



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY – REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

ENG. JOAO CAHOLO

AT THE

**SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER MEETING AND
THE REGIONAL STRATEGIC WATER INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTOR/DONORS CONFERENCE**

MASERU SUN HOTEL, MASERU, KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

22nd September 2011

- Director of Ceremonies,
- Your Honor the Deputy Prime Ministers; Mr. Lesao Lehohla, our guest of honor
- Minister of Natural Resources for the Kingdom of Lesotho, Hon Monyane Moleleki; our Gracious Host
- Dignitaries from the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho here present;
- Chairperson of the SADC Committee of Ministers responsible for Water, Hon Emanuela Vieira Lopes ;
- Honourable Ministers from the SADC Member States here Present
- Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Senior Officials from the SADC Member States;
- Colleagues from the SADC Secretariat, River Basin Organisations and other Regional Bodies;
- Representative of our International Cooperating Partners
- Executive Secretary of AMCOW
- Distinguished Delegates
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Executive Secretary Dr. Augusto Salamao, It is with immense sense of duty, that I have been accorded the opportunity to deliver a few remarks, to this august forum.

I would like at the outset, to recognize with great appreciation the presence at this occasion, of his Honour the Deputy Prime Minister of The Kingdom of Lesotho, an unequivocal demonstration of the importance that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho attaches to the regional water issues. I should however hasten to say that this is not surprising to some of us as this is indeed where the SADC Water Sector was conceived and coordinated since 1996 up to 2003 when the sectors were

centralized at the Secretariat in Gaborone Botswana. I have no doubt that Honorable Deputy Prime Minister will give us very instructive insights on the regional water issues, which will inform the deliberations of the Honourable Ministers in this meeting and all stakeholders as we move into the Investment Conference tomorrow.

It is also very fitting that these two events are taking place in a country which serves as a water tower for four SADC Member States at the Southern part of our sub-region and being at the Head Waters of one of our largest shared river basin the Orange-Senqu River Basin.

This meeting and the subsequent conference are taking place at the time when the issues of water are becoming very critical in the development equation in our various Member States, the SADC Region and Africa as a whole. Our region is characterised by acute variability of water resources both in time and in space. This is further exacerbated by threats posed by the global climate change phenomenon which renders our available water resources to be stressed as a result of a reduction in the overall precipitation. Indeed. Climate change has also seen us facing more intense and frequent extremes of weather such as droughts and floods, thus necessitating coordinated management of our shared water courses and resources. For the SADC region with its multiplicity of shared watercourses, issues of cooperation and joint planning and management of the development and utilization of our shared resources is of paramount importance.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Honor, the Deputy Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The past three days, the senior officials have been working tirelessly to prepare documents for our Water Ministers, who are meeting today. More importantly we have had the Honourable Ministers responsible for Water from the Zambezi Basin meet to discuss and give the much needed direction to the process of operationalising the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) Agreement. The Zambezi is the largest river basin wholly within the SADC region and is shared by far the largest number of SADC Member States. It is very gratifying to note that following protracted efforts by the Ministers, the Agreement has come into force and the moment is now opportune to unlock a number of opportunities for implementation of projects of economic and developmental gain within the Zambezi Basin riparian states and SADC as a whole, as we seek to address the challenges of poverty reduction and economic development in SADC.

I wish also to note with great appreciation the Ministerial side Meeting that took place on the margins of this meeting on the OKACOM and wish to commend the Ministers of OKACOM to spearhead and guide the implementation of the decisions they just took.

It is also commendable that the committee of Ministers responsible for Water direct the secretariat to work with all the river basin organizations established under the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses to align all the structures of the current established River Basin Organizations to the dictates of the Protocol.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Honour, the Deputy Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The region has already adopted, as its development priority, infrastructure development which, for the water sector is very critical for making sure that our region's most vulnerable can gain access to water supplies of adequate quantity and good quality for their various needs including energy and food security through irrigated agriculture. This together with the need to address the sanitation gap will directly facilitate the region's attainment of the millennium development goals particularly on water and sanitation targets. The upcoming investor conference, therefore, takes place at an opportune time and we seize the opportunity to promote our regional strategic Water infrastructure Programme to our potential investors and donors. This will enable us to leverage the much needed resources to improve the status of infrastructure development in the region, especially in the Water Sector which affects all other sectors of the economy.

We recognize with interest the developments that are happening in the water sector on the continent where the role of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) has been very instrumental. We in SADC as regional economic community of the AU and therefore a sub-regional part of AMCOW are making our contributions in the implementation of the AMCOW programme.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Honor, the Deputy Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I could not have completed my remarks if I did not recognize and appreciate the important role that our partners in the water sector are playing in assisting us to realize the overall SADC development objectives especially those who have supported the organization of the Investor Conference taking place tomorrow. These partnerships are very important and need to be nurtured.

Director of Ceremonies

Your Honor, the Deputy Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to end my remarks by thanking the government and people of the Kingdom of Lesotho for hosting this very important SADC event and making these excellent facilities available to all the delegates including the SADC Secretariat. I would also like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly to make the meeting and the conference a success, which they promise to be.

I thank you all for your kind attention;

Kea Leboha.