



**SPEECH BY SIMON CHELUGUI, CABINET SECRETARY FOR WATER AND  
SANITATION DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 1ST KENYA  
NATIONAL DAM CONFERENCE HELD AT FLAMINGO BEACH RESORT AND  
SPA, MOMBASA ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2018**

**Mr. Keriako Tobiko,  
Cabinet Secretary,  
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources  
Hon Ali Hassan Joho,  
Governor, Mombasa County,  
Ms Winnie Guchu  
Chief Administrative Secretary,  
Ministry of Water and Sanitation,  
Other Chief Administration Secretaries present  
The Principal Secretaries  
Hon Dr. Julius Kones,  
Chairman,  
National Water Conservation & Pipeline Corporation  
Other board Chairpersons and Board of Directors  
Dr. Eng. Ali Hassan,  
Ag, Managing Director,  
National Water Conservation & Pipeline Corporation  
Other Chief Executive Officers  
Senior Ministry Officers present  
Members of the Press,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good morning,**

I am very pleased and honored to join you all to the 1<sup>st</sup> Kenya National Dam Conference. On behalf of My Ministry, I welcome all the delegates who have travelled across the country to participate in this conference. The conference provides us with a perfect forum to exchange ideas, and experiences in matters relating to water resources infrastructure. I want to congratulate National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation for coming up with this brilliant idea that has brought us together in seeking solutions to the water challenges we face as a country. The Conference has come at the right time as we are undergoing transition in the water sector.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Water is a major resource to the country's socio-economic development and achievement of Kenya's Vision 2030. The Government target is to achieve 80% coverage of water services by the year 2020 from the current level of 60% and 100% coverage by 2030 as per Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development goal no 6. We therefore have to put in place plans and strategies to ensure this is achieved. To achieve universal access to water by the year 2030, we require to spend Ksh 1.764 trillion which translate to annual requirement of Ksh 100 billion. The sector however, receives only Ksh 40 billion annually, leaving a financing gap of Ksh 60 billion. I thank our development Partners ie. World Bank, IMF, KfW, AfD, KOICA Italy and GoK for their continued support to grow the sector for enhanced access to water.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, His Excellency the President has spelt out his agenda to Kenyans for the next five years under the big four initiative of Food Security, Universal Health Care, Manufacturing and Affordable Housing. These initiatives cannot be achieved without water. Provision of safe water in sufficient quantities is an enabler to the big four initiatives.

Towards this end, we have identified fifty-seven (57) large dams to be implemented in the next five (5) years. Construction of these dams will require us to mobilize both financial and technical capacity that will ensure that their implementation will be timely, with the limited resources available. I want to challenge the Professionals in the water sector that the Government expects implementation of dams to be cost effective so as we have value for money. This will enable us achieve our target of increasing water storage at the least cost possible.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I want to particularly single out the conference theme: **"Synergy in Water Resources Infrastructure for Water Security."** For a long time, we have worked as individual entities in the water sector and we have made progress in improving access to water. However, by teaming up we can achieve more. I am proud to see a team of dedicated professionals who have come together for a worthy cause. As you identify the challenges of water insecurity and seek solutions, remember that we have to act fast to mitigate against the effects of drought and floods. As the experts, implementers and policy makers, the *mwananchi* is looking up to us to provide sustainable solutions to water challenges we face.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

I wish to emphasize on the importance of water harvesting and storage. Kenya is considered a water scarce country with a per capita water availability of less than 600 cubic meters, which is below the global threshold of 1000 cubic meters per capita.

The solution to our low per capita fresh water availability is by ensuring that we harvest all the water when it rains, store it for future use especially during dry season.

We are also exploring groundwater potential in the country as this has not been adequately exploited. As part of this process, groundwater exploration studies are going in Turkana County with support from USAID while the Ministry is undertaking the same exercise in Marsabit and Garissa Counties.

I want to assure Kenyans that I will give priority to supporting water harvesting programmes at the local and national levels as this is the only way we can improve our vulnerability to droughts and floods. This will also increase water storage that will be used to store water for domestic and irrigation use and thus contribute towards achieving the big 4 agenda.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As we discuss rain water harvesting, quality assurance especially in urban areas is key. We need to work with our partners in the private sector especially those in real estate and the National Construction Authority (NCA) to ensure our buildings are compliant with rainwater harvesting systems. Let us also bring on board the micro-finance institutions that offer market products for rainwater harvesting

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

The Water Act 2016, provides an enabling environment in terms of policies and legislation that will increase water harvesting and storage. In addition, the Act has established new institutions among them the National Water Harvesting and Storage Authority. The Authority's mandate will include development of water storage infrastructure and flood control which is key to water harvesting in the country. The

Authority will be launched next month and it is expected that it start operating immediately.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Additionally small dams and pans are very resourceful in water harvesting and storage. Small earth dams are particularly useful for drinking water supplies in the rural areas. Their multipurpose use by communities make them very effective in addressing water problems in the areas they are serving. The Government will continue to encourage the communities to come together and initiate such projects. However, I assure them that the Ministry will continue to support development of these small dams and pans by providing budgetary provision and implementing them.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am confident that we are on the right path. When we come together, we consolidate our efforts financially, technically and technologically to achieve the sustainable development Goal Number six on; "Ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all."

I thank all the partners and sponsors who have worked with National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation to ensure this conference is a success.

In conclusion, **Ladies and Gentlemen,** I do not intend to exhaust some of the issues that are lined up for deliberation during the conference. I am happy to note that the paper presenters will cover a wide range of very important and provoking discussions relating to dam construction.

I urge you to approach the deliberations with open mind and aim at promoting **Synergy in Water Resources Infrastructure for Water Security. Most importantly, please emphasize on the need to bring down the cost of dam construction which runs to billions of shillings here in Kenya as opposed to other countries in Africa and the world. Due to this high cost,** the Government has constituted a Taskforce comprising of Experts incorporating public universities and institutions of higher learning to look into this issue and come up with

recommendations which will hopefully, bring down these costs for the benefit of the Public.

With these remarks, I wish you fruitful deliberations, as I pronounce this conference officially open.

God bless you all