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# AFRICA SOURCE WATER PROTECTION VIRTUAL SEMINAR

Focusing on Source Water Protection to Improve Water Security

## CONCEPT NOTE

### INTRODUCTION

The World Water Forum set to be held in Senegal in 2021 is fast-approaching. The Kenyan Government has committed to hosting a pre-congress to mobilize potential participants in the greater Eastern Africa region to attend the forum. The government has expanded the theme of the pre-congress to include water security and preparation of a regional agenda for the World Water Forum.

To this end, the key organizers—the Kenyan Government, The Nature Conservancy, Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company, and the World Water Council—will host a virtual seminar on **Monday, September 21, 2020**, to discuss source water protection issues in the region.

### AFRICA SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

Of all the continents, Africa is perhaps the most exposed and vulnerable continent to the multiple stressors on water security. Much of the continent is endowed with significant freshwater resources, many of which, however, are inconveniently distributed in time and space. Estimates from various sources project that by 2050, the continent will double its population and bear increased demand for agricultural land. By 2025, of the 48 countries that are expected to be facing acute water shortages, no fewer than 25 will be African. This means that approximately 690 million Africans—or

nearly half of the projected population—will be living in water-scarce or water-stressed areas. At the same time, ecological conditions for terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems and the species that depend upon them have been deteriorating throughout much of Africa in the past decade outside of the protected area footprint.

Water security, defined as ‘the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods, and production’ is built out of protecting source water (including water from lakes, rivers, and underground aquifers) from encroachment, over-extraction, and contamination. Investing in source water protection can offer a cheaper and more sustainable alternative to enhance system resilience and help meet Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) needs when used in conjunction with traditional infrastructure solutions.

Balancing the needs of people and nature in the coming years is critical to improving water security and addressing sanitation challenges while safeguarding the natural assets upon which future growth depends. Transformation of this trajectory of water risk for Africa requires a fundamental review on how water sources are protected, conserved, and managed, beginning with a recognition of nature as green infrastructure, eligible for the same kinds of financing as grey infrastructure (i.e. water storage, distribution, and sanitation infrastructure).

## AFRICA SOURCE WATER PROTECTION VIRTUAL SEMINAR

### ABOUT THE SEMINAR

This virtual seminar will serve ongoing discussions by key stakeholders on how to build a coalition that will tackle this existential problem. Specifically, the seminar will bring together conservation, water management, and WASH professionals from Africa and around the world including government authorities from the national, regional, and local levels, leaders from the private sector, representatives from the development community, academia, and civil society.

#### Core elements of the seminar will:

1. Deliver high-level statements by select representatives from Kenyan, South African, and Senegalese governments, the World Water Council, the private sector, and civil society on the importance of source water protection and stewardship in Africa
2. Provide a platform for interactive online discussions on eight thematic areas linked to water security and source water protection, and identify opportunities and actions that participants can take back to their organizations and coalitions
3. Build consensus on priority issues to be raised by the region during the pre-congress and at the World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal.



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### Expected Outcomes

The main output from the seminar will be a summary report on the high priority issues from the panelists, presenters, and group discussions. This will set the stage for further discussions, in the lead up to the World Water Forum in Senegal.

Other outcomes include increased awareness among the participants of the main issues to consider in addressing source water protection by each sector and how these could feed into the major international and national processes. The seminar will also advance initial discussions about an “Africa Source Water Protection Partnership” which would involve a mutually-beneficial partnership between conservation and WASH NGOs, corporates, governments, and international finance organizations to develop programs and attract financial flows and collaborative action on source water protection for enhanced water security.

### PROGRAMME FORMAT

This virtual seminar will run from **14:00-16:30 East Africa Time** and will consist of both high-level panel discussions with key stakeholders in source water protection as well as breakout groups during which attendees will tackle various topical issues in smaller sessions.

### PARTICIPATION

The Seminar is by pre-registration only and will be held in English. To register, please visit: [bit.ly/3b1839M](https://bit.ly/3b1839M)

### CONTACTS

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