



REMARKS

BY

SADC SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE

MS MAPOLAO MOKOENA

AT THE OCCASION OF THE

11TH SADC MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WATER DIALOGUE

MASERU, LESOTHO

29 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

Programme Director;

**Guest of Honour, Honourable Mohlomi Moleko, Minister of Natural
Resources of the Kingdom of Lesotho;**

**Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Kingdom of
Lesotho, Ms. Relebohile Lebeta;**

**Deputy Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Natural Resources – Mr
Lisema Lekhooana**

**Head of Economic and Development Cooperation at the German Embassy in
Botswana, Ms Simone Goertz;**

Head of Cooperation EU Delegation in Lesotho, Ms Anna Renieri;

**Interim Executive Secretary- Global Water Partnership for Southern Africa,
Mr. Andrew Takawira;**

Government Officials here present;

Members States Representatives of all Sectors;

River Basin Institutions and SADC Regional Implementation Agencies;

International Cooperating Partners and Regional Partners;

Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society;

Representatives of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

Allow me to make remarks on behalf of the Executive Secretary of SADC, His Excellency Elias Magosi who could not be with us to equally important assignments in the Region.

It is a privilege and very exciting for the SADC Secretariat to take part in this momentous occasion, the opening of the 11th SADC Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue held here in the Kingdom of Lesotho.

The SADC Secretariat, working with various partner organisations from time to time, convenes the biennial Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues as a platform for exchange of ideas and experiences, and to jointly brainstorm on pressing and emerging issues confronting the water sector. The outcomes of the Dialogues get to shape the regional water programme in support of the delivery of regional integration, industrialisation and poverty reduction which are the SADC aspirations as espoused in the SADC Vision 2050, Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015 – 2063 and Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030, among others.

The 11th Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue particularly seeks to explore how the water sector, functioning within the ambit of the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus framework, can contribute effectively to support the delivery of the new regional initiative of smart regional economic corridors. The regional economic corridor development concept has been recently endorsed by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 2025, with a specific directive to the SADC Secretariat to fast-track the development of the value proposition, detailed investment plan and roadmap on North-South Economic Corridor. Notably, water is instrumental in the issue of regional development and integration, an enabler of regional value chains development, and assuring water security for livelihoods and industrial development. Outcomes of the Dialogue will therefore serve as crucial input in the development of the regional economic corridor investment plan.

Honourable Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

SADC views the economic corridor development initiative as a game changer in actualising the vision of regional integration and development. Smart economic corridors are an influential integrator of all sectors, and in the process commanding all sectors to truly find a space in regional development. The initiative will stimulate alignment of sectoral visions and strategies, co-design and co-production of sustainable solutions for impactful and resilient regional trade, with evidence of ease of trade and integrated movement of goods, services and people.

Presently, the picture is not so bright with respect to regional water and energy security. Current regional water access levels are at 63%, and sanitation at 37%; against a target of 80% by 2030. Regional dam storage is still at a meagre 18% of the regional annual renewable water resources. The percentage of the population with access to electricity has slightly increased from the weighted average 48% in 2019 to 56% in 2024, which is substantially below the regional target of 85% by 2030 as projected in SADC Regional Energy Access Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2030. The percentage share of renewable energy (comprising hydro, solar and wind and biomass) is just around 35% in the regional energy mix. We need to improve this situation, which is why the regional economic corridor development initiative is considered an opportunity, and the different sectors needing to re-align their programmes for more regional impact.

Programme Director,

It gives me pleasure therefore to see Water Sector taking a lead in starting conversations that seeks to adapt its practices, strategies and plans to support the regional course. However, we also recognise the limitations of the sector when working alone; hence the need for pursuit of nexus and integrative arrangements, specially building on the momentum of the WEFÉ nexus already generated. We also encourage the WEFÉ sectors to mainstream other cross-cutting support sectors such as transport, ICT, climate, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and others as they seek to find their space in the discourse and actualisation of the corridor

development concept. RBOs should also redefine their approach to ensure that they impactfully support the regional development course, not just their Basin States.

It gives me pleasure therefore when I look at the theme and sub-themes of the Dialogue, that you intend to really deep dive into the issue of partnerships for inclusive and sustainable regional economic corridor growth. I see you will also engage on the innovative climate resilient water infrastructure solutions towards trade, and regional value chains.

Honourable Minister, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude with a recognition and applaud of the support of the German Government (through GIZ) and Global Water Partnership Southern Africa that have ensured provision of the resources and capacities to convene the event.

Honourable Minister, SADC is also grateful for the support of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho in driving the regional programme, and the endless support of your Ministry that enables us to convene such events as this one. Thank you for this generous support and for always opening borders to welcome SADC Member States, SADC Secretariat and our Cooperating Partners and the SADC Subsidiarity institutions to this beautiful Mountain Kingdom. We also want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to officiate this important gathering.

Allow me also to thank you all distinguished delegates and colleagues for your attendance. We rely on your contributions to make the regional development programme impactful, as we try to transform the lives of the region's people.

I Thank you All!