

**SPEECH BY ENG. DAVID STOWER PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF WATER AND IRRIGATION, DURING THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE NAIROBI WATER SUPPLY MASTER-PLAN
STAKEHOLDER FORUM WORKSHOP, HELD ON TUESDAY AUGUST
30, 2011**

- The World Bank and French Development Agency representatives
- Other donors present
- District Commissioners and other government representatives present
- Athi Water Services Board Chairman
- Chairmen of other water service Boards
- Chief Executive Officer-Athi Water Services Board
- Chief Executive Officers of other water services Boards
- Chairmen of Water services Providers
- Managing Directors Water Services providers,
- Local leaders ,
- Friends and the Media,
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel highly honored to be invited to the Nairobi Water Supply Master-plan Stakeholder Forum workshop and furthermore to meet with you and chart a way forward as far as water sector development in Kenya is concerned. We all know that water is critical to our country's sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are aware Kenya is classified by the U.N. as a chronically water-scarce country. The country's natural endowment of freshwater is highly limited, with an annual renewable freshwater supply of about 647m³ per capita, significantly below the 1,000m³/capita set as the marker for water scarcity.

The current level of development of water resources in Kenya is very low. Only 15% of the renewable fresh water resources (known as the safe yield) has been developed currently. This low level of development means that

water supply storage per capita has declined dramatically from 11.4m³ in 1969 to about 4.3m³ in 1999 – simply because of population growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Kenya possesses sufficient water resource to meet demand however; challenges such as increase in population growth, decline in water storage infrastructure, degradation of existing water resources, water catchment endangerment and climate change all pose a great risk to economic performance and poverty reduction.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has earmarked twenty five (25) large dams for completion by 2015. The effect of this infrastructure investment is to support irrigation projects whilst we use the dams as flood control devices. The Government has also invested heavily in allocating resources towards creation of water schemes.

The challenge constantly faced by Government is ensuring that these water schemes are managed sustainably so that reliable water services are enjoyed by local residents. To address this challenge, the Legal and policy framework has laid the foundation to institute sound corporate governance to see to it that the investments are translated into impact.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you may be aware the government has instituted policy and legal sectorial framework as embedded in the Water Act 2002. However the success of the water sector reforms will depend very much on the cooperation and involvement of all water users.

As the population of Kenya increases, there is a corresponding increase in the demand for the available resources making it imperative that we protect our water sources to ensure their sustainability and reduce potential competition.

This competition is induced by water scarcity among users, of various sectors of the economy, between countries and indeed between counties sharing common water resources.

The 2030 vision for water and sanitation is to ensure that improved water and sanitation are accessible to all. The flagship projects under this development blueprint for 2012 include construction of multipurpose dams with increased capacity, rehabilitation and expansion of urban water supply and sanitation in key satellite towns and rehabilitation of major irrigation schemes. The Ministry is also charged with the rehabilitation of the hydro-metrological network and the 600 stations supporting it.

With global attention riveted on the effects of global warming, the Government, Development Partners (thanks to the World Bank and the French Development Agency –AFD) and Athi Water Services Board are all committed to put innovation to the test and find new ways of harvesting and using rain and underground water with the aim of conserving water and finding sustainable means to ensure food security for greater Nairobi area.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my hope that this Stakeholders forum will discuss existing needs and initiatives that will lead to the pooling of resources and building of capacity, propose additional ideas through which we are prepared to collaborate, so as to meet the objectives of the Nairobi Water Supply Master Plan.

We must however reemphasise that our key objective is to develop New Water Sources for Nairobi and Satellite Towns.

With these few remarks ladies and gentlemen, I have the pleasure to officially open

I once more congratulate all for this day. The organizers and the participants, I say to you Hongera!!!! May God bless you all.

Eng. DAVID STOWER., CBS.
PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF WATER AND IRRIGATION

