



REPORT FROM REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA- September 2014**1. Participation in IAH Commissions, Networks and Working Groups by IAH members from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)**

It was proposed earlier that consideration should be given to improving regional representation on IAH Commissions and Networks, especially by IAH members from SSA. As a follow up of this issue, as SSA VP I have formally written encouraging members in SSA to join the various IAH commissions and networks and the response has been encouraging. A number of members from SSA have already expressed interest in joining the various groups it is hoped that positive consideration will be given to those that have or will apply.

2. Operationalisation of Burdon Network activities

Efforts to institutionalize the activities of IAH through the office of Vice President have continued in order to make the position of Vice President relevant to the needs and priorities of the region. In this respect, the VP has been actively involved in activities of IAH taking place in the region through the Burdon Network. Support provided through the Burdon Network to SSA (book scheme, support to training, attendance of conferences and meetings, website etc) has been used to promote IAH and have it appreciated by members of IAH. The VP is able to use the benefits members get as an incentive for them to join the association.

3. Promotion of IAH membership in SSA

A membership promotion drive has been ongoing in Sub-Saharan Africa. A special invitation to join IAH was issued widely through AGW-NET, IAH members and the Rural Water Supply Network, indicating the benefits of joining IAH and indicating the procedures to go through to join the association. This invitation was very well received and many follow up requests for further information were received. So far over 20 members have applied to join IAH and 10 of these have been sponsored by IAH. This drive will continue through various partnerships with other groundwater related organisations such as the African Groundwater Network.

4. Support to establishment of new IAH National Chapters

Establishment of IAH National Chapters in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia has been one of the key priorities of IAH over the last few years. It had been proposed that the IAH Secretariat, the British Chapter and SSA VP make all efforts to support Malawi and Zambia in establishing country chapters. Possibilities of a visit by SSA VP to these countries were also considered.

As a follow up of this issue, email contacts have continued to be made with Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia to reactivate plans for setting up national chapters but the responses have not been as good as expected. These efforts will continue and it is expected that some achievements will be realized by mid 2015. In addition an initiative by the Irish Chapter to twin with Uganda was started and discussions are still ongoing.

5. Attendance of Conferences and Congresses

It has been noted that attendance of IAH congresses by hydrogeologists from Sub-Saharan Africa has been poor over the years. It had previously been proposed that IAH should put aside some funds for supporting participation of hydrogeologists from SSA. It had also been proposed that availability of such resources be made known to the SSA VP well in time so that he can communicate them to members. Knowing the availability of these resources well in time would make it possible to mobilise hydrogeologists early enough to prepare papers.

As a follow up of the above issue, mobilization for strong participation by groundwater professionals from SSA in Marrakech 2014 congress was made in collaboration with AGW-NET and the IAH Burdon Network. A meeting of members of AGW-NET and IAH from SSA was planned to take place as a way of getting many groundwater professionals to interact and know each other.

As part of this mobilization over 50 professionals from SSA submitted abstracts to Marrakech and it is expected that over 30 were accepted. However, possibilities of supporting these professionals to attend the congress were pursued in collaboration with the congress organisers and IAH Secretariat but the results have not been good. Although not sure how many participants from SSA are participating in the congress information received from a number of people who submitted abstracts indicate that they will not be attending due to funding problems. It is therefore recommended that IAH assesses possibilities of promoting participation of young professionals especially from SSA in IAH Congresses. Creation of specific fund for this purpose could be considered.

6. Publicity and out-reach

In order to improve the profile of IAH and create synergy in promotion of groundwater activities in Sub-Saharan Africa contacts were maintained with the African Groundwater Network (AGW-NET) and other groundwater related organizations for possible joint training opportunities and other collaborative activities. Discussions are ongoing on possible joint website between AGW-NET and IAH Burdon Network to document practical groundwater experiences.

7. Capacity building in groundwater related courses

It had been proposed that resources should be allocated in the IAH budget for at least one groundwater related training to be undertaken in one part of SSA (East Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa and Central Africa). Such courses could be offered as part of support to establishment of a national Chapter and could be conducted in collaboration with other networks such as Capnet, AGW-NET to have many participants and raise additional resources.

In this regard two training courses on groundwater management for River Basin Management were organized and supported by AGW-NET and IAH. The two courses were held in Bamako (Mali) and Porto Novo (Benin) and were well appreciated. It is proposed that resources continue to be allocated annually to support at least 2 similar courses in SSA.

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