



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY Ms PAM TSHWETE, THE DEPUTY
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION AT THE
WATER RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT CONFERENCE, ZIMBABWE**

24 - 25 JUNE 2015

Programme Director

*Honourable Minister of Environment, Water and
Climate in Zimbabwe, Minister Kasukuwere*

Other Ministers in attendance

International Co-operating Partners present

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentleman

All protocol observed

On behalf of the Government of South Africa, allow me to thank you as the Deputy Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation, for giving me an opportunity to address this key and strategically important investor conference on water resources and infrastructure.

We are all aware about the importance of water, as we always say that water is life; as well as how infrastructure development can bring about a catalytic effect to the economy.

South Africa is a water scarce country. We do not receive as much rainfall as you do here in Zimbabwe, however, our per capita water use is slightly higher than the global average.

As I sat and listened to your engineers make presentations yesterday, I realised that South Africa and Zimbabwe are faced with common challenges if not with the rest of Africa. Our water supplies in the rural towns are at times erratic and unreliable. This has at times caused social unrest.

Your municipalities have made a tremendous effort in water accounting through metering. I commend Zimbabwe for that. Most of South Africa's rural communities and small towns still need water metering. Even where we do have water meters, our non-revenue still remains very high.

In most of our old towns and cities, the water infrastructure is ageing, hence we have high physical water losses. Most of our water service authorities have been given the mammoth task of implementing water conservation and demand management measures. This has become our first line of action for improving water supply before we allocate more water.

I have noted that you have ZINWA – the Zimbabwe National Water Authority to manage your water resource. South Africa is also moving in the same direction and very soon most of our rivers will be managed by Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs).

We relate to Zimbabwe's experience with the colonial legacy. We also have come a long way due to the Apartheid legacy which prioritised water supply to minority groups based on discrimination. After 1994, we embarked on a process of water sector reform just as Zimbabwe has done with its Water Act of 1998. South Africa is currently in a process of redress to correct those past imbalances.

South Africa and Zimbabwe share a lot of history, culture, economic aspirations, and also river basins. The Limpopo River basin has been a source of peaceful cooperation between our countries, as well as for the development of the greater region.

Centred on the Limpopo River, both South Africa and Zimbabwe are Contracting Parties to the Limpopo Watercourse Commission (LIMCOM), with the other two parties namely Botswana and Mozambique. Together with others in the region, our two countries are signatories to the Revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses of 2006.

We note that a multi-state partnership continues to provide us with the platform for ensuring the sustainable development and conservation of the water resources of the Limpopo River Basin. And we are glad that LIMCOM presents us with the framework for identifying, implementing and managing joint projects and initiatives, in furtherance of the environmental and socio-economic objectives of all riparian states.

It is the pursuit of the socio-economic benefits of the citizens of South Africa and Zimbabwe – drawing on the already existing strong relationship between us – that underpins recent efforts to formalize a binational collaboration to optimize the accessibility to, and utilization of, water resources between our two countries.

Programme Director,

As a country, our water interests and needs – based on the National Development Plan Vision 2030 – are diverse and large, aiming to serve the expanding demand for energy, industrial growth, agricultural development and community advancement.

In this light, we are increasingly cognizant of our dependence on our neighbours for additional water resources.

As you are probably aware, the primary source of water for South Africa's economic hub in the Gauteng Province, the Vaal River System, depends extensively on trans-boundary water transfer from the Kingdom of Lesotho, through the vehicle of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). Phase 1 of the project incorporates two major dams at Katse and Mohale, and planning is currently underway to develop Phase 2 of the project, including the construction of the proposed Polihali Dam.

For the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) is designated as the funding agency on behalf of the Republic of South Africa, and I'm happy that the TCTA is here at this conference to share the South African experience in innovatively financing, implementing and managing such an important trans-boundary initiative.

Over the last two decades, as part of our long-term planning perspective, a number of other trans-boundary schemes were also identified as possible sources of water augmentation for South Africa.

One of such proposals gave thought to the possibility of transferring water from Zimbabwe to the northern parts of South Africa, including, for example, potential support for the anticipated growth in water requirements associated with the development of the coal fields of the water-scarce Limpopo Province.

In this context, it is gratifying that, as part of the new bi-national agreement, our two countries are already formulating the framework for undertaking a joint study on the provision of water from Zimbabwe to South Africa.

It is understandable that the process of assessing the potential for developing such a transfer scheme would require that all information from studies undertaken by both South Africa and Zimbabwe be jointly reconciled,

with adequate attention to technical, social, environmental, financial and geopolitical dimensions.

As part of the assessment of the feasibility of the preferred options, it is of utmost importance that our joint task teams of senior officials identify and prioritize opportunities for quick wins simultaneously as they continue with detailed investigations.

Indeed, where possible, quick wins should be identified, then fast-tracked for implementation, to concretize the spirit and letter of our Agreement of Cooperation on water resources management.

As a Guest of Honour let me take this opportunity indicate that there is great commitment between the two governments in ensuring the identified projects are implemented in line with the signed co-operation agreement.

In conclusion, let me wish this conference fruitful bilateral engagements and deliberations, more importantly the lessons that would be shared on water

investment models, and the potential investors who will out of this conference commit to invest.

Zimbabwe has a solid infrastructure development plan that only needs implementation. The country has made an impressive call for investment partnerships and South Africa is in solidarity with you. We would like to see the plans coming to fruition.

I do hope the conference will have tangible outcomes in mobilising resources to support potential water infrastructure investments in Zimbabwe which would also in turn benefit South Africa and the rest of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, especially those sharing the borders with Zimbabwe.

I thank you all