

**Africa has a similar water endowment to other continents but captures much less for its development. Less than 5% of agricultural land is irrigated, less than 10% of hydropower potential has been tapped, and only 58% of Africans have access to a clean water source.**

### **Water resources**

- Rainfall patterns are exceptionally variable, likely to become more so with climate change.
- Major drought and flood episodes can cost affected countries as much as 5-10% of GDP.
- Africa has very little water storage capacity to buffer hydrological shocks: only 200 cubic meters per capita compared with over 1,000 in most other developing countries.
- Without large increases in hydraulic infrastructure (to store water), Africa's economies will continue to be vulnerable to droughts and floods.
- Managing water resources effectively is complicated by the fact that 60 of Africa's major rivers cross national borders, making international cooperation on water essential.

### **Irrigation**

- Agricultural productivity is the lowest in the world, partly due to a lack of irrigation infrastructure.
- There is the potential to double Africa's irrigated area for higher value crops if development costs can be kept to around US\$2500 per hectare.
- Small-scale irrigation schemes offer the highest economic returns for most countries.

### **Sanitation**

- One in three Africans has to make do without any kind of toilet facility, and half the population rely on the most basic latrines providing minimal sanitary protection.
- Households are today the largest financiers of sanitation devoting substantial resources to developing their own on-site facilities.
- Governments can play a key facilitating role through promoting hygiene education and development of local capacity to produce improved latrine facilities.

### **Water supply**

- Only 5 African countries have met the Millennium Development Goal for access to safe water, with only 12 other countries likely to do so.
- Due to rapid urbanization and limited investment, coverage of improved water services is actually falling in Africa's cities.
- Groundwater accessed through boreholes is by far the fastest growing source of water supply for both urban and rural households in Africa.
- Existing spending on water supply and sanitation is nowhere near enough to meet the Millennium Development Goals; there is a funding gap of US\$9.3 billion a year.
- Ensuring that better-off customers pay the full cost of water services would accelerate access for the poor.