

**KEYNOTE SPEECH ON ADDRESSING THE WATER AND SANITATION
CHALLENGE IN THE AFRICAN AGENDA. PRESENTED AT THE AFRICA DAY
SESSION, TAKARAGAIKE PRINCE HOTEL, KYOTO ON THE 17TH MARCH 2003,
3RD WORLD WATER FORUM.
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Your Excellency, The President of Botswana

His Royal Highness the Prince of Orange of the Netherlands

The Secretary General of WMO

Executive Director of HABITAT and Under Secretary of the United Nations

The Vice Presidents of ADB and JICA

The African Water Ambassador

Hon. Colleague Ministers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be given the opportunity to deliver the keynote address on the occasion of the opening plenary of the Africa Day at this 3rd World Water Forum here in this beautiful city of Kyoto, Japan. Let me begin by extending to the Government and the people of Japan my sincerest appreciations for the support they have provided to us in organizing the Africa Day Session. In particular I wish to recognise the untiring efforts of all those in the 3rd World Water Forum Secretariat who

have given their very best, to ensure that we can all be gathered here today and deliberate on a natural resource that is, without doubt, a fundamental basis of life and development. The very presence of the eminent persons assembled here this morning, together with all the other stakeholders demonstrates the absolute importance of this event.

Let me also mention that today is also the gender day, here at the 3rd World Water forum and we should ensure that in all our discussions we bear in mind the crucial issue of gender.

Let me crave your indulgence and refer you back to a statement in the Africa Water Vision of 2025, that says:

“It is apparent that water and socio-economic development are mutually dependent on each other. They can be nodes in a vicious cycle that puts societies in a downward spiral of poor economic development and poor access to safe and adequate water supply and sanitation. Alternatively, they can be nodes in a virtuous cycle, reinforcing each other in an autocatalytic way, and leading to an upward spiral in which improved socio-economic development produces resources needed for improved development of water resources that, in turn, buttress and stimulates further socio-economic development”.

I believe this is a very apt statement that depicts the vital nature of the resource that is the subject of our deliberations today, and nowhere is this statement more relevant than in the African context.

Given this rather poignant linkage between water and socioeconomic development therefore, it is evident that the efficient and sustainable use as well as the protection of water resources must underpin the belief that is enshrined in the New Partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD) by African Heads of States that Africa can break free of poverty and overcome the "development trap" that confines it to a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, conflict and suffering. An efficient and sustainable use of water resources would catalyse the rejuvenation of Africa and lead to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the targets that were outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002.

African Government must however face several challenges if the envisaged desirable outcomes for the water sector are to be achieved. The figures are well known: in Africa over 300 million people do not have access to safe water, and an even larger number of over 500 million are without adequate sanitation. An equal number of people are food insecure and malnourished in spite of the availability of large underutilized agricultural lands and irrigation potentials. The utilization of renewable energy resources is not more than 3% of the potential on the continent.

Africa appears to have abundant water resources. It has large rivers, big lakes, vast wetlands and limited, but widespread ground water resources. Moreover, it has a high

potential for hydroelectric power development. However, this resource base is threatened by certain natural phenomena and human factors. The natural threats include: multiplicity of transboundary water basins, extreme spatial and temporal variability of climate and rainfall, climate change, growing water scarcity, shrinking of some water bodies, and desertification. The human threats include: pursuit of inappropriate governance and institutional arrangements in managing national and transnational water basins, depletion of water resources through pollution, environmental degradation, and deforestation, failure to invest adequately in resource assessment, protection and development of water storage structures.

These threats pose serious challenges to our aspirations that include: significantly improved access to water supply and sanitation; sufficient water for productive purposes to address food security and energy generation; adequate utilisation of groundwater and rain water harvesting for domestic and agricultural uses; appropriate frameworks for integrated water resources management in national and shared water basins; water-related disaster prevention, mitigation and management; empowerment and capacity building focused on improving equity and gender sensitivity; pro-poor water governance and water policies.

On the other hand financing the interventions required to meet these challenges is a huge challenge by itself, given the current world trade and economic context. It is estimated that an annual investment requirement in the order of \$20 billion would be required to be able to meet the targets of the vision. The huge financing requirement tends to further compound the path to ensure successful outcomes.

It is however our conviction that, given clear policies and strategies and real commitments to implementation, the challenges of the MDG and the WSSD outcomes could be met, and water would help eradicate poverty, reduce water-related diseases and help achieve sustainable development in Africa.

Given this conviction, it is encouraging to note the positive political developments we are undertaking on the continent as exemplified by the New Partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD) and the formation of the Africa Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW). In addition to these, and on the technical front, the emergence of the African Water Task Force and its activities that aim to implement the African Water Vision and Framework for Action (actively being pursued by the Africa Water task Force) provide a foundation to address the challenges for the MDG and WSSD targets in Africa.

NEPAD is a mandated initiative of the African Union (AU) and is one of the most significant developments ever to take place in Africa. It provides a type of leadership that assures ownership and introduces changes in the rules for partnership outside Africa. It provides a partnership between Africa and the international community based on mutual respect, dignity, shared responsibility and mutual countability, and designed to build balanced and equitable relationships in trade, investment and capital flows.

The primary objective of this partnership is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries both individually and collectively on a path of sustainable growth and development and thus, halt the risk of marginalization of Africa in the globalization

process. In contributing the pursuit of this objective, African Ministers of Water, came together to establish the African Ministers Council on Water.

AMCOW came into being during a special launching meeting of Ministers of Water in Africa held in Abuja, Nigeria during 29 – 30 April 2002. The United Nations Environment Program played a leading role in its establishment, working in its capacity as co-chair (along with the World Bank and the world Meteorological Organization) of the erstwhile water cluster of The United Nations Special Initiative on Africa (UNSIAs).

It is a Forum of African Ministers for Water Affairs reporting to the AU system, and should be considered as the political mouthpiece on African water issues and, through that, contribute to the social and economic development and poverty alleviation in Africa. Its mission is to provide political leadership, policy direction and advocacy in the use and management of water for social and economic development and maintenance of Africa's ecosystems.

The Africa Water Taskforce was a key outcome of a meeting convened by the African Development bank in September 2001 on "Promoting Water Resources Development in Africa". The task Force was tasked with the responsibility of harmonizing the IWRM programs of the ECA and the AFDB to implement the vision and framework for action, to develop and prioritise common African positions and to coordinate and facilitate African participation at the Johannesburg Earth Summit (2002) and the 3rd World Water Forum, (Kyoto 2003).

The Taskforce has since organised the Accra Water Conference and the Waterdome event at the Johannesburg Summit mandate and is currently coordinating the African participation at this 3rd World Water Forum here in Kyoto, according to its mandate.

THE NEPAD WATER AGENDA

Water supply and sanitation is a sector included in the priority areas of NEPAD as a critical development issue. Africa will not make much progress in achieving the MDGs unless we develop partnership approaches that have a common goal of improved water and supply and sanitation services. The responsibility for preparing action plans for this sector rests with the African development bank which is responsible for the Infrastructure priority area. The policies and directions being pursued under this priority area are derived mainly from the Africa Water Vision and its Framework for Action, strengthened by outcomes of the African Stakeholders Conference in Accra that was organised by the African Water Task Force in April 2002. The action agenda includes the following five thematic areas that aim at addressing the challenges identified.

1. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

The challenge here is the multiplicity of shared water resources in Africa as a significant challenge for integrated management of water resources. The approach to be adopted is to support riparian-led initiatives that enhance cooperation in the planning, development and management of shared water systems and to strengthen existing river/lake basin organizations and create new ones as necessary. Shared water basins

are vital instruments for regional cooperation, integration and development, but they are also sources for potential conflict unless appropriate mechanisms are put in place for cooperative utilization. On the contrary, the management of shared water resources should, for us, constitute a major stake in relations amongst our various countries now and into the future.

2. SUPPORT TO DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IWRM PLANS

- The basin wide intervention under enabling environment for regional cooperation will only be successful if they are supported by appropriate policies and regulations at the national level. Hence based on the Africa Water vision all countries in Africa should be assisted to develop national IWRM policies and institutional reforms including capacity building by 2005.

Actions would also be undertaken to increase public awareness and strengthen the political will needed for sustainable development and management of water resources. The building of human and institutional capacity is crucial for the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management. In this respect, institutions for research and information sharing would be established or strengthened as appropriate to play their role.

3. MEETING URGENT BASIC SERVICES

Sustainable efforts needed to translate water resource management agreements into micro-level, on-the-ground improvements in access to basic water supply and sanitation services, to improve the environment and to complete the macro-level agreements on hydro power, flood control and irrigation.

The focus would be on programmes that ensure; efficient and sustainable use of limited water resources; effective application of science and technology; regional investment in irrigated agriculture and aquaculture that focus as much on economic development and income generation as on food security.

4. IMPROVING WATER WISDOM

In many parts of Africa, data on the quantity, quality and temporal variation of ground and surface water resources are either unavailable or inaccessible.

Most of the monitoring networks are in a poor state, historical database not well maintained and are often incompatible; and some information is no longer accessible. These problems are partly due to inadequate operations and maintenance of the networks and lack of capacity. The consequence of this is the difficulty to plan and develop available water resources in a sustainable manner and to facilitate issues such as flood warning, water scarcity and quality deterioration.

Actions to mitigate water related disasters such as droughts, floods and desertification, (aggravated by the impact of climate change) would include; developing a prevention based culture, rectifying knowledge gaps and strengthening policy and institutional capacity to assess and monitor climate and water mitigate the effects of climate change and climate variability on water resources; adopting approaches to mitigate the impact of disasters and climate change; and strengthening disaster management capacity and emergency preparedness. In response to these the water agenda would seek to undertake urgent rehabilitation of the networks, capacity building for the responsible institutions and urge adequate allocation of financial resources by national government.

5. STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL BASE

The level of financial resources needed calls for a renewed, bold commitment and approach by all stakeholders including governments, communities, the private sector and the international community. In this respect innovative ways of raising finance is required. To ensure adequate finances for interventions, actions to mobilise funding for those essential investments, which cannot be supported using, local or private sector resources would be enhanced. The African Water facility which is designed to serve as a conduit for pooled funds for capacity building and investment support in Africa is one contribution in this direction.

Given the ongoing activities on the water resources front, and the evolving enhancement of the political framework as evidenced by activities under NEPAD and the formation of AMCOW, I invite all our development partners achieving the MDGs and the

WSSD outcomes in Africa. We have been encouraged by the support in the Camdessus Panel report for the Africa Water Facility. We are also grateful to the Governments of the Netherlands and Great Britain for the technical and financial support they have given to us in preparing the background papers for facility. We thank those governments that have already encouraged us with their promises of support, and I will like to call upon all these friends of Africa to help create an awareness of the African Water facility and assist with mobilising support for it.

So in conclusion, we of AMCOW, of Africa call upon our Development Partners to support the actions already taken and to help us, along with civil society groupings and other stakeholders to:

- Prepare a common and overarching framework for an African regional strategy for the management and development of Africa's water resources at national and transboundary levels and for the achievement of the MDG's for water supply and sanitation,
- Prepare national IWRM and water efficiency plans by 2005, in accordance with article 25 of the WSSD, as input for providing economic justification for including water supply and sanitation as well as water resources management into PRSP's,
- Create awareness of the MDG's, promote national and local level commitments, prepare action plans with annual MDG targets and provide adequate allocation of financial and human resources to ensure implementation
- Provide appropriate institutional reforms to ensure the sustainability of investments in the water sector in general and in water supply and sanitation in particular

- Promote the empowerment and involvement of women at all levels in the water sector

I know that you will rise up to the accession!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.