

# **A Holistic Approach to Sustainable Groundwater Development in Africa**

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Groundwater provides about 45% of global domestic water demands, is the main source of domestic water supply in several African countries, and is the most common supply of water demands in of sparsely populated areas. Where groundwater is shallow, hand dug wells play a major role in Africa's domestic water supply in rural, as well as peri-urban areas. Over the past two decades, Africa has witnessed a significant increase in boreholes - financed through investments by development programmes, water users and local businesses. They are used for handpump and piped water supplies. The Sustainable Development Goals strive for universal realisation of the right to safe and affordable drinking water by 2030. Ensuring that everyone has access is a momentous shift from the MDGs, particularly for rural and peri-urban Africa, where access is low. Without doubt, groundwater supplies, and boreholes in particular, will play a tremendous role in reaching the SDGs. Developing sustainable groundwater supplies and managing the resource is a highly skilled endeavour. The wider socio-economic, institutional and political environment, as well as the way that projects are designed affects groundwater development. If boreholes are not well sited, designed, contracted and installed, the supplies cannot be sustained, and investments are wasted. If groundwater resources are not properly managed, there is risk of pollution and failure of the water supplies. Unfortunately, there is growing evidence that there are major weaknesses in the way in which drilling projects are being undertaken in many African countries. If there is to be any chance of meeting the SDGs for water, this must to change, including-

- Improved design and implementation of drilling and rehabilitation projects
- Raised capacity
- Dialogue & exchange
- Civic awareness of groundwater
- Improved, policies, regulation, standards and procedures
- Increased consideration of water resources

