



© Nick Hall, Captureson, Roshni Lodhia, Dan Rozier, Nick Hall

AFRICA WATER SECURITY CONGRESS

Source Water Protection to Improve Water Security

NAIROBI, KENYA | APRIL 27-30, 2020

Africa is the most exposed and vulnerable continent to the multiple stressors on water security. Much of Africa has significant freshwater resources, but they are poorly distributed in time and space. By 2050 the continent will double its population to 2.5 billion people and experience the greatest expansion of cropland globally.

By 2025, of the 48 countries that are expected to be facing 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.

Balancing the needs of people and nature in the coming years is critical to improving water security, address 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 other water storage and distribution infrastructure.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

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 cheaper and more sustainable alternative to enhance system resilience when used in conjunction with traditional infrastructure solutions.

ABOUT THE CONGRESS

Widespread consideration and adoption of source water protection is possible but only if we, the key partners, work together. These include governments, local authorities, international finance institutions, corporations and civil society. The Africa Water Security Congress aims to bring together leaders from this community for the first time ever to share the vision and discuss accelerating and resourcing source water protection efforts in Africa.

The Source Water Protection Congress: Nairobi 2020 aims to bring together conservation and water management 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.

THE SOURCE WATER PROTECTION CONGRESS: NAIROBI 2020

WHY ATTEND?

For Governments, Local Authorities and IFIs:

Source water protection is a cost-effective mechanism to improve water security, while at the same time, generating additional benefits to society such as biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation. Source water protection can also spark a conservation economy in places where there are limited economic alternatives.

For Corporations: Source water protection can address water risks such as physical access to water of appropriate quality and in sufficient quantities. It can also provide a platform for corporations to address an ever more complex social context surrounding a highly competed resource.

For Civil Society: Source water protection addresses water and environmental challenges, and provides a platform to share responsibilities and accountability among all sectors.



© Nick Hall

EVENT OBJECTIVES

The **Africa Water Security Congress** serves as an important rallying point towards the 9th World Water Forum to be held in Dakar, Senegal in 2021, to present the issues, concerns and promising solutions to one of Africa's most existential challenges- securing its source waters in the face of climate change, rapid land use change, and other economic and population pressures.

An important pillar of this event is its dedicated effort to share experiences and learnt lessons, build capacity and disseminate science and knowledge both within the source water protection community and among those interested in using green infrastructure to improve water security. This sharing of knowledge and capacity building is key to effectively replicating Water Funds and other source water protection models and scaling up the impact of their activities. This Congress serves as an integral step towards this end.

- Share best practices on how to effectively use source water protection approaches to improve water security from within and outside of Africa;
- Reflect proactively on the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned from financing source water protection in Africa and globally;
- Develop adaptable capacity- building tools that offer training resources for both in-person and online training and skills advancement
- Launch an Africa Source Water Protection Partnership to collaboratively accelerate the effort
- Join Kenya and other regional governments in launching Nairobi Declaration 2020 and other position papers for World Water Forum 2021 in Senegal

AGENDA AND INVOLVEMENT

The Congress will cover three days with a mix of plenary and concurrent sessions, with a fourth day for field trip and side meetings. Interactive training sessions will be integrated into and prior to the agenda. Young Water Professionals will hold a pre-congress workshop at the venue on April 26.

Lead organisers The Kenyan Government, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company welcome development and research institutions, philanthropies, utilities, business and individuals willing to partner in the agenda development committee. The organising partners are also inviting financial co-sponsors for different elements of the Congress. Sponsored exhibition space will also be available. **For more information on either opportunity please contact Event Coordinator, Mr Simon Thuo at congress@nairobi2020.org.**