



REMARKS BY SADC Chair

Mr. Camille Iyaka, Head of Division in charge of transboundary water management, Democratic Republic of Congo

AT

THE 10TH SADC MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON WATER - ENERGY – FOOD (WEF) NEXUS APPROACH HELD ON 5th-7th SEPTEMBER IN MASERU, LESOTHO

- **Guest of Honour**
- The Guest speaker
- Mr. Lebohang Maseru, Commissioner of Water, Government of Lesotho
- Mr. Lisema Lekhooana, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Water, Government of Lesotho
- Ms. Paola Amadei, EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho
- Ms. Mapalao Mokoena, SADC Secretariat
- Executive Secretary of the Global Water Partnership – Southern Africa -GWP-SA- Mr Alex Simalabwi;
- Chairpersons of the Committees of senior officials responsible for Water, Energy and Food Security;
- Senior officials from member states;
- The Heads of the SADC Implementation organizations including The River Basin organisations;
- Our International and Regional Cooperating Partners In The Water, Energy and Food sectors here present;
- Distinguished guests, media houses;
- Ladies and gentlemen and invited guests;
- Dear colleagues from SADC Secretariat

Greetings,

- 1.1 Allow me to greet all of you as we meet for the 10th SADC Multi-stakeholder Dialogue here in Maseru, Lesotho. As you've already heard, this is an important forum through which practitioners and other influencing sectors have discussions on pertinent issues that need to be addressed to deepen regional integration and address poverty in the region. We would like to thank the Secretariat at SADC that organizes this biennial event to help the region unlock the potential of sustainable water resources development in contributing to regional integration, poverty eradication and socio-economic development.
- 1.2 Water, energy, and food security continue to be riddled with challenges in this part of Africa. In my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, access to quality water remains a challenge, especially in rural area. Despite freshwater sources being in abundance, water quality and accessibility are some of the major challenges in DRC. The infrastructure in most cases has not been maintained for a while, bringing out justified concerns around the water quality. In some cases, the infrastructure is not there with insufficient water storage and treatment facilities, women therefore have to walk for long distances to access water from open sources, which may also be unsafe. We can therefore not talk about winning the fight against water borne diseases when we have not addressed the issue of water quality.
- 1.3 Food security is of greatest concern at the moment in DRC. The latest report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification shows that the 27 million people, one-quarter of DRC's population, are currently highly food insecure with 857,000 children and 468,000 women likely suffering from acute malnutrition in the Democratic Republic of Congo. DRC, a Southern African country, currently has the largest number of highly food insecure people in the world. This should not be a DRC problem alone, it should worry us all, it should worry the SADC community.
- 1.4 Energy. Just as in many other Southern African states, DRC mostly relies on hydropower and access remains low. Access rates improved from 11% in 2009 to 19% in 2017 but the access rates in rural areas remain low at only 4%. You can see that there is again a task before us to increase the access rate or improve the situation.
- 1.5 The challenges I have highlighted here are not unique to DRC. Water access and quality is quite an issue in many southern African countries, food security may be worse in DRC but some Southern

African countries are facing the same challenge. Low rates of energy access are also alarming for many SADC member states. So the region is in the same boat regards most of the challenges in the water, energy and food sectors hence is it commendable that SADC has settled for these as key priority areas for the region. Traditionally, the design of water, energy and agriculture systems has been done independently or has only considered simplified interdependencies between the systems but with the picture I have painted of the DRC, these sectors are interlinked and therefore resolving the challenges may need a collaborated response for the three sectors and member states within the region.

- 1.6 I am therefore delighted that this year's Multi-stakeholder Dialogue event is fully integrative of these three sectors, under the Water-Food-Energy Nexus concept which acknowledges that we cannot discuss water security, food security or energy security independent of each other. Focus or actions in solving the challenges in the other may impact others hence the need to use an integrated approach. Central to resolving challenges in the energy or agriculture or food sectors is the water sector. Therefore, increased integration and inclusive approaches to water resources management, development and its utilisation are crucial for water to truly play its role of catalysing regional development, and to attract more investment into the sector.
- 1.7 Through the SADC WEF Nexus Regional Dialogue Project funded by the European Union and implemented on behalf of SADC Secretariat by the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa, we want the region to meet water, energy, and food security targets, while improving the region's resilience since as you know the challenges in the three sectors have been exacerbated by climate change and high population growth especially in urban areas among others. SADC considers the nexus approach as critical in accelerating and implementing sustainable investments at the national and regional level. This approach allows not only the identification of possible trade-offs, but also synergies, whereby an investment in one sector benefits the others.
- 1.8 We are glad that there have already been strides registered at the national level of many SADC member states that have held national dialogues under the SADC WEF Nexus Regional Dialogue Project. Through the national dialogues, member states have been able to identify national WEF nexus priorities and showcase the benefits of how improved sectoral coordination can accelerate national investment opportunities. They have established technical working groups that will facilitate continuous engagements at national levels.

The task at hand now is for SADC and other implementing partners to help mobilise resources for implementation of the identified projects for the attainment of food, energy and water security, which will stimulate economic growth, and improve the quality of life of citizens in the region. I'm happy to report that is SADC chair, the Democratic Republic of Congo lead by example and conducted its own national dialogue joining a number of other Southern African member states in conducting such meetings. It is my sincere hope that these national dialogues will result in tangible progress where we see WEF projects taking shape and these being accelerated at regional level. It is 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.

- 1.9 This 10th Multi-stakeholder dialogue is a continuation of the past four dialogues and aligns with with the theme of the 41st Summit. It is not isolated, it takes forward the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 which emphasises on technological and economic transformation of the SADC region through industrialization, modernization, skills development, science and technology, financial strengthening and deeper regional integration. We can not discuss these targets if there is no growth in the Water, Energy of Food sectors or if the SADC membership works in isolation.
- 1.10 To truly realize social and economic transformation, 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 which are increasingly becoming complex with climate change, environmental degradation, growing economies and populations that are intensifying the pressure on natural resources such as water, land and energy.
- 1.11 It is therefore my hope and expectation that this forum will be a useful platform through which we can share knowledge, ideas and come up with strategies that would improve our region's security in the three sectors of water, energy and food.
- 1.12 Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen; in conclusion, I would like to encourage us all to be open minded and contribute to the discourse so that we can all learn from each other. As a region, the challenges we all face are in most cases similar and therefore sharing solutions that may be working in one country may be useful to the other and can be scaled up at regional level. I wish you

productive deliberations and a wonderful stay in Lesotho. I thank you for your kind attention.

ENDs