



THE CAPE TOWN DECLARATION ON AFRICA WATER INVESTMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF G20

PREAMBLE

We, the African Heads of State and Government, in the presence of other Global Leaders, gathered in Cape Town from 13 to 15 August, 2025 for the inaugural Africa Water Investment Summit, convened under the auspices of the African Union, the High-Level Panel on Water Investment for Africa and the Republic of South Africa's G20 Presidency.

Also in attendance were the Ministers and Deputy Ministers, financial institutions, investors, development partners, civil society, technical experts, philanthropic institutions Intergovernmental Organizations, Regional Economic Communities, United Nations Agencies, Private Sector, Youth, Women and Academia.

RECALLING the commitment of the African Union Heads of State and Government in July 2008, in terms of the Sharm El Sheik Declaration on Water and Sanitation (Assembly/AU/Decl.1(xii), which seeks to accelerate the achievement of water and sanitation goals in Africa.

ALSO RECALLING the Africa Water Vision 2025, which envisions "An Africa where there is equitable and sustainable use and management of water resources for poverty alleviation, socioeconomic development, regional cooperation and the environment".

ACKNOWLEDGING that inadequate investments in water have affected the gains made across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the critical role that water plays in climate change adaptation and mitigation and the goals of Agenda 2063.

RECOGNISING that the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) is the brainchild of the United Nations-World Bank High Level Panel on Water (HLPW). The HLPW was established by United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon and President of the World Bank Jim Yong Kim, comprised of eleven sitting Presidents and Prime Ministers.

RECOGNISING the need to build climate resilience through water investments in Africa in response to the projected severe and more frequent impacts of climate change as expounded in the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032).

RECALLING the approval of the Continental Africa Water Investment Program (AIP) as part of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa-Priority Action Plan 2 (PIDA-PAP 2) by the African Heads of State and Government during the 34th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly which took place in February 2021 (EX.CL/1108(XXXVIII)).

RECALLING the launch of the High-Level Panel on Water Investment for Africa at the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar on 25th March 2022 comprising of the founding co-chairs; the Republic of Senegal, Republic of Namibia; Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the fourth President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

NOTING that during the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York, the African Union and International High-Level Panel released the High-Level Panel Report, with pathways for countries to mobilise at least US\$30 billion annually by 2030 to close the water investment gap in Africa, as part of the UN Water Action Agenda.

NOTING that in December 2023 during COP 28 in Dubai, UAE, the African Union Commission and AIP International High-Level Panel launched the Africa Water Investment Action Plan, outlining how countries can mobilise the additional US\$30 billion per year required to ensure water security and sustainable sanitation on the continent.

APPRECIATING the AU Resolution EX.CL/Dec.2(XLIV)Rev.1/42: APPROVES the proposal to adopt “Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063” as the African Union Theme of the year 2026.

RECOGNISING the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for initiating the first G20 Water Dialogues under the KSA G20 Presidency in 2020 that considered water as key for socioeconomic development, supported by G20 member States.

RECOGNISING that the Summit is taking place at a historic time, marking the first-ever G20 Presidency hosted on the African soil and the progressive admission of the African Union into the G20 membership.

REAFFIRMING that water and sanitation are not only foundational to peace, economic growth and development, human dignity and public health but are also essential to climate resilience, food security, economic transformation, and achievement of progress in implementing the SDGs.

APPRECIATING the opportunity presented through the G20 Presidency of South Africa to elevate Africa’s water investments, minding the gap in water investments and leveraging on the African Union’s membership to the G20 and the opportunity to highlight the outcomes of the Summit as address in the declaration.

WELCOME the preliminary potential financial outcomes identified in the pipelines present at the Summit, estimated conservatively at 10 to 12 billion dollars per year worth of investments from some Development Banks, Investors, bilateral and governments, across the Continent.

NOTE that the above excludes anticipated pledges and investments that will be consolidated. Further Investors in the matchmaking sessions committed to submit their initial pledges to the online portal, which will increase the total committed investments, secured by this Summit

HEREBY COMMIT TO:

1. Create an enabling environment for enhancing investment for water and sanitation, aligned with national development plans, SDG 6, and climate resilience priorities.
2. Scale up domestic public and private finance for water investments, including through national budgets, and innovative financing mechanisms.
3. Request the African Union Commission continue providing leadership in the implementation of the Africa Water Investment Program (AIP), including supporting Member States and Regional Economic Communities to develop national and regional climate resilient water investment programs.
4. Further request African Union Commission to support Member States and Regional Economic Communities in developing project pipelines to mobilise resources, including climate finance.

5. Call for the reform of the multilateral financial institutions, taking into consideration the urgent need for accelerated investment in the water and sanitation sector, priority given to Africa to bridge the water investment gap.
6. Deploy de-risking tools where they add real value—particularly in underserved rural and peri-urban areas, fragile and conflict-affected states, and for nature-based solutions.
7. Raise the profile of water to drive sustainable economic growth and improve people's health, nutrition and prosperity across the continent; recognising that water investments can reduce the impacts of climate change and build resilience.
8. Call on governments and their development partners to work together to establish the conditions needed to attract and secure significant investments, including public and private finance, in increasing water security and access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.
9. Mobilise concessional and catalytic capital to enable investments where private capital alone cannot flow.
10. Prioritise public benefit and local ownership, particularly in areas where water services remain a critical human right and development enabler.
11. Call upon the (inter)national and regional financial institutions in Africa to prioritise financing water and sanitation investment pipelines, including innovative financing mechanisms.

Roadmap and accountability

12. Commend South Africa G20 Presidency for the inauguration of the Global Outlook Council on Water Investments, as a Legacy Initiative advocating for water investments at the highest levels of global diplomacy.
13. Request the inclusion of this Declaration as part of the outcomes of South Africa's G20 Presidency.
14. Call on G20 leaders to support the endorsement of water as a core investment priority in the reimagining of multilateral finance.
15. Call upon the co-hosts UAE and Senegal of the 2026 UN Water Conference, to anchor the Declaration into the preparatory process.
16. Resolve to convene African Water Investment Summits every 4 years on a regional rotational basis, under the coordination role of the African Union Commission.
17. Request the Republic of South Africa, in their capacity as the G20 Presidency, to present this Declaration to the 39th Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2026 for endorsement.

Adopted on 15th day August 2025, in Cape Town, South Africa.