



**Official Welcome Remarks by Mr. Lebohang Maseru, Commissioner of  
Water, Ministry of Water, Government of Lesotho  
At the 10<sup>th</sup> SADC Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Water, Energy and Food  
(WEF) Nexus Approach  
Avani Maseru, Lesotho, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**Protocol**

- His Majesty King Letsie III
- The Right Honourable the Prime Minister
- Honourable President of the Senate
- Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly
- His Lordship the Chief Justice
- Honourable Deputy Prime Minister
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers, in particular the Honourable Ministers of - Water; Energy and Meteorology; and Agriculture and Food Security
- Their Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Mission and International Organisations, in particular Ms. Paola Amadei, European Union Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho
- Honourable Members of the Senate and Principal Chiefs
- Honourable Members of the National Assembly
- Principal Secretaries, in particular the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Water, Ntate Lisema Lekhooana, ..., here present
- Chairpersons of the Committees of Senior Officials responsible for Water, Energy and Food Security;
- Senior Officials from Member States;
- Church Leaders
- Heads of Departments, Parastatals and Public Institutions
- The Guest Speaker, Prof Makoala V. Marake
- Director of Infrastructure and Services at the SADC Secretariat, Ms. 'Mapolao Mokoena,
- Executive Secretary of the Global Water Partnership – Southern Africa, Mr. Alex Simalabwi;
- Heads of SADC Implementing Agencies including River Basin Organisations;

- Our International and Regional Cooperating Partners in the Water, Energy and Food Sectors here present;
- Distinguished Guests,
- Colleagues from SADC Secretariat
- Representatives of Media Houses;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

**Good morning to you all,**

1.1 It is indeed an honour for me to deliver these few welcome remarks on behalf of the Government of Lesotho at this 10<sup>th</sup> SADC Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue focusing on the Water, Energy and Food -WEF-Nexus Approach being held under the theme; ***“Bolstering regional productive capacities for water, energy, food security and ecosystem resilience to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial transformation.”*** Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome you all to the capital Maseru in the beautiful mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. I hope you are already enjoying your stay.

I would have loved you to experience our beloved country so that you can enjoy the picturesque and aesthetic network of the Maloti Mountains, where you can breathe the fresh air at 3000m above the sea level, and that you may appreciate the majestic Katse dam and many other interesting places in our country. I hope that most will in your spare time, take time to visit us and experience our deep culture and our beautiful country.

1.2 Their Excellencies, Guest of Honour, Distinguished Participants and Guests, we are here to talk about an important aspect of the socioeconomic development of our SADC Region; water, and the central role it plays in energy and food security in the region. In Lesotho we refer to water as our white gold, not only because we receive royalties from water transfers to our neighbour South Africa through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, but mainly due to the critical role of water in various areas of our livelihoods and socioeconomic development sectors, including the water-dependent textile and apparel industry which is our largest employer. Moreover, we do have

water in relative abundance, as we occupy only 3% of the Orange-Senqu River Basin area, while we generate over 46% of the total runoff in the basin.

1.3 Lesotho is a good example when we talk about the WEF Nexus Approach. We generate our main source of electricity through the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, and produce fish for local consumption and export while we transfer water to the Republic of South Africa for various uses. We have embarked on the climate-smart Integrated Catchment Management Project (ICM), that we will be witnessing during the excursion on Day 3 of the Dialogue, that seeks to collaboratively manage water, land and the environment sustainably, building on the WEF Nexus Approach. We are implementing the Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project (ROLL) that is intended to ensure that rural communities adopt transformational practices for regenerated landscapes and sustainable livelihoods, while promoting energy saving technologies in rural areas.

1.5 Colleagues, With Lesotho's contribution of over 46% of the overall Orange-Senqu River basin runoff, access to potable water supply for Basotho is still a problem. This is a clear indicator that water is not necessarily Lesotho's major challenge but technology to create access to it and to distribute it to where people are (where it is needed) as well as investments to generate more energy for the country. Capacity, innovation and entrepreneurial ideas and skills based on the WEF Nexus thinking are required in order to fill this gap, and not only in Lesotho but throughout the region, though that challenges may slightly differ from State to State.

1.6 This is why Lesotho finds this multi-stakeholder dialogue to be very critical in that while each of our countries has its own national agenda aimed at uplifting the socio-economic conditions and livelihoods of its people, we definitely need to work together to plan on usage of our natural resources to combat common challenges within the WEF Nexus. So as a country, we take this SADC Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on WEF Nexus approach seriously, which is why we are one of the first SADC countries to hold a national WEF Nexus Dialogue.

1.7 It is therefore critical that the conversation and practice of the WEF Nexus concept is implementable at both national and regional levels for the economic growth and transformation of the entire SADC region, so we do not leave anyone behind.

1.8 We therefore commend SADC Secretariat for staying the course on pushing the WEF nexus agenda in the past recent years where for instance the past four multi-stakeholder dialogues have linked the WEF Nexus dimension to regional development. You may remember the 6th Dialogue held in Lusaka Zambia in 2013 focused on the theme ***exploring the water, energy and food nexus for regional development***; the 7th Dialogue held in Windhoek, Namibia in 2015 discussed ***the central role of water in driving industrialization, with the realisation that water attains its true value when it has optimised contribution to other productive sectors of the various industrial value chains***; in 2017 at the 8th Dialogue in Boksburg, South Africa we looked at ***fostering regional value chains and job creation through the***

***Water-Energy-Food Nexus approaches;*** at the 9th Dialogue held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2019 we discussed ***promoting the water-energy-food nexus approach and youth empowerment for sustainable development.*** This year we continue with a focus on ***bolstering regional productive capacities for water, energy, food security and ecosystem resilience to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial transformation.***

1.9 To truly realize social and economic transformation of our region through growth of the three sectors, member states need coordinated policies and actions for related sectors. It is through such coordination that member states can create synergies between sectoral development agendas to deal with regional challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, growing economies and populations which are increasingly becoming complex and intensifying the pressure on natural resources such as water, land and energy. We need to continue planning as three sectors in the Region using these nexus approaches to respond effectively and efficiently on the mandate of reducing poverty levels in our respective Member States..

Colleagues, as we continue to engage and deliberate on these WEF Nexus Approaches in the next two days, there is need to improve cooperation more than ever before collectively as SADC Member States, to respond to the urgent needs of our people with regard to the provision of reliable potable water, energy and food security. It is therefore my hope that this forum will accord us all an opportunity to, firstly, develop a strategy on ways in which we can optimize the use of water, food and energy sustainably, while still maintaining the integrity of our ecosystems. Secondly, to find ways on how

we can mobilize inclusive entrepreneurial capabilities within the nexus to enhance the region's productive capabilities, and last but not least, to understand the regional instruments to support water, energy and food security, within the sustainable bounds of the environment.

1.10 Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen; In conclusion, I would want to thank the Conveners and financiers of this Multi-Stakeholder dialogue for having stood together and organised this important dialogue. I also appreciate the positive response from the delegates represented here for having heeded to the invitation by SADC Secretariat to attend this important WEF Nexus dialogue from your busy schedules. I believe that our deliberations will align with the meeting objectives so that we develop practical strategies for use of the WEF nexus approach in ensuring food, energy and food security for the region. Therefore, I take this opportunity to wish all of you great success during the three-day deliberations. I thank you for your kind attention.

**Merci**  
**Obrigado**  
**Kea leboha.**

**Khotso Pula Nala**