



Press Release

On the Occasion of World Water Day, 22nd March 2012

More Investments needed for Water Infrastructure Development in SADC

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) joins the rest of the world in commemorating this year's World Water Day with a call for more investments towards the development of water infrastructure in the region in order to improve assurance of water supply for domestic, industrial, energy and food security.

The SADC region which has a population of about 260 million people is characterized with high levels of water insecurity with close to 100 million people in the region still not having access to safe drinking water and nearly 155 million people not having access to improved sanitation facilities.

SADC Secretariat Senior Programme Officer in the Water Division Mr. Phera Ramoeli says, "as we observe this year's World Water Day, whose theme is - **Water And Food Security**, our hope is that the Private Sector, Investment Banks and the Donor Community will be motivated to dedicate more resources towards Water Infrastructure Development so that our region remain food secure and further reduce the devastating impact of Climate Change and Climate Variability".

Water Infrastructure Development is very critical for making sure that the region's most vulnerable people can gain access to water supplies of adequate quantity and good quality for their various needs including energy and food security through irrigated agriculture.

In September 2011, SADC held a regional investor opportunity conference on strategic Water Infrastructure in Maseru, Lesotho which brought together SADC Ministers responsible for Water, potential investors including Multi-lateral Banks, the Private Sector, International Cooperating Partners (ICP's), representatives of the African Union, among others, to discuss funding for already prioritized strategic Water Infrastructure projects from SADC Member States.

Twenty-three (23) prioritized projects amounting to an estimated US\$18.5 billion that had been prepared by the Member States with the assistance of the SADC Secretariat were presented to the conference with the hope of attracting funding.

The process of wooing more investors to fund the projects is ongoing and some interest has been shown by some partners especially for small water infrastructure projects which intend to benefit more than one country.

The Water Infrastructure projects are packaged into three categories, namely regional, cross border and priority national projects which contribute to goals of regional integration, peace and stability, and poverty eradication through food security, energy security and safe water supply and sanitation. These projects are also geared towards improving resilience to citizens of the regions from water-related disasters that occur mainly due to the changing climate.

The need for the development of Water Infrastructure is one of the key priorities cited in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), SADC's operational blue print for regional integration and poverty alleviation crafted in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

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