



10th SADC Multistakeholder Dialogue- “Bolstering regional productive capacities for water, energy, food security and ecosystem resilience to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial transformation”

Opening Remarks by EUD- Her Excellency Paola Amadei

5 September 2022

I present my respects to His Majesty, King Letsie III, and Her Majesty Queen Masenate

The Right Honourable, Prime Minister, Dr Moeketsi Majoro,

The Honourable President of the Senate

The Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly

His Lordship the Chief Justice

The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister

The Acting Principle Secretary)- Mr Lisema Lekhooana;

, Director Infrastructure in the SADC Secretariat - Ms. Mapolao Mokoena;

The ORASECOM Executive Secretary- Mr. Lenka Thamae;

The BMZ Head of Economic and Development Cooperation SADC/BWA- Marcel Grella;

The GIZ Country Team;

Representatives of Government Ministries,

Representatives of UN Agencies and other Development Partners

Representatives of Civil Society Organisations,

Member of the media fraternity

Good morning to all – Khotsong bo-'Mé'e le Bo-Ntate,

First of all, let me thank the Government of Lesotho for hosting this 10th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, on the water, energy and Food Nexus in Maseru. It is encouraging to see regional and international events coming back after the long

break imposed by the pandemic and especially an event like this one, touching key issues for Lesotho and the region. Hence a special thank goes to the Global Water Partnership of Southern Africa, for bringing this Regional event to the Mountain Kingdom.

Further appreciation goes to implementing partners today present that have jointly funded the event: the German Government, the GIZ, SADC- Water Fund, ORASECOM and the SADC Ground Water Management Institution.

Rea leboha!!

Natural resources are increasingly at risk due to factors such as climate change, demographic and economic growth, political instability and forced migration. Today, some of the greatest challenges to development and cooperation include the identification of appropriate and timely adaptation measures in this continuously changing and fragile environment.

As we stand here today, Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for 60% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa and accounts for 23% of the continent's GDP. However, efforts to scale the sector and increase food security are negatively impacted by resource constraints, political instability, and climate change. Additionally, Southern Africa's biodiversity and ecosystem services are under pressure from unsustainable agricultural practices. As we face the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, natural resource management is now more critical than ever—especially in the protection of the most precious resource: water.

Since February this year an additional factor is affecting food security in the region: the unwarranted Russia's aggression against Ukraine has caused a price escalation of food items, fertilisers, fuel which are particularly felt in this region dealing with chronic food insecurity and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Cereal exporting countries such as South Africa and Zambia, might not meet the demand this year, because of the increase in price and reduced availability of imported chemical fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, and other countries might not be able to cover for the shortfalls.. Furthermore Southern African countries, including Lesotho, have been experiencing some moderate to severe climate shocks in the last decade, with an unprecedented surge in the frequency and intensity of El Niño episodes, accompanied by over-normal rainfall years as well as delayed rainfall seasons.

Past the era of sectoral silos there is a broad consensus to address the challenges of the environment, of climate change of preservation of water and soil, of energy production of food security in a interlinked manner and to see the nexus between

them. During the Covid-19 pandemic it became clear that the health of the planet and of the human beings are closely connected and that there is only One Health and one joined-up approach , reach the established SDG's under the Agenda 2030.

In the logic the EU is supporting SADC and its partners with financing for the SADC Water Energy and Food Nexus Dialogue Project, as we believe that with emerging challenges such as climate change and growing population, the world and the region faces pressure to provide clean water, sanitation, food and energy., hence the need to use an approach that will use resources efficiently to solve some of the most complex challenges. The nexus approach allows for collaborative means to find solutions and that we avoid situations where developments in one sector negatively affect another sector.

Team Europe, meaning the European Union and all its member states and institutions, is honoured to contribute to these actions and advance towards a sustainable and equitable future for all SADC people.

The Nexus approach that will be discussed throughout this Dialogue, is aligned with and supportive of the EU Consensus on Development (of 2017) – “*Our World, our Dignity, our Future*”. Key elements of the Consensus require collaborative efforts across sectors in ways that can be supported by a Nexus approach. Furthermore, under the recently launched EU Green and clean-Global Gateway Strategy, Team Europe aims to support global partners in speeding up their green transition and move to a circular economy. In this regard, the EU is catalysing its investment globally in green initiatives that improve air and water quality, promote sustainable agriculture and preserve environmental systems and biodiversity. As an example, the EU is a pioneer in supporting proposals that will restore Europe's nature by 2050 and halve pesticide use by 2030: The Commission has proposed to restore damaged ecosystems and bring nature back across Europe, from agricultural land, to seas, forests and urban environments.

Allow me to refer now to some to the work the EU is undertaking in Lesotho's Water and Energy sectors following a Nexus approach, with 75% of our resources going the latter. The EU cooperation is currently supporting Lesotho to move towards sustainable water and sanitation infrastructures, energy generation and consumption and affordable access for all Basotho. In this regard, we are working together with the government of Lesotho, the World Bank and the European Investment Bank in the implementation of Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Programme Phase II. The aim of this project is the development of water infrastructure, which will facilitate increased access in the Lowlands to secure, safe and affordable water supplies for rural and urban households,

enterprises, agricultural production and industries. It will further support the Government, private sector and civil society to maximise the socio-economic development benefits of water supply without compromising sustainability of ecosystems.

We are similarly involved in Lesotho's Reform to the Energy Sector, currently supporting the creation of the enabling conditions for improved sector governance, including adaption of sector reform by key stakeholders and conditions created for full-scale access to modern energy in rural areas.

One single programme, the Lesotho's Integrated Catchment Management National Programme-widely known as **ReNOKA**, supported by the EU in partnership with the German Government and the Government of Lesotho, and implemented by the GIZ, exemplifies the commitment of Lesotho and its Team Europe partners for an inclusive and holistic approach to protect and conserve the natural resources of Lesotho and the Orange-Senqu River Basin as a whole. You will be able to appreciate the work conducted to date under this programme during Wednesday organised excursion.

Let me highlight to you the importance of this programme to the Country and to the Region, as well as the main drivers for the EU's support to RENOKA:

- **To support Lesotho into fighting against its annual natural resource depletion.** Time is not anymore on Lesotho's side: Lesotho is losing at least 4,500 tonnes of (fertile) top soil / hour, carried away in rivers flowing into South Africa. Erosion in its current rate is threatening agricultural production potential and Lesotho's food security, potentially leading to migration affecting the region as a whole.
- **To protect Lesotho's water infrastructure and maintain water retention capacity :** erosion silting up existing dams could severely reduce the lifetime of water and energy infrastructure, affect the ability of Lesotho to guarantee water supply to its neighbour South Africa, and potentially to Botswana.
- **Support Lesotho's Clean Energy production** as erosion diminishes the hydropower potential in the country.

To conclude I would like to say a few words about our cooperation in the areas of Trade and Economic Development in the Region, aiming at boosting local and regional productive capacities. You might be aware of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), that the European Union signed with SADC. It is permanent, with no end date, and thus provides potential exporters and investors, whether

local or foreign, with predictability and stability. While trade of Lesotho with the EU represents a major resource for the country, with a traditional positive balance in favour of the Mountain Kingdom, diversification and increased value added to local exports would be a plus and the EU in cooperation with the German Ministry of Cooperation and GIZ plans to launch in 2023 the activities of a programme aimed at supporting Lesotho economic operators in accessing the EU market.

Senior officials from water, energy and food sectors across all 16 SADC Member States, representatives of regional institutions, of youth and women groups, civil society organisations, private sector, International Cooperation Partners are present here today . This broad participation gives me confidence that discussions will be fruitful and offer practical solutions to the region as a whole and to the individual countries to meet the water, energy and food security demands in the context of climate change.

The EU is happy to be associated with efforts meant to “achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration,” in line with the objectives stated by the SADC itself. Together SADC and EU we are stronger and we can better provide for the needs of our people and for the safeguard of an healthy planet.

Khotso. Pula. Nala.