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**Closing Remarks on the occasion of the:**

**WATER CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT HIGH LEVEL  
PANEL**

**Cop 17, Durban South Africa**

**H. E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace**

*Commissioner, Rural Economy and Agriculture*

**African Union Commission**

December 2011

1.

Mr. Chair and Honourable Minister of Water resources Kingdom of Lesotho,  
 AMCOW Ministers Present Here including my dear sister Hon. Maria Mutagamba, Minister of Water and Environment Uganda  
 Honourable Minister of Environment, Forestry, Republic of The Gambia Honourable Jattu Sila Excellences,  
 The State Secretary of, Ministry of Environment Sweden Mr Andres Flanking  
 State Secretary Ministry of Environment Switzerland Mr Bruno Obelbeke  
 Executive Secretaries and Director Generals here present

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to give the closing remarks of the deliberations on the Water Climate Development High level Panel.

Noting the following:

1. Water is life. In Africa, this is an absolute matter of fact and priority issue. Climate change in Africa means more and longer droughts, more and sharper floods, less food all round, and less energy. Africa Union, in particular the Heads of State, have in the special summit on water at Sharm el Sheikh committed to addressing the issue of water as priority to addressing adverse impacts from a changing climate.
2. In Africa, every single country shares water with its neighbour. In the rest of the world, dealing with climate change has many faces- transforming technology, alternative energy, etc, but in Africa climate change is managing the water cycle
3. In developed countries the storage capacity for water is very high (the US has 7000 m<sup>3</sup> of water per person safely stored for food and power and in Kenya for example there is only 4m<sup>3</sup>, equivalent to 1 kg of maize or beans for the whole year). This lack of adaptive capacity makes us vulnerable?

4. In developed countries variability is only around 10%, BUT IN Africa it ranges around 60% year on year.
5. It simply means that Africa needs more water than America, and the need is increasing. Therefore, more storage, more dams, but also more protection for the ecosystems.
6. More storage will ensure we deal simultaneously with unreliable rainfall, longer drought, extreme floods and increased population.

### **KEY MESSAGES FROM THE WATER CLIMATE DEVELOPMENT DAY**

The following key messages and recommendations have been discussed relevant follow up actions are required. The AU is committed to ensure that these key messages become reference points and inform our future work in Africa and also as we engage our colleagues in the Negotiations.

- Water needs to be sufficiently addressed on the UNFCCC agenda since it is part of Article 4.1 e of the Climate Change Convention. Climate change is to a large extent water change and the water community is already dealing with the challenges. The existing experience and knowledge needs to be shared. In partnership – Africa, developing countries and development partners need to work strategically to ensure water resources as a thematic focus in the UNFCCC.
- Water is not a sector, it is a resource. Climate change is making water resources management more complex due to the uncertainty and unpredictability in weather patterns. The complexity and cross-cutting nature of water must be fully acknowledged. Addressing water is not about bringing in sectoral interests, but a way of systematically addressing complexities that currently are addressed under headings such as hazards, floods, droughts,
- Water is about both adaptation and mitigation. It needs to be distinctly pointed out that the success of most mitigation interventions, as determined by the UNFCCC, rest upon the availability and sustainability of water resources.
- Water knowledge expertise needs to inform the adaptation committee to ensure linkages between NWP and the Cancun Agreement, emphasizing importance of water as a key medium for adaptation. Qualified water resource

management expertise should be represented amongst the members of the Adaptation Committee

- We welcome the SBSTA draft decision to organize a technical workshop on water. This can be strengthened by establishing a thematic focus under the Nairobi Work Programme. As AU, we support this recommendation
- Consideration should be made to explore modalities for establishing water as a priority under the Green Climate Fund with a sub thematic funding window for water resources management.
- Within the Africa Green fund, this issue needs to be explored as well and see how a thematic funding window for water resources to be utilized for projects related to water management and climate change adaptation and mitigation can be established

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you.