

VOTE OF THANKS BY H.E. JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE, CHAIRPERSON OF THE GWPSA-AFRICA BOARD DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 9TH WORLD WATER FORUM, DAKAR – SENEGAL, 25TH MARCH 2022

Honourable Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation for the Republic of Senegal, Madame Asma El Qasimi

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the end of the 9th World Water Forum here in Dakar, Senegal under the theme “*Water Security for Peace and Development*”. This is my first time to participate in a World Water Forum but those who have been to previous Forums intimated to me that this is one of the best.

On behalf of all the distinguished delegates and participants, I would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, the government, and the people of Senegal for their warmth of reception and gracious hospitality. We have enjoyed a true African hospitality. We felt the warm rhythm and sounds of our brother Youssou N'Dour, the legendary African music icon.

We also thank you for making available excellent facilities for the many meetings held, the exhibitions, and other services here at the beautiful and smart city of Diamniadio. This city and its world class facilities defines and exemplifies the vision and leadership of my dear brother H.E. Macky Sall.

Organizing so successfully a conference of around eight thousand participants and hundreds of exhibitors from across the globe is no small feat. We congratulate the organisers from the World Water Council and the Senegalese government for a job well done. You truly deserve our bountiful compliments and appreciation. Thank you, Minister, Serigne Thiam, and your team and thank you Loïc Fauchon and the team from the World Water Council.

To H.E. President Macky Sall, we say thank you so much for making Africa proud. We salute him for his empathy and transformative leadership and for showing to the world that Africa has come of age.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the leadership of the World Water Council and partners for trusting Senegal and Africa. We also thank the partners, all sponsors

and the various organisations and delegates who contributed in many ways to the success of this 9th World Water Forum.

To the delegates who came from near and far, I would like to express special appreciation for coming in large numbers to Dakar to participate in this year's edition of the World Water Forum. Coming during these trying times when the threat of COVID 19 pandemic is very potent, certainly you deserve recognition and appreciation. I commend the organisers for being keen on putting in place all the necessary COVID 19 prevention and protection measures. I applaud the delegates for being serious in observing the COVID 19 protocols.

Honourable Serigne Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation in Senegal, thank you for your leadership and for hosting the Ministerial sessions in the forum. Let me also thank the Co-Presidents of the International steering committee for the World Water Forum, Mr. Abdoulaye SENE and Patrick Lavarde for a Job well done!

To everyone that prepared and hosted technical sessions, provided simultaneous translations, arranged, and managed all logistics including accommodation and transport, I say thank you to you all.

As we leave Dakar going back to our homes and countries, let us begin to prepare for the March 2023 UN Conference on Water that will be co-hosted by The Netherlands and Tajikistan. We thank the delegation from the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the time they took to brief us on the conference. We hope that delegates to this 9th World Water Forum will follow up with concrete actions on the ground. What remains ahead of us is to implement to the latter and in spirit, the Dakar Declaration.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the issues that we need to urgently give our due attention is with regards to mobilising resources to close the water investment gap.

We have heard mentioned numerous times that the water and sanitation infrastructure resource deficits are huge. There was mention of US\$114 billion in global capital investment (excluding maintenance) needed annually to close the gap for the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water and sanitation services. The water investment gap is largest in Africa where 700 million people do not have access to sanitation and 400 million lack access to clean drinking water. The service and economic sectors also do not get the water they need for optimal performance. The deficit impacts negatively on the health and socio-economic wellbeing of the people of Africa.

Addressing the water investment gap, its associated challenges and valuing water requires **bold leadership. We need to act. We need to take appropriate decisions, now.**

We salute the leadership of H.E President Macky Sall for taking a bold step, as Chairman of the African Union, to formally launch the establishment of The International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa. We have heard that he will also serve as a Co-Chair of the Panel together with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia. They are a formidable team who will definitely deliver to our expectations.

Let us all rally behind this bold step and support the continent to mobilise resources to close the water investment gap.

Indeed, in the words of Nelson Mandela, '*it always seems impossible until its done*'. Congratulations Senegal, Congratulations Africa, Congratulations the World Water Council, and congratulations to us all for what we have been able to do and achieve this week.

With these many words, it is now my singular honour and pleasure to declare the 9th World Water Forum closed. Bon Voyage, Travel mercies.

Thank you.