



COMMUNIQUE OF THE 27TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON WATER RESOURCES (NCWR) HELD FROM 30TH NOVEMBER TO 4TH DECEMBER, 2020 AT THE WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS' CONFERENCE CENTRE, GADUWA ABUJA, FCT.

The 27th Regular Meeting of the National Council on Water Resources (NCWR) was held at the West African College of Physicians Conference Centre Gaduwa District, Abuja from 30th November to 4th December, 2020. The Council was declared open by the Honourable Minister of FCT, Mallam Mohammed Musa Bello while the Honourable Minister of Water Resources and Chairman of the National Council on Water Resources Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu FNSE, FAEng, gave the Keynote address.

2. The meeting was attended by 30 Commissioners responsible for Water Resources in their States while 806 participants were in attendance, comprising Permanent Secretaries of Federal and State Ministries responsible for Water Resources, Directors of the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Managing Directors of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), other Chief Executives of Federal, FCT and State Agencies responsible for Water Resources; Representatives of the Federal Ministries of Science and Technology, Health, Education, Women Affairs, Agriculture and Environment, Representatives of some Development Partners; World Bank, UNIDO, UNICEF, Bank of Industry, members of the Academia, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, gentlemen of the Press and the general Public.

3. The Council had as its theme 'Managing Water Resources in Crises: The Nigerian Experience' in order to focus on contemporary challenges of the Sector. The theme was further examined under the sub-themes of Pre-Covid 19, Post-Covid-19 eras and the Impact of Climate Change on Integrated Water Resources Management.

4. In his keynote address, the Honourable Minister of Water Resources explained that the theme of the 27th Meeting of the National Council on Water Resources "Managing Water Resources in Crisis: the Nigerian Experience" was carefully chosen to take stock of milestones recorded within the last one year, the challenges and the way-forward to deliver on collective mandates as well as giving adequate responses to the debilitating COVID 19 pandemic.

5. Finally, the Honourable Minister gave an insight into the National Water Resources Bill which debate he said came against the backdrop of a situation where the country's health was being undermined by unsafe drinking water. The Bill, he further explained, was the manifestation of the Government's desire to ensure that the citizens derive maximum benefits from the country's Water Resource endowments and potentials.

6. A lead Paper focusing on Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene presented to Council by Timeyin Uwejamomere strongly advocated for reforms in the State Water utilities for efficient and improved service delivery and to address inefficiency as 40 -60% of water utilities revenues were lost to the Private Sector.

7. The Council was preceded by the National Technical Committee on Water Resources (NTCWR), chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs Didi Esther Walson-Jack mni. In her opening remarks, she informed the gathering of the Ministry's intervention across the country as part of its response to the COVID 19 emergency with over 360 facilities of WASH infrastructure provided under the initiative.

8. A lead paper was presented at the opening ceremony on 'Managing Water Resources in Crisis: Impacts of Climate Change on Integrated Water Resources Management - The Nigerian Experience' by Dr S.A Adejuwon.

9. During presentation and discussion of memoranda, 18 Action and 33 Information memoranda were presented. Council thereafter considered and approved all the Action memoranda and took note of the 33 Information Memoranda.

10. Consequently, the Council resolved as follows:

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Council** recognized the enormous resources invested in borehole construction in the country, the need for LGAs to improve the capacity of staff involved in borehole construction, supervision operation and maintenance activities in their respective domains and therefore urged all States and Local Governments to collaborate with the NWRI to train their staff to ensure the sustainability of borehole projects across the country for safe water supply.

2. **Council** was adequately apprised on the need for a specialized University in Nigeria to solely cater for the Water Resources Sector in order to meet the needs of the Sector in the near future, and therefore urged the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to set up a Technical Committee to consider the possibility of its actualization.

3. **Council** expressed dissatisfaction over the conversion and destruction of the groundwater monitoring boreholes drilled nationwide by NIHSA and particularly, the ones drilled in the premises of Abia State Water Board, Umuahia, Lagos State Secretariat premises, Ikeja, and the premises of Cross River Basin Development Authority, and therefore mandated the Abia State Commissioner for Public Utilities to ensure a smooth hand over of the borehole to NIHSA, while the CRBDA and Lagos State Government are to ensure the replacement of the boreholes vandalized within their premises.

4. **Council** commended the partnership between the Nigerian Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) leading to the acquisition of 3 Automatic Weather Observation Stations and therefore encouraged States to actively participate in the Annual Flood Sensitization organized by NIHSA. Council furthermore directed States to enact laws to ensure proper flood mitigation and management, while encouraging States and other agencies to partner NIHSA in the acquisition of Flood Early Warning Systems.

5. **Council** noted the strategic role of irrigated agriculture as a necessity to addressing the looming food production deficit, increasing unemployment of youths, global COVID-19 pandemic, and the threat posed by climate change to agriculture, and urged State Governments to further collaborate with the Federal Government by facilitating access to land and to take up the responsibility of cadastral survey mapping and compensation to the land owners as part of their contribution to the national development of the irrigation sub-sector.

6. **Council** noted the incessant threat and attacks currently unleashed on farmers and developed agricultural programmes by kidnappers, bandits, rustlers and insurgents, thereby negatively affecting national food security and therefore approved putting up a recommendation to the National Food Security Council for consideration to stem the challenges of food insecurity especially as it affects agriculture and its value chains.

7. **Council** was adequately briefed on how the recurrent flooding events being experienced in Nigeria can be permanently controlled by ensuring the construction of adequate number of dams with large storage capacities to hold back sizeable flood waters, and therefore mandated the Sub-Committee on Dams and Reservoir Operations to identify and set priorities through a liaison with relevant MDAs, for the construction of dams on identified sites for systematic reining in of flooding in the country.

8. **Council** noted the need for the celebration of World Rivers Day which is to create awareness and carry out advocacy on the importance of rivers, the anthropogenic threats and abuses that rivers face and chart ways to promote and sustain healthy livelihoods from waterways and their ecosystems in Nigeria. Council therefore directed the 12 River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), all States, to key in into the celebration by marking the World Rivers Day on the last Sunday of September of every year in line with the United Nation's approval.

9. **Council** commended the efforts of the NWRI in carrying out the Assessment of Water Quality in Chronic Kidney Diseases

(CKD) prone areas. The Institute has shown capacity to conduct similar research studies in other chronic disease problem areas to forestall public health crises and enhance access to potable drinking water. Council therefore urged the regulatory authorities to strictly enforce the code for the construction of boreholes for domestic usage, as studies have shown that shallow wells have higher concentrations of chemical and biological toxins which are potential causes of kidney diseases.

10. **Council** noted that the Partnership for Expanded Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (PEWASH) is a 15 -year programme, to bridge access gap in Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, in compliance with the SDG 6.1 & 6.2, by 2030 in the rural areas, and urged States to key in into the current PEWASH Initiatives, while PEWASH focal States should be judged based on performance approach using the established separate budget line for PEWASH programme in RUWASSAs

11. **Council** was adequately apprised of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) which has evolved to the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF) providing additional opportunity for leveraging more resources to the Sanitation and Hygiene sub-sector in Nigeria. Council therefore directed the National Task Group on Sanitation (NTGS) to finalize the SHF proposal to fund the financial gap for Nigeria, and for the shortlisted States to convey willingness in order to benefit from the grant, in line with the co-financing requirement of the grant in QI of 2021.

12. **Council** noted the implementation of the National Village Level Operation and Maintenance (VLOM) Strategy designed to address the issue of low functionality of water facilities in Nigeria and urged the States and FCT to adopt, domesticate and work with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to implement the VLOM Strategy to enable the country achieve SDG 6, and to report on their progress regularly in the implementation of the VLOM Strategy.

13. **Council** noted the need for States and FCT's participation in the Technical Assistance Programme of the National Action Plan for the revitalization of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

(WASH) Sector and urged the 9 States yet to sign up to the Plan to urgently do so. It further urged the 36 States and FCT to key in into the on-going research and capacity development program to improve their workforce towards the attainment of SDGs-6.

14. **Council** also noted the need to deregulate importation of Water Treatment Chemicals (such as alum and chlorine) for a period of two years, in Nigeria, as the growing population, the Covid-19 Pandemic and global lockdown combined have made it imperative for Nigeria to review the Water Treatment Chemical Procurement Policy regime; and therefore urged the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to engage local manufacturers of WTCs to ascertain the problems responsible for not meeting the demands of SWAs. Furthermore, Council directed the Ministry to encourage local production through collaboration with the Raw Materials Research and Development Council as well as the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria.

15. **Council** was updated on the progress of the 'Clean Nigeria, Use the Toilet' campaign under the National Programme to end Open Defecation in Nigeria by 2025, that 14 States have joined and Council urged the remaining 20 States and FCT that are yet to key in into the initiative to urgently do so, to enable the country achieve ODF by 2025. Council further urged the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to strengthen the campaign structures and provide the required guidance at the State level.

16. **Council** noted the Status Of on-going/abandoned Urban Water Supply Projects in the country and enjoined the States and the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to renew their commitment to the existing synergy in the conception and completion of water projects in the States to ensure smooth implementation and post-completion operations and maintenance.

17. **Council** noted the report of the 2019 Rivers and Open Water-bodies (Dams & Lakes) Monitoring Activities by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources which revealed that the quality of rivers, dam reservoirs and lakes in dry season were better than the wet season and that they all contained E.coli and total Coliform in large proportion, due to preponderance of open defecation and poor environmental management in the Country. Council therefore encouraged all States and FCT to intensify efforts to end open defecation and other anthropogenic activities

to improve the quality of Nigerian rivers and open Water-bodies, and directed the Federal Ministry of Water Resources to upgrade its National Water Quality Reference Laboratories in accordance with 15017025 to handle complex water quality analysis

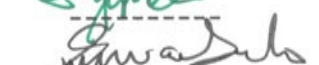
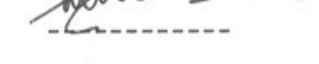
18. **Council** considered and commended the WASH-NORM initiative -a routine data collection tool for monitoring progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets 6.1 and 6.2 and directed States to cooperate and collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Water Resources in the third round of NORM Survey and to seek increased funding to the sector.

19. Finally, Council conveyed its gratitude to the Hon. Minister, Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Mohammed Musa Bello, for successfully hosting the 27th Regular Meeting of the National Council on Water Resources.

20. **Council** agreed that its 28th Regular Meeting will hold in Sokoto in 2021.

Done this 3rd Day of December, 2020 at Abuja, FCT. We append

our Signatures:

1. Representative Commissioner -	North East	
2. Representative Commissioner -	North West	
3. Representative Commissioner -	North Central	
4. Representative Commissioner -	South East	
5. Representative Commissioner -	South South	
6. Representative Commissioner -	South West	


Engr. Suleiman H. Adamu FNSE, FAEng,
Chairman of Council