

**Speech for the National workshop related to the Convention on the
Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes:
Zambia's accession process**

H.E. Hon. Elton Mike Mposha (MP), Minister of Water Development and Sanitation,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman, dear friends, good morning,

I am honored to take the floor today to this important workshop organized by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and by UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe) for this invitation today.

The transboundary Zambezi and Congo River Basins cover respectively approximately 75% and 25% of Zambia's territorial area. This illustrates the importance of the present workshop and, why Zambia took important and strategic measures to promote cooperation with neighboring States in the management and development of its shared waters, in accordance with the provisions of international law. Just to mention a few:

- Zambia is party to basin agreements and member state of basin organizations such as the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) with all 8 riparian states, the Zambezi River Authority (Zambia & Zimbabwe) and the Lake Tanganyika Authority (Zambia, Burundi, Tanzania, Congo DR).
- Zambia has initiated the process to become a party to the Commission Internationale du bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS)²
- Zambia is planning to develop an agreement and a river basin authority for the Luapula River shared between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- At regional level, Zambia is a party to the 2000 SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses.

The EU is convinced that transboundary water cooperation fosters peace and development through different ways:

- It generates benefits (economic, social, environmental, political), which foster development and stabilize societies.

- It prevents conflicts and consolidates peace in post conflict situations.
- It helps adapting more efficiently and preventing negative impacts from unilateral countries' measures.
- It reduces sectoral trade-offs and disputes.
- It allows responding in a coordinated way to challenges linked to climate-related emergencies.
- Building regional organizations reinforces regional stability and integration.

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) aims to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters by strengthening transboundary water cooperation.

The Convention, which is serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. Nowadays almost all EU countries sharing waters with their neighbours are also Parties to it.

The role that the Convention had in the pan-European region, was extremely important and it was one of the most advanced worldwide in terms of transboundary water cooperation. Since the end of the Second World War, it has fostered in Europe the sustainable management of shared resources and the creation of strong institutions, which have promoted regional integration and prevented conflicts.

And we are happy to see that since 2016 more countries are accessing it, like Chad and Senegal, followed by Ghana in 2020, Guinea Bissau and Togo in 2021.

The European Union strongly supports the globalization of the Water Convention, as stressed in 2018 Council Conclusions on the promotion of legal and intergovernmental frameworks for transboundary cooperation.

We are happy to see how the promotion of the accession to the Convention has brought us here today. This workshop aims to support accession to the Water Convention and thereby strengthen transboundary water cooperation and the sustainable and peaceful management of shared water resources in Zambia and the whole region.

And the support of the EU Delegation in Zambia will contribute to showing the importance given by the EU to transboundary water cooperation as a tool for peace, security and stability.

With this last note, I would like to thank again all participants to this workshop for their participation, and encourage the Government of Zambia and in particular the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, to strongly profit from the discussions, which I am sure will be insightful.

Thanks, Tsikomo