

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE PROF. MARK J. MWANDOSYA,
MINISTER FOR WATER AND IRRIGATION,
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE EXTRA-ORDINARY
NILE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING HELD IN KINSHASA,
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.
22 MAY 2009.**

**Hon. Jose E. B. Endundo, Chairman of the Nile Council of
Ministers,**

**Colleagues, Honourable Members of the Nile Council of
Ministers from Burundi, Egypt, Federal Democratic Republic of
Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda.**

**The Executive Director of the Nile Basin Initiative,
(Representatives of our Development Partners),**

The Riparian Team of Experts,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, We continue to enjoy the Congolese hospitality that you cordially extended to all delegations since our arrival in Kinshasa two days ago. We have no reason to complain at all. The conducive environment that we find ourselves in, sets the stage for successful deliberations during our crucial meeting today. I call this meeting crucial because it has all the prospects of

being a historical meeting that could bring to conclusion the long and arduous process of negotiation for a Permanent Cooperative Framework for the management and development of our valued Nile water resources.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, let me recapitulate the process of negotiation for the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework, albeit briefly, in order for us to refresh our memories. The Process started in 1997 when the **Panel of Experts** made their proposals to **the Council of Ministers of the Nile Basin States that met in Khartoum in March 2001**. The report of the Panel of Experts consisted of Draft Provisions on General Principles, Rights and Obligations of contracting States, Proposed Institutional Structure with Subsidiary Institutions and Miscellaneous Provisions and had many brackets which were passed on to the **Transitional Committee** to iron out before the **Entebbe meeting of the Council of Ministers in August 2001**.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, you will also recall that pursuant to the February 2002 Cairo meeting's decision to form the **Negotiation Committee**, you flagged off that Committee at the launching meeting in **Addis Ababa on December 9, 2003**. While acknowledging the good work done by the Panel of Experts and the Transitional Committee, the Honourable Ministers noted that there was still outstanding work to be done in terms of agreeing on some of the basic Principles and Substantive Articles of the Draft Cooperative Framework and it was unanimously resolved that the mantle be

passed on to **the Negotiating Committee**. The Negotiating Committee met seven times under the able chairmanship of Professor George Khroda, formally Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Republic of Kenya. Legal counsel was provided by Professor Steve McCaffrey. Honourable Ministers continued the negotiation process to date by holding meetings in Bujumbura, Kigali and Entebbe. Our meeting in Kinshasa has been dubbed as extra-ordinary, and I hope it will achieve extraordinary outputs under the excellent guidance of the Chair and valuable inputs from all of us, Honourable Ministers.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, an old Chinese proverb says “ even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. We made that single step in 1997. The scope we have covered and the challenges we have faced and overcome to reach this stage are quite significant. It is now time to usher in a new era of cooperation by having a permanent institution – the Nile Basin Commission. The establishment of the Commission is at the heart of the Nile Basin Initiative Process and programs and when in place it will be beneficial to all the Nile Basin States.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, there are many joint benefits for a basin-wide agreement. These are *inter alia*:

1. meeting the needs of “traditional users” while at the same time accommodating the present and future needs of upstream riparian states;

2. mobilizing financial resources from multilateral and bilateral agencies by demonstrating commitment of the Nile Basin States to work together;
3. reducing conflicts over water by promoting equity without causing significant harm to any riparian state;
4. harnessing the water resources of the Nile for mutual and equitable benefits.
5. having an institutional framework capable of managing and developing the Nile waters using principles of integrated water resources management.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, the ground is set for a new era of cooperation. After working together over the years we see many achievements including increased confidence and trust among the riparian countries, which we need to build on in our endeavor to continue fostering cooperative development within the Nile Basin States. We now need to ensure that the benefits of cooperative development of the Nile waters are made more visible to a wider audience as possible.

Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen in closing let me reiterate my Government's commitment to the NBI process which we are convinced is the best way we can sustainably and equitably develop, use and manage the Nile Basin water resources to achieve socio-economic development and benefit to all the Basin countries.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, we therefore need to conclude discussions and facilitate the signing of the Agreement on the Nile Basin Cooperative Framework. I am confident with the mutual trust and spirit that has been cultivated and demonstrated over the years we are going to reach into a conclusion on the permanent Nile Basin Cooperative Framework in this meeting. Our people have high aspirations and expectations to the beneficial use of the Nile. We should not let them down.

Mr. Chairman and Honourable Ministers, Tanzania would like to reaffirm her commitment and resolve to reach consensus on the pending Article in the Draft Cooperative Agreement. I am confident that we will have fruitful deliberations that will benefit the people of the Nile Basin. Let us make this meeting historical.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ATTENTION!