



## Research Brief

# Managing Water Resources Across the African Continent

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Last month in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ELI's Jessica Troell played a key role at the Third Africa Water Week. With support from the State Department and the Agency for International Development, ELI staff have been providing assistance to the African Ministers' Council on Water. AMCOW provides political leadership, policy direction, and advocacy in the management of water resources.

The Director of ELI's International Water Program, Jessica has completed an analysis that elaborates the key challenges facing AMCOW and provides recommendations for improving the council's structure and operations. Once these recommendations are approved, ELI will assist in their implementation and focus on strengthening the capacity of the council to implement its plan.

Jessica and Reginald Tekateka, Chair of the AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee, convened a session during Africa Water Week to address these issues. The session brought together water managers, civil society, and government officials to explore the ways in which a stronger AMCOW could facilitate sectoral progress

toward the Millennium Development Goals and Africa Water Vision 2025.

For more than a decade, our International Water Program has been working with NGOs, governments, and private-sector partners to encourage reasoned discussion and identify and develop the operation of practical mechanisms for expanding public participation in water management.

Following years of in-depth research conducted with local partners throughout Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, ELI will soon be publishing a practical *Handbook on Public Participation in International Water Management*. Designed for managers and NGOs, the handbook presents legal and management approaches that can be applied to increase stakeholder and public involvement in international water resources decisionmaking.

Jessica also worked with the Coca-Cola Company to develop a guide specifically for its bottling plant and division staff that will help them identify and engage with stakeholders in effectively managing local water resources. The guide was used in three regional pilot training workshops

for the company and its NGO partners in South Africa, Mexico, and China, and is now used throughout the Coca-Cola system. Elsewhere, Jessica was part of an international team of experts who helped develop a Stakeholder Involvement Plan for the Orange River Basin Commission in Southern Africa.

The program has also helped draft laws and build institutional capacity in Armenia, Kenya, Morocco, Brazil, Lebanon, Guyana, and other countries. Since over 250 river basins are shared by two or more countries worldwide, the program focuses on one of the most complex aspects of water management: governance of transboundary watercourses. Jessica and her staff are working on a variety of tools designed to reduce the environmental and social impacts of development on these shared water resources, as well as to prevent and mitigate potential conflicts.

In 2005 and 2006, for example, Jessica partnered with the Kenyan Department of Fisheries and the Institute for Law and Environmental Governance, a Kenyan NGO, to establish a transboundary legal and

operational framework for co-management of Lake Victoria's fisheries.

The program has produced significant scholarship on the legal and institutional frameworks governing transboundary impact assessment of international waters. Building on this research, Jessica served on the team that drafted the Guidelines on Regional Impact Assessment in the East African Community, and we recently learned that the East African Assembly is expected to draft and pass into law a Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill in 2011. The Institute for Security Studies is drawing on ELI's analysis as it helps the assembly design the law, and ELI is reviewing and commenting on the draft.

Most recently, the program has turned its attention to the pressing issues related to post-conflict water resource management and adaptation to climate change. ELI convened a regional conference on "Climate Change and Water Resources in Southern Africa: Toward Greater Resilience and Adaptive Governance," and this month, with her Kenyan co-author, Jessica will publish a chapter on "Climate Change Adaptation and Water in Kenya: Governing for Resilience."

In future columns I will report on a related ELI initiative exploring the links between post-conflict natural resource management and peacebuilding, as well as how our team is helping to shape international thinking and legal frameworks in other areas.