



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



ZAMCOM

**OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS BY ALPHEUS G. !NARUSEB, MP,
HOST MINISTER AND CURRENT CHAIR OF ZAMCOM COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS & MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, WATER & FORESTRY
IN NAMIBIA.**

AT THE

**5TH ZAMCOM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING HELD ON 22ND
FEBRUARY, 2018, DOME & BON HOTEL CONFERENCE CENTRE,
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA.**

ANGOLA - Hon Eng. Joao Baptista Borges, Minister of Energy and Water

**BOTSWANA - Hon Prince Maele, Minister of Land Management, Water &
Sanitation Services**

**MALAWI - Hon Joseph Mwanamvekha, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation &
Water Development**

**MOZAMBIQUE - Hon Carlos Bonete Martinho, Minister of Public Works,
Housing and Water Resources**

**ZIMBABWE – Hon Oppah Muchinguri, Minister of Water Resources
Development and Climate**

TANZANIA - REPRESENTED BY Mr Emmanuel Kalobelo, DPS, Ministry of Water and Irrigation

ZAMBIA - REPRESENTED BY Eng Kenneth Nyundu, Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environment

Honourable Cleophas Mutjavikua, Governor of Erongo Region;

Representative from SADC Secretariat, Water Division, Dr Kenneth Msibi;

ZAMCOM Executive Secretary, Prof. Zebediah Phiri and your Staff;

ZAMTEC Members and Other Senior Officials;

Members from the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning.

1.1 Let me take this opportunity also to welcome you to Swakopmund, Namibia although you have already been welcomed by the Honourable Governor of Erongo Region to our 5th ZAMCOM Council of Ministers' meeting. As current Chair of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers and on behalf of my Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water & Forestry in Namibia, I want to thank you for having heeded to my call of inviting you to our 5th Ordinary Session of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers meeting here in Swakopmund. It gives me such immense privilege and pleasure to host you as Ministers of ZAMCOM responsible for the Water portfolio in your respective countries. I am reminded that, last year we met as Council in Tete, Mozambique during the same time of the year and our meeting was indeed a success as I am told.

1.2 Just to put you in a picture Colleagues, Namibia is a signatory to the SADC Treaty and the 2000 SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses. We were one of the few ZAMCOM member States to have first ratified the 2004 ZAMCOM Agreement in 2005 and have always been committed to the sustainable management of transboundary water resources of the Zambezi basin. Namibia shares a common history with most of the ZAMCOM Member States and is also committed to cooperate with other basin States. Just to emphasize that as Namibia, we are not only Party to the 2004 ZAMCOM Agreement, but also a Party to the other agreements establishing the Orange/Senqu River, Okavango/Cubango River, the Cuvelai and Kunene River basins.

1.3 Throughout Namibia's tenure as Chair of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers, we have witnessed the completion or implementation of some activities such as:

- (a) the Legal Equivalence Study aimed at harmonising or reconciling of national legislations relating to the use and management of water resources.
- (b) the Implementation of ZAMCOM Procedures for Notification on Planned Measures which we endorsed and approved last year in Tete, Mozambique.
- (c) the Implementation of Rules and Procedures for Sharing Data and Improvement of data exchange function of Zambezi Water Resources Information System (ZAMWIS).
- (d) the good Progress made on the Development of the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse which is important and;
- (e) the good Progress made on the Conceptual Design of ZAMWIS Decision Support System which includes Hydro Meteorological Database.

Colleagues & Distinguished Delegates,

1.4 Our ordinary meeting here in Swakopmund comes at a time when Namibia is faced with challenges relating to climate change and variability that have brought

drastic changes on our shared watercourses of the Zambezi and other River basins which we share with our neighbours, impacting heavily on socio-economic development. This year, we have been experiencing low and late rainfall patterns in most parts of our country specifically the area where we are and our north central and north east regions whose subsistence farming activities depends heavily on rain fed crops. This means that, the prospects of a good harvest will be compromised by insufficient rainfall in our country.

1.5 Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa where water scarcity is prevalence. Most of our Perennial Rivers are shared with our neighbours whose use and management is subject to international agreements. As a Country, we are considering to use conventional sources of water of which one is desalinated seawater, so as to augment water supply to drought stricken areas of Namibia which includes the Central Area of Namibia in the long run. Desalination of sea water in our case has become so crucial such that we are collaborating with our neighbour, Botswana to jointly consider the viability of tapping water from this Ocean you see here to augment water supply to some drought stricken areas in Namibia and in Botswana Country.

1.6 Our one day meeting here seeks to deliberate on issues that are of great importance to our livelihood – **WATER OF THE ZAMBEZI RIVER** although we are about 1350 km away from it. It does not matter how far the distance is from the River. What matters most are the issues which needs our endorsement and approval today in our Annotated Agenda as prepared by our Technocrats. It is during the ordinary Council meeting like this one that Ministers responsible for Water and their staff are expected to show their commitments that will guide ZAMCOM Member States to accelerate the pace of implementing the transboundary and national water projects in the Zambezi River for now and then.

1.7 My special plea goes to our Senior Officials and ZAMTEC and its Sub-Committees to continue engage in projects which are environmentally sound aimed at uplifting the Socio-economic livelihood of our people in the Zambezi basin itself. It is without a doubt that all water related stakeholders and indeed the SADC Community as well as the world community at large have been closely following the deliberations of our meeting since the arrival of our Commissioners (ZAMTEC) here in Swakopmund for the obvious reason that water is life and an engine for economic growth and development. I am aware that there are challenges faced by our economies as ZAMCOM Member States in having to achieve 100% access to potable water and improved water supply to our people.

1.8 I would like to acknowledge the efforts made by our respective Governments led by various Heads of States & Governments in coming up with policy interventions aimed at alleviating poverty and one such intervention for example speaking from my own country is the Harambee Prosperity Plan and Strategic Industrial Growth, initiated two years back (2016) which is of short to medium term nature. However, the anticipated industrial growth is likely to attract expansion of the agricultural sector with a notable expansion of irrigated land although currently irrigation potential in Zambezi region of Namibia is very low when compared to other Riparian States and we would want to increase the farming activities alongside the Zambezi Watercourse in our country in due course so as to contribute to food security and poverty eradication. Similarly, I would also imagine more or less similar interventions happening in other ZAMCOM member States.

1.9 This means that, more water abstraction from the Zambezi basin is required in a sustainable manner in order to achieve social and sustainable development as well

as our short-medium-and long term development agendas. I am aware that the water requirements in Zambezi River are much less than the water availability. It is therefore appropriate to note that, water from Zambezi basin is vital for human health, in terms of drinking and sanitation, plants & animals, as well as for socio economic growth. The interlinkage and interdependence between waters of the Zambezi and development can be seen from the fact that water is essential in food security, sustaining the environment, transport, energy sector, industrial growth among others. In all of these water uses, there is need to have sufficient and reliable water of acceptable quality.

Colleagues,

1.10 On behalf of my ZAMCOM Council of Ministers, it is with no doubt that the challenges in the Zambezi Watercourse are many and require bold and decisive solutions from our side. As Policy Makers, we must tackle future challenges by being innovative in our financing mechanisms taking into account the huge funding requirements for the water sectors in our respective countries and the urgency of mobilizing funds to put the right water infrastructure and skilled manpower to develop and manage the water sectors more efficiently. As I speak, the support from our Zambezi International Cooperating Partners (ZICPs) and International Communities to the programmes of ZAMCOM has been overwhelming. It is also imperative that ZAMCOM Member States take the leadership and ownership in developing strategies and needed actions in mobilizing required funding to bridge the funding gaps and accelerate the pace of implementation of our national and transboundary water projects not only in Zambezi Watercourse but also in other Watercourses and not only rely on external funding support.

1.11 As I speak now, Namibia has its own IWRM Plan which was launched in Windhoek and has been popularised to all Regions. Namibia has also a Water

Policy White Paper of 2000; A Water and Sanitation Policy of 2008 and a Sanitation Strategy of 2009 as well as the Water Resources Management Act of 2013 governing the management of water resources. As Namibia is stepping down as Chair of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers, I wish to commend my fellow colleagues and note with satisfaction the bold steps ZAMCOM Secretariat Staff has taken under the leadership of Prof. Zebediah Phiri to champion cooperation, regional integration and also in putting up various ZAMCOM governance structures in place so as to promote Africa Water Vision 2025 and other National Development agendas from our respective countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1.12 As I conclude, once again as outgoing Chair of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers, I would want to thank my predecessor, Honourable John Mutorwa who has been a member of this Commission for years in championing ZAMCOM Work programmes. I would also want to wish the incoming Chair of ZAMCOM good luck, and the entire ZAMCOM fraternity and in particular, the ZAMCOM Executive Secretary whose term of office as I understand comes to an end by June this year and his staff as well as my organizing team for their tireless efforts in ensuring that this meeting becomes a reality.

1.13 I have been officially requested by the incoming Chair, Tanzania to preside over this meeting today as the Honourable Minister of Water & Irrigation, Hon Eng. Isack Kamwelwe could not make it due to some unavoidable circumstances, to which I accepted as Host Minister. With these opening remarks, as Host Minister, and outgoing Chair of ZAMCOM Council of Ministers' it is my hope that you will find your coming to this beautiful town of Swakopmund over the next two days enjoyable, fruitful and achieve expected outcomes. Once again, I wish you a

pleasant stay in Namibia “*The Land of the Brave*” and declare the 5th ZAMCOM Council of Ministers’ meeting officially open.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION,

OBRIGADO,

KE A LEBOHA!