



**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE JUMAA HAMIDU
AWESO (MP), MINISTER OF WATER, UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA DURING OPENING
CEREMONY OF THE UNITED NATIONS WATER
CONFERENCE ON 22ND MARCH 2023 NEW YORK,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

- Your Excellency Csaba Kőrösis, President of the United Nations General Assembly;
- Your Excellency, Mr. António Guterres, Secretary - General of United Nations;
- Your Excellencies Heads of State and Governments;
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. Salutations

I am pleased to join you in this August assembly and I wish to begin by conveying fraternal greetings from Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, the land of Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar spice Islands and Serengeti National Park, who could not attend this conference due to other equally important national commitments. She wishes you well.

It is therefore my distinct honour and privilege to address this United Nations Water Conference on behalf of the Government and People of the United Republic of Tanzania. Before I go long, allow me to extend our appreciation to the United Nations Secretary General, your Excellency António Guterres, the entire United Nations Secretariat and the Organizing Committee for your dedicated service on this life-giving agenda. In a similar way and gratefully enough, I wish to register our appreciation and to congratulate the Governments of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Tajikistan for co-hosting this conference which is taking place after more than forty

(40) years. I assure you of Tanzania's support and cooperation as we discharge our responsibilities.

2. The World Water Agenda

Mr. President, allow me to quote His Majesty, King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands. In a book with a title Water Resources Systems Planning and Management, the King says in the foreword; and I quote: *“The quality of our lives is directly related to the quality of our natural environment - our air, land and water resources”*, end of quote. Hence, it is encouraging to note that, the world is meeting to continue discussions on a very significant and critical water agenda that gives life. Water is at the centre and is an enabler of all the seventeen (17) United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In many ways, water is a determinant of the world peace and security, human development, social well-being, gender equality and international cooperation. Therefore, it is high-time that, water becomes a prominent agenda in meetings of United Nations, Regional Economic Communities and many other high-level platforms. Furthermore, special attention should be directed on good sanitation services and sustainable

utilization of groundwater resources for socio-economic development.

Mr. President, over the years, water has been placed and perceived as a social item only, but now the global trends have shown that, water is both social and economic good hence the need to amplify the economic aspect of water cannot be over-emphasized. The United Republic of Tanzania commits her full support in raising the global water profile at all levels with full knowledge that it is a human right and essential for all livelihoods.

3. Investing in Water

Mr. President, Tanzania has been implementing the Water Sector Development Programme from 2006-2025. Meanwhile, we are in the last phase of the programme 2022-2025 which aims to mobilize **six billion United States Dollars (USD 6 billion)** from both National Government and Development Partners. In this regard, we are opening a welcoming window to the international community to join and support the implementation of this

noble task for our beloved country as well as to meet Sustainable Development Goals and Africa Agenda 2063.

Mr. President, allow me to commend the African Union for underlining the need for Africa to invest in water. It is against that background that, during the 34th ordinary session of African Union summit on 7th February 2021, the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State and Government adopted the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme as part of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa – Priority Action Plan Two. The Water Investment Programme responds to the needs to invest in a minimum of thirty (30) billion United States Dollars annually in order to realize the implementation of SDG 6 for all in Africa by the 2030. I wish to inform this August assembly that, the United Republic of Tanzania is committed for this and will be launching a multi-billion-dollar Tanzania Water Investment Programme for the 2023-2030 period. The programme will ensure national water security and resilience to climatic shocks.

Mr. President, in similar efforts, in March 2022, The Zanzibar Water Investment Programme that aims to mobilize over **six hundred sixty-five million United States Dollars (USD665 Millions)** for the period between 2022-2027 was launched. The programme aims at securing clean and sustainable water supply for the island's population and fast-growing economy. The United Republic of Tanzania is calling upon the international community, investors and partners to extend their technical and financial support in implementation of these three noble Water Investment Programmes.

4. Valuing Water

Mr. President, in 1992, a significant statement on managing freshwater resources was pronounced in Dublin, famously known as Dublin Principles. One of the four principles says, and I quote: *“Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognised as an economic good”*, end of quote. Therefore, as we are here to reflect and deliberate on the water agenda, a question may arise - *what is the value of water to life and economic development?* The answers to this question are multiple

and are in different forms. While we acknowledge that water is indispensable to daily human life, the matter of fact is that, for long time, the value of water has been underestimated and only perceived that water is simply available and given. It is time to change our attitude of mind to face the reality that water gives life, hence the least it can be described is that, the value of water is equal to life.

Mr. President, the description of the value of water should be expanded through acknowledging the relationship between water and human health, water and economic growth, water and peace, and water and national resilience among many other aspects. This is evident through the prism of SDGs where ten (10) goals out of seventeen (17) are connected/related to water. While not all values of water can be monetized, the monetary factor of water can be established at all scales and uses. In this context, change of thinking on the way management of water resources is undertaken ought to change. Issues of conservation and protection of water sources should be embedded when valuing water.

5. Water Cooperation for World Water Security and Peace

Mr. President, Water is a unifying factor. Water is connected to majority of the Sustainable Development Goals; and water connects systems of the environment, economics, social and political. Water is connecting people and nations in particular when we refer to transboundary and shared waters. Despite the truth that water is a source of cooperation, it's management and governance is both sensitive and complex. The benefits of water cooperation among nations outweigh those of non-cooperation. Therefore, we need cooperation and partnerships to address national, regional and global water challenges including mitigation and adaptation to impacts of climate change and prevention of water pollution at all scales. The United Republic of Tanzania calls for international cooperation and partnership on water through increasing trust and good will of Member States.

6. National Progress and Initiatives to achieve SDG 6

Mr. President, Tanzania has the National target of increasing the number of people with access to clean and safe water to **85% and 95%** in rural and urban areas

respectively by the year 2025. I am pleased to inform this assembly that the percentage of people with access to clean and safe water in rural areas has increased tremendously in the previous three years **from 65% in 2019 to 77%** in December 2022. Likewise, for the urban areas, there is an increase from **78% to 88%**. This is a result of carrying out major reforms in the Water Sector in the year 2019 including establishment of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency which deals exclusively with rural water supply and sanitation; enhancing water management for water security, increasing the water sector budget and enhancing legislations. In a special way, in order to enhance institutional capacity, Tanzania has procured heavy duty equipment for groundwater assessment and exploration and construction of dams for rain water harvesting.

Mr. President, the Water Sector Development Programme 2006-2025 has made a significant progress not only in increasing the number of people with access to clean and safe water both in urban and rural areas, but also in improving sustainability of water supply service in rural

areas, whereby non-functional water points has decreased significantly **from 40% to 12%** and as we keep on pursuing various interventions on the issue of sustainability in technical, financial and institutional areas, I strongly believe that the number of non-functional water points in rural areas will decrease much more to the lowest possible level.

7. Challenges towards achieving SDG 6

Mr. President, despite these National efforts, I have to admit that, Tanzania is facing two key challenges. The first pronounced challenge is recurrence of climate change impacts especially droughts. The second is inadequate funding to accelerate universal water coverage and sanitation especially in rural areas. Therefore, Tanzania is calling the international community and all stakeholders to support fund raising and build national resilience to climate extremes, drought and floods; to enhance groundwater assessment and development to increase water security; as well as protection of surface waters to prevent pollution and reduce costs for project development.

8. Conclusion

Mr. President, this full house gathering here today justifies that water is a precious resource that has caught global attention. Unpredictable situations caused by impacts of climate change are threat to global water security. Therefore, we need water solutions that touch base and have ground-impact now than before. It is crystal clear that water is life, yet this vital natural resource is being depleted, polluted and mismanaged. Disruption to the hydrological cycle is also causing more water-related disasters. The world needs to give the water agenda the attention and resources it deserves. The world needs domesticated changes to shape the water agenda and to address ever growing water crisis before it is too late.

Mr. President, let me conclude by emphasizing that, the United Republic of Tanzania calls for the world leaders to:

- i) Increase investment in water resources management, governance and development as a paramount element to achieve water security;

- ii) Consider water as a driver and enabler of human development;
- iii) Place water at the centre in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
- iv) Assess the value and contribution of water at global, regional and national economies;
- v) Invest in human capital and build institutional capacity to improve water governance;
- vi) Ensure joint efforts are in place to manage shared challenges such as impacts of climate change which lead to increasing frequencies of drought and floods; and
- vii) Consider water as a substantive agenda in meetings and conferences on economic forums as well as United Nations.

Mr. President, the father of the Nation, of the United Republic of Tanzania, the first president, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, once said, “*development should be people centred*”. I have also noted that, the Koran 21:30 states, “*by means of water we give life to everything*”. In the same way, Her Excellency President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, being the first female President of Tanzania, she underscores the importance that access to clean and safe water not only

contributes to national economic development, but also ensures that women and girls can spend more time in their economic and academic activities, which in return will contribute towards achieving SDG 1: No poverty, SDG 5 on Gender equality and SDG 8 of decent work and economic growth. Therefore, let us put water at the centre of human development and give life to people.

I thank you very much for your attention.