

**STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR MARK MWANDOSYA, MINISTER FOR  
WATER AND IRRIGATION, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
DURING OPENING OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> NILE EQUATORIAL LAKES  
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING, KINSHASA, 21<sup>ST</sup> MAY, 2009.**

**Honourable Chairperson,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Members of the Nile Equatorial Lakes Technical Advisory Committee,  
Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative,  
Regional Coordinator of the NELSAP Coordination Unit,  
Project Managers for the Transboundary NELSAP Projects,  
Staff Members of NELSAP Coordination Unit and the Projects,  
Invited Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**Honourable Chairperson,**

On behalf of the Tanzania delegation, I would like first of all to thank the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for hosting this meeting in the beautiful City of Kinshasa, on the banks of the mighty Congo River. Our reception since arrival has been gratifying for which we sincerely thank our hosts. Secondly, I would like to commend the NELSAP Coordination Unit for the nice and conducive meeting arrangements.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

It has been a year since the last NELCOM meeting that was held in Bujumbura, Burundi. A lot has happened since then. Most notable are the ongoing global financial crisis and persistent food shortages which have been **acerbated** by the failure of rains this year in some of the countries in the region. It is my hope that the fallout from the global financial crisis will not hurt Africa in general and the Nile Equatorial Lakes Region in particular. Any reduction or suspension of funding from our development partners to ongoing and planned NELSAP projects will adversely affect the region.

These projects are part of the region's efforts in trying to alleviate poverty to the sub-basin population, sustain economic growth and protect the environment. The high food prices have brought hardships to the region's population. Failure of rains in some of the countries has made matters worse as regards food availability for many people. The global financial crisis and food shortages have compounded an already fragile livelihood in our countries. We need to work together in addressing these as well as the chronic challenges of poverty, slow economic growth and environmental degradation.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

In an attempt to address these challenges, countries are invariably taking actions to alleviate the problems. Irrigation schemes are being constructed and expanded. If there is no coordinated and integrated approach to these efforts, the Nile countries might witness an increase in competition for water resources in the countries and eventually in the entire Nile basin. Rising food demand and depleting food supply in the basin will have impacts on water use. But, for a scientific approach to addressing the food crisis, we need to manage the available water resources in an integrated manner. This requires an understanding of the basin agriculture.

The Regional Agricultural Trade and Productivity Project (RATP) being undertaken by NELSAP is a commendable effort in addressing the food crisis prevalent in the region. This project needs the support of all the countries. Its development objective provides the link between economically viable agriculture and sustainable and efficient use of the basin water resources.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Tanzania, in an effort to achieve adequate and secure food production, has prepared an Irrigation Master Plan and is in the process of developing a National Irrigation Policy to guide sustainable irrigated agriculture for food security in the country. The country wants to harness the available total irrigation potential estimated at 29.4 million hectares out of a total land area of 94.8 million hectares in a systematic manner in order to raise the living standards of her population. Of the total 10 million hectares cultivated area, only 306,745 hectares are under improved irrigation. Food security especially to the rural population is one of the

major indicators for poverty reduction which is in line with one of the NELSAP objectives.

Agriculture can also contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Findings from studies being undertaken by the RATP project and those mainstreamed from other initiatives will be of much help to the Tanzania endeavor.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Another development objective of NELSAP is the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. Availability of adequate and reliable supply of electricity is an essential catalyst to socio-economic development. The Nile Equatorial Lakes region has potential for hydropower generation but access to electricity to the region population is only about 6%.

Several studies on the feasibility and design for power generation and regional transmission interconnection are ongoing while others are being planned. There is need and urgency for these studies and other works such as on the Rusumo and elsewhere to be completed as scheduled. I urge the NELSAP Coordination Unit to continue with ongoing financial resources mobilization for the construction of the Rusumo Falls Hydropower and Multipurpose project as well as for the hydropower interconnections. Availability of adequate and reliable electricity will revolutionalise our development. On the part of the basin countries, we need to start prioritize and include these projects into country power plans in order to co-finance them whenever possible. That will enhance cooperative development.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Countries have begun to realise the benefits of cooperative development and utilization of transboundary Nile basin water resources. Tanzania is implementing two NELSAP projects. These are the Mara and Kagera Transboundary Integrated Water Resources Management Projects. Examples of achievements in Tanzania are the Karagwe water supply and environmental protection project at Rulenge in Kagera Region. In Mara region, preparation for construction of the Bisarwi irrigation dam is ongoing. It is my hope that work will be completed as planned.

The progress made in developing and implementing the first set of inter-country NELSAP projects has created increasing trust and a cooperative spirit amongst the member states which led to the March, 2005 NELCOM endorsement of the Scaling up Strategy.

This was to involve scaling up of current project activities and identify new cooperative and consultative investments in new geographical areas and sectors.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

In 2007, Tanzania presented to the NELSAP Coordination Unit a set of about 30 project proposals for scaling up in water supply, irrigation and water resources management. It is important that the Scaling up Strategy be given more attention to hasten new investments. It is understandable that requisite financial resources to finance these investments could be a constraint. In order to address this challenge, I would like to repeat my earlier pledge for countries to start partly meeting some of the costs. Another alternative is to use ongoing or planned bilateral and multilateral projects and programmes to fund some of the activities. The Water Sector Development Programme (WSDP) being implemented in Tanzania since 2006 is such an arrangement where for instance studies could be done under NELSAP while construction works could be done under WSDP. Yet another alternative is to utilize opportunities created by synergies and linkages with other projects such as the up coming Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project – Phase II as well as organizations like the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

I have mentioned the different options our countries can take to realize quick and tangible results because communities in the region have started to benefit from the utilization of the basin resources and now they want more. People's expectations and aspirations from enjoying more benefits have been raised so much that all efforts need to be done to fulfill these ambitions.

In this respect, I commend action taken by the NELSAP Coordination Unit and the Project Management Units for the ongoing process of preparation of the Investments Strategy and the Nile Equatorial Lakes Water Resources Development Program. When completed, these will be important tools in directing prioritized

investments in the sub-basin. Let us all support this initiative which is geared to open up investment opportunities both for public and for partnership with the private sector.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

Let me conclude by once again by thanking the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for hosting this meeting and the NELSAP Coordination Unit for the organization and nice meeting arrangements.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**