 to 60% in 2015.

Considering the central position of the Water and Sanitation sector in our development policy for reaching the MDGs, thus ensuring a significant improvement in the standard of living of our citizens,

Considering the need to mobilize financing to carry out water and sanitation programmes in view of reaching the MDGS,

The Government of Mauritania commits to:

- 1) Participate to future High Level Meetings, which will be attended by the Ministers of the concerned Departments;
- 2) Increase the budgetary provisions allocated to the Drinking Water and Sanitation sectors over the period 2011-2015;
- 3) Comply with the Declaration of eThekweni, South Africa, signed by the African Ministers in charge of Water and Sanitation in March 2008 (especially regarding the commitment to devote 0.5% of the GDP to sanitation), approved during the Sharm El Sheikh Summit in June 2008;
- 4) Ensure a coordination of stakeholders in the Water and Sanitation sector, in order to avoid overlaps in programme implementation;
- 5) Provide the information needed in relation to the situation of water and sanitation programmes for the development of WHO and UNICEF's GLASS (Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Water) report;

- 6) Ensure an increasingly pro-poor policy through fair access to drinking water and sanitation, building watering places and implementing a self-sufficient and collective sanitation strategy;
- 7) Promote greater use of surface water through building structures (dams, retention basins) for drinking water supply and for agriculture;
- 8) Increase follow-up and transparency in the technical and financial implementation of water and sanitation programmes through Steering Committees, monitoring and evaluation, and audits;
- 9) Identify those bottlenecks that hinder the implementation of water and sanitation programmes, in order to ensure their timely fulfilment and their compliance with contractual standards;
- 10) Seek funding for the implementation of the Phase III of the Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework and the Plan of Action for Water and Sanitation for 2010-2015;
- 11) Strengthen Public Private Partnerships for water management through establishing enabling conditions for the enforcement of the Law related to the Regulation of the Water Sector, in particular with a closer follow-up of the public service delegates;
- 12) Hire and train a sufficient number of staff with adequate profile for the Central and Decentralized Hydraulics and Sanitation Services;
- 13) Establish a Hydraulic Database system providing information on existing and future works;
- 14) Develop a National Sanitation Policy, Strategy and Plan of Action;
- 15) Increase the activities of the National Sanitation Bureau (ONAS) created in April 2009, in charge of carrying out and managing self-sufficient and collective sanitation networks;
- 16) Carry out the first phase of the sanitation of the City of Nouakchott with a loan. This phase will include 4 Moughatas (prefectures) out of Nouakchott's 9 Moughatas;
- 17) Promote sanitation at the national level through activities of awareness-raising and extension work.