



REPORT FROM REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA - 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 made to improve regional representation on IAH commissions and Networks especially by IAH members from SSA. As a follow up of this issues 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 commissions and networks and 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 trainings, 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 incentive for them to join IAH.

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 the African Groundwater Network, 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 partnerships with other groundwater related organisations such as AGW-Net.

4. Support to establishment of new IAH National Chapters

Establishment of Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia IAH National Chapters 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 contact has continued 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 at 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 in good 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 at the Marrakech 2014 congress was made in collaboration with the African Groundwater Network and IAH Burdon Network. A meeting of members of the African Groundwater Network and IAH from SSA was planned to take place as a way of getting as 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 it is not certain how many participants from SSA participated in the congress, information received from a number of people who submitted abstracts indicates that they could not attend 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 a 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 (AGWNET) and other groundwater related organizations for possible joint training opportunities and other collaborative activities. Discussions are ongoing on a possible joint website between AGWNET and the AH Burdon Network to document practical groundwater experiences.

7. Capacity building through groundwater related courses

It had been proposed that resources should be allocated in the IAH budget for at least one groundwater related training activity 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, AGWNET 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 AGWNET 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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