

**Keynote Address by Honourable Mohlomi Moleko,
Minister of Natural Resources, Lesotho
At the 11th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue
Maseru, Lesotho, 29 - 30 September 2025**

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
Their Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Mission and International Organisations
European Union Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho
Honourable Members of the Senate and Principal Chiefs
Honourable Members of the National Assembly
Principal Secretaries and Senior Officials from Member States
Director of Infrastructure and Services at the SADC Secretariat
Heads of Departments, Parastatals and Public Institutions
Heads of SADC Implementing Agencies including River Basin Organisations
International and Regional Cooperating Partners in the Water, Energy, Food and
Ecosystems Sectors
Distinguished Guests
Colleagues from SADC Secretariat
Representatives of Media Houses
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my singular honour and privilege to welcome you all to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, and to the 11th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue. We are deeply honoured to host this important gathering, which brings together visionaries, practitioners, and decision-makers from the SADC region, united by a common mission: ensuring that water serves as a catalyst for regional integration, inclusive development, and shared prosperity.

We are humbled to host the event for the second time, after hosting the 10th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in 2022 under the theme; ***“Bolstering regional productive capacities for water, energy, food security and ecosystem resilience to achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial transformation”***.

The theme for this 11th SADC Multi-stakeholder Dialogue is: ***“Water Security, Innovation, and Nexus Action: Watering and Enabling Regional Economic Development Corridors for Transformation in SADC”***. It underscores the fact that water security and innovation are not only environmental or social concerns, but also central drivers of economic growth, industrialisation, and regional integration.

This Dialogue builds directly on the outcomes of the 44th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government, which called for innovation to unlock opportunities for sustained economic growth and development. It also aligns with key regional and continental frameworks that guide our collective vision; including SADC Vision 2050, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020–2030), and the SADC Regional Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015–2063), as well as the African Union’s Agenda 2063. These frameworks remind us of that regional integration, industrialisation, and sustainable development must be mutually reinforcing.

Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished participants,

Water is indispensable to every link in the regional value chain from agriculture and energy to trade and industrial processing. Without water, there can be no inclusive growth, no food and energy security, and no sustainable industrial transformation. Therefore application of adaptive and include Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus approaches is key., making water not just a sectoral concern, but a catalyst for economic development. As the SADC region advances its approach to economic corridor development, we must ensure that water is placed at the heart of planning and investment. Economic development corridors must be more than trade routes, but lifelines of resilience, providing equitable access to resources, enabling climate-smart solutions, and fostering inclusive partnerships.

This Dialogue provides us with a **unique opportunity to:**

- Reflect on how to align institutions, policies and strategies so that the water sector contributes effectively to corridor development;
- Explore innovative and climate-resilient infrastructure solutions that can unlock opportunities for trade and value chain development;
- Strengthen cross-sectoral partnerships across water, energy, agriculture, transport, ICT, and conservation to drive inclusive transformation; and
- Advance recommendations for policy reform, institutional collaboration, and investment to secure our shared future.

In the case of Lesotho, transboundary and regional cooperation through initiatives such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and the Lesotho Botswana Water Transfer Project, Southern Africa Power Pool and Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project demonstrate the value of collaboration in managing shared resources for mutual benefit. These lessons underline why forums such as this Dialogue are critical to the region: they enable us to learn from one another, to innovate together, and to act collectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our deliberations over the next two days should not only strengthen our understanding of the nexus between water, energy, food, and ecosystems. They should also provide clear pathways to transform that understanding into actions; actions that secures water for development, strengthens resilience against climate change, and ensures that no community, no sector, and no Member State is left behind.

On behalf of the Government of Lesotho and Basotho, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the SADC Secretariat, the Government of Germany through GIZ, and GWPSA, for their continued technical and financial support in convening this Dialogue. I also wish to thank each participant here today. Your expertise, commitment, and contributions will ensure that the Dialogue delivers tangible outcomes for our region and its people.

With these few words, it is my privilege and honour to declare the 11th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue officially opened.

I thank you.

Khotso! Pula! Nala!