



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF WATER AND  
SANITATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA (RSA) MR GE NKWINTI TO  
THE 5<sup>TH</sup> FORUM OF THE PARTIES AT THE OCCASION OF THE ORANGE SENQU  
RIVER COMMISSION (ORASECOM) MINISTERIAL MEETING TAKING PLACE IN  
MASERU, THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO.**

**14 DECEMBER 2018**

**MASERU, THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

Minister of Water of the Kingdom of Lesotho our very Esteemed Host, Honourable  
Samonyane Ntsekele.

Minister of Land Management, Water and  
Sanitation Services of the Republic of Botswana, Honourable Kefentse Mzwini.

Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry of the Republic of Namibia, Honourable  
Alpheus G. !Naruseb.

Strategic International Partners

ORASECOM Commissioners

ORASECOM Executive Secretary, Mr Lenka Thamae

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors;

Senior Officials Present;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All Protocols Observed;

It is with humility and honour that I greet you all on this instructive occasion where we are continuing to drive, shape and contribute to the ORASECOM Cooperation on Integrated Water Resource Management.

Let me also express my profound appreciation for the gracious hospitality afforded to me and my delegation since our arrival.

It was eighteen years ago when our forebears charted our path towards a water secured future underpinned by a regionally integrated management of the Orange Senqu River system.

Today, we are gathered here in beautiful Maseru to take the baton forward and continue as a collective of four governments, to ensure that our people, in all our four countries access water and sanitation services as a basic right, duly enshrined in our respective Constitutions, hence our slogan **“ONE RIVER, FOUR NATIONS”**.

As you may recall, our ORASECOM relationship was founded on very strong foundations in the year 2000. The ORASECOM Cooperation has been in place for 18 years. Judging from the previous progress reports, it is indeed continuing to bear fruits since its existence almost two decades ago.

In the process, ORASECOM has also been rated as the best River Basin Organization in the African Continent. Soon, we will be celebrating 20 years of the ORASECOM.

**We therefore propose that on our way to reaching the 20 years milestone, we direct the Secretariat to mobilise resources to celebrate accordingly through the documentation of our experience, progress and success stories of the twenty years, to be ready for publication on our 20<sup>th</sup> Celebration. We also propose that at that very special occasion, we invite our respective Heads of States and Heads of Government to be part of the ORASECOM Celebration in 2020.**

We noted with satisfaction progress made by ORASECOM and we are also delighted that the Commission's work is translating into tangible results. We further urge the team to continue to develop and implement the necessary interventions and actions which will uplift our people out of poverty, as well as contributing towards regional economic development in the SADC Region. We also appreciate progress made by the Legal Task Team to strengthen the rules of engagements in managing the shared water resources, in this regard; we are very pleased to note that the Revised Agreement on the establishment of the Orange Senqu Watercourse Commission is going to be signed today.

South Africa is ready to sign the revised ORASECOM Agreement.

We should continue to be dedicated to our work, by ensuring that our people benefit from our shared vision of water security as the Four Nations. To mention few examples:

1. The proposed Lesotho to Botswana Water Transfer Project currently being investigated under the auspices of a Joint Study Management Committee, with support from the ORASECOM Secretariat will ensure that growing demands for water in the lowlands areas of Lesotho, in the North West Province and surrounding areas of South Africa as well as in Botswana are timely and adequately met.
2. Cooperation and Partnership with Lesotho on Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which of course entails the construction, operation and maintenance of the Puliwali Dam which will augment the transfer and delivery of water to the economic heartland of South Africa, the Gauteng Province.
3. The joint planning work currently in progress by South Africa and Namibia regarding the feasibility of the development of the Vioolsdrift/Noedhoewer Dam is

critical for re-regulating and improving water security in the lower end of the Orange-Senqu River System.

Financial resources are key to the success of our cooperation. We appreciate the commitment demonstrated by all State Parties in ensuring that ORASECOM is sustained through regular payments of annual country contributions. The Secretariat should continue to find innovative funding models which will ensure that ORASECOM is financially sustained.

The strategic cooperation amongst our Four Countries continues to give our respective Populations hope. **Our cooperation must rope in industry partners that benefit from the Orange-Senqu River System including ordinary communities.** Therefore, the Secretariat must mobilise industry partners to invest within the Basin so that they could be part of our Vision and Mission in the development and protection of the Orange-Senqu River Water Resources.

Programme Director,  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I Thank You  
Ke a Leboha  
Siyabulela  
Baie Dankie  
Pula! Pula! Pula!!!