



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF LANDS AND WATER AFFAIRS

BOTSWANA NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ACCESSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE PROTECTION AND USE TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES

25TH October 2023

MASA SQUARE-Gaborone, Botswana

SALUTATION

Your Excellence, Ms Petra Pereyra- Ambassador, European Union, Delegation to the Republic of Botswana and SADC

Mr. Zia Choudhury, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Botswana

Ms Amanda Jacobsen, Deputy Chief of Mission, United State of America Embassy to Botswana

Ms. Sonja Koepfel, Secretary of the Water Convention

Mr. Peter Kovacs, Member of the Bureau to the Water Convention, - Republic of Hungary.

Mr Gaselemogwe Senai, Chief Executive Officer, Water Utilities Corporation

Brigadier T.K Dikole, Deputy Secretary for Defence, Ministry of Defence and Security

Brigadier T I Mpetsane, Botswana Defence Force

Mr. Phera Ramoeli, Executive Secretary, OKACOM

Mr. Felix Ngamlagosi, Executive Secretary, ZAMCOM

Mr. Sergio Siteo, Executive Secretary, LIMCOM

Mr. Remy Kinna, Legal Officer, Water Convention Secretariat

Ms. Bernadette Araba Adjei, Director, Legal and Monitoring Department, Water Resources Commission, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, **Republic of Ghana**

Ms. Ndina Nashipili, Deputy Director: Directorate of Water Resource Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, **Republic of Namibia**

Mr. Stanley Hantambo, International Waters, Department of Water Resources Development, Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation, **Republic of Zambia**

Government official present

Dignitaries from private sector and other organizations

Ladies and Gentlemen

I greet you all

1. I am greatly honoured and privileged to address you on this auspicious occasion, where Botswana is making strides towards acceding to the 1992 United Nations Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, known as "**The UN water convention**".
2. Director of ceremonies allow me to commence by thanking The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for co-hosting this auspicious occasion with the Government of Botswana.
3. Ladies and Gentlemen this engagement is a significant part of the Ministry's way of doing business which is a consultative process to achieve a product which is acceptable to all. Botswana shares most of her river systems with some SADC riparian countries and is signatory to four (4) River Basin Organisations (RBOs) which are drivers of these regional instruments. This therefore places maintaining international water relations as an important element in ensuring water security as well as building mutual cooperation.
4. The SADC Protocol as well as the River Basin Organisations (RBO) Agreements are based on principles of: (i) Equitable access and reasonable utilization of transboundary resources, (ii) no significant harm on resources and (iii) prevention of conflict among riparian states. These principles are similar to those of The UN Water Convention. It is, therefore not surprising that Botswana has expressed interest on acceding to The UN Water Convention.

5. I greatly appreciate that The UN Water Convention was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996 and is a global unique legally binding instrument which promote: (i) the sustainable management of shared water resources, (ii) implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 of Sustainable Development Goals, (iii) the prevention of conflicts that might arise due to sharing and utilization of transboundary water sources, and (iv) the promotion of peace and regional integration.
6. I also greatly appreciate decision made, on 1st March 2016, by all the parties to The UN Convention, to have found it be fitting to open the accession to The UN Water Convention to all United Nations members states. Botswana acceding to The UN Water Convention will be a signal to our riparian states on shared watercourses that, we are committed to the core basis and principles of transboundary agreements we signed under river basin organisations we are part of.
7. Ladies and Gentlemen, I must reiterate that, these are the principles enshrined in both of our River Basin Organisations' Agreements and The UN Water Convention and the Botswana's ratification to the UN Water Convention, will be a confirmation of our firm belief that cooperation among riparian states on shared water resources contributes; (i) to peace and security, (ii) to sustainable water management for everyone's benefit and (iii) good governance.
8. Ladies and Gentlemen, please note that Botswana by nature is a water scarce country and almost all our water resources are in transboundary

basins and with that we have to prevent conflict on water by all means. It is our government clear policy that water scarcity should not be exacerbated by poor governance more especially in the international space. Botswana government strongly support and promotes the RBO platforms as they bring solutions and regional development on shared watercourses through harmony and cooperation by all riparian states.

9. Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to inform you that through the RBO platforms and international cooperation, Botswana has made progress in transboundary space by securing water from shared water courses, being from; (i) Zambezi basin which is shared by eight (8) countries and have been allocated 495 million cubic meters of water per annum and the Chobe - Zambazi water transfer scheme is at project pre-tender stage. We have also agreed to access 100 million cubic meters of water per year from Lesotho through The Orange-Senqu River Commission. The project is at feasibility study phase. The project is complex as the project involves three (3) countries being Botswana, South Africa, and Lesotho.
10. The government of Botswana in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Namibia is also undertaking a feasibility study for the sea water utilization from Atlantic Ocean through Namibia. All this demonstrate the strength and trust that has been achieved by transboundary cooperation among our riparian states and hence it has to be nurtured.
11. Botswana is also in the process of reviewing water related legislation to align them to best practices and address emerging issues. The intention is to

enhance; governance on water and sanitation delivery services, water resources management monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and harmonise our local water laws with international water law to accommodate international legal instruments on shared watercourses. The move will further strengthen our relations on shared watercourse with our riparian states.

12. I am aware that this is our first encounter since the kick-off meeting and I therefore urge you to engage in constructive discussions, exchange experience and examine pioneering initiatives instituted in our Policies, Regional Convention and Global Conventions to address emerging challenges on shared water resources. It is my hope that this gathering will enable us to leverage on this collective expertise to shape the future of transboundary water cooperation in the Southern Africa region as we are all one big family.
13. I would also like to encourage other riparian states to consider The UN Water Convention to appreciate its benefits and what it means to the SADC region, as to us, The UN Water Convention is a framework agreement, which fosters our River Basin Organisations Agreements' establishment and their implementation.
14. Your Excellences, Secretary of Water Convention, Executive Secretaries of RBOs, ladies and gentleman we are grateful for you have spared time to be with us and be engaged in this conference which will provide insights on accession on The UN Water Convention.

15. I am also very thankful to Development Partnership for their support on various initiatives and Master of Ceremonies allow me to recognize the presence our Development partners GIZ, GWP, IUCN, and World Bank.
16. Master of Ceremonies, allow me to conclude by a special welcome to those coming from outside Botswana and ask you to spare sometime and tour our beautiful city of Gaborone.
17. I therefore welcome you all ladies and gentlemen and wish you a fruitful discussions.
18. Thank you.