



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**STATEMENT BY**

**MR. HAKAINDE HICHILEMA**

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

**DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE THIRD  
IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE ON  
WATER (PANAFCON-3)**

**HELD AT MULUNGUSHI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE,  
LUSAKA**

**ON TUESDAY, 27TH MAY, 2025**

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
CABINET OFFICE  
**LUSAKA**

**MAY, 2025**

- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES;**
- **REPRESENTATIVES OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;**
- **HONOURABLE MINISTERS;**
- **AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONERS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS;**
- **PARTNERS;**
- **MEMBERS OF THE PRESS;**
- **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.**

IT IS WITH IMMENSE PRIDE AND PROFOUND GRATITUDE THAT I WELCOME YOU ALL TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA AND IN PARTICULAR, TO THE GREATER CITY OF LUSAKA, A CITY OF INCLUSIVITY AND INNOVATION, FOR THE THIRD AFRICAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE ON WATER (PANAFCON-3).

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA, AND AS HOST PRESIDENT, I EXTEND MY HEARTFELT GREETINGS TO MINISTERS, COMMISSIONERS OF THE AFRICAN UNION, MEMBERS OF TEAM EUROPE SUPPORTING THIS CAUSE, REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, INDUSTRY LEADERS, MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA, AND ALL STAKEHOLDERS FROM AFRICA AND BEYOND.

YOUR PRESENCE HERE UNDERSCORES OUR SHARED COMMITMENT TO A TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA FOR WATER AND SANITATION.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

WE GATHER UNDER THE BOLD AND UNIFYING THEME: "***ASSURING INCLUSIVE AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT WATER SECURITY AND***

***SANITATION FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT.***” THIS THEME IS A CALL TO ACTION, ALIGNING WITH ASPIRATION 1 OF THE AGENDA 2063 - A PROSPEROUS AFRICA ROOTED IN INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

IT, THEREFORE, DEMANDS THAT WE PLACE WATER AND SANITATION AT THE HEART OF OUR CONTINENT’S HEALTH, PROSPERITY, AND PEACE. IT WILL GUIDE OUR DELIBERATIONS OVER THESE NEXT THREE DAYS IN THIS CONTEXT.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, AFRICAN LEADERS ENVISIONED AN AFRICA WATER VISION 2025, PROMISING EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WATER USE FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS, POVERTY ALLEVIATION, REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP. YET, AS WE STAND PAST THAT MILESTONE, WE FACE A STARK REALITY: PROGRESS HAS NOT MATCHED OUR AMBITIONS. RAPID POPULATION GROWTH, URBAN EXPANSION, CLIMATE VARIABILITY, AND CHRONIC UNDERINVESTMENT HAVE LEFT MILLIONS WITHOUT SAFE WATER AND DIGNIFIED SANITATION. THIS GAP THREATENS HEALTH, LIVELIHOODS, AND STABILITY ACROSS OUR CONTINENT.

IN 2008, THE SHARM EL-SHEIKH DECLARATION SAW OUR LEADERS RECOMMIT TO WATER AND SANITATION GOALS. SINCE THEN, REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES SUCH AS SADC, WORKING WITH THE AFRICAN MINISTERS’ COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW), THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, AND THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (UNECA), HAVE DRIVEN POLICIES AND

PROGRAMMES TO ADVANCE WATER SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE SANITATION ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT BUT A CRITICAL BARRIER REMAINS: A VAST FINANCING GAP EXISTS AND THE URGENT NEED FOR INNOVATIVE APPROACHES THAT RECOGNISE WATER AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER AND SANITATION AS A CATALYST FOR OPPORTUNITY.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

AT THE **38<sup>TH</sup>** ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ASSEMBLY IN FEBRUARY 2025, HEADS OF STATE ELEVATED WATER SECURITY TO THE FOREFRONT, ADOPTING "ASSURING SUSTAINABLE WATER AVAILABILITY AND SAFE SANITATION SYSTEMS TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF AGENDA 2063" AS THE 2026 THEME. I WAS TASKED WITH PRESENTING AN IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE POST-2025 AFRICA WATER VISION AND POLICY AT THE **39<sup>TH</sup>** ASSEMBLY IN 2026, A FRAMEWORK ALIGNED WITH AGENDA 2063, DRIVEN BY INCLUSIVE GROWTH, AND UNDERPINNED BY A COMPELLING BUSINESS CASE FOR WATER AND SANITATION.

PANAFCON-3 IS A PIVOTAL STEP IN THIS JOURNEY. OUR MISSION IS TO MOVE FROM VISION TO EXECUTION, FORGING A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, SECURING POLITICAL BUY-IN, AND MOBILISING THE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO DELIVER WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL AND FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

OVER THE NEXT THREE (3) DAYS, WE WILL:

1. THROUGH OUR DIALOGUE, CHAMPION WATER AND SANITATION AS ENGINES OF FISCAL STABILITY, JOB CREATION, AND PEACE.
2. DEVELOP A CLIMATE-RESILIENT, INCLUSIVE, AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE ACTION PLAN FOR THE AFRICA WATER VISION AND POLICY.
3. ALIGN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES, RIVER BASIN ORGANISATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS ON ROLES AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES.
4. DE-RISK WATER AND SANITATION PROJECTS TO ATTRACT PRIVATE CAPITAL AND FOSTER INNOVATION IN WATER-WISE TECHNOLOGIES AND SANITATION ENTERPRISES.

BY THE END OF PANAFCON-3, WE AIM TO FINALISE A DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE **39<sup>TH</sup>** AU GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SETTING A CLEAR PATH FOR ADOPTION AND ACTION ACROSS AFRICA.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

ZAMBIA IS DEEPLY HONOURED TO HOST PANAFCON-3, A ROLE ENDORSED BY AMCOW IN CAIRO IN OCTOBER, 2024, RATIFIED BY OUR ZAMBIAN CABINET IN DECEMBER, 2024, AND AFFIRMED BY THE **38<sup>TH</sup>** AU GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN FEBRUARY, 2025.

I COMMEND OUR REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES, RIVER BASIN ORGANISATIONS, AND PARTNERS FOR SHAPING THIS PROGRAMME AND RALLYING EXPERTISE. LET US HARNESS THIS MOMENT TO SHOWCASE AFRICAN UNITY. I URGE ALL DELEGATES TO ENGAGE ACTIVELY IN SHAPING THE POST-2025 VISION AND POLICY, ENSURING

EVERY VOICE - TECHNICAL, POLITICAL, AND PRIVATE SECTOR, DRIVES BOLD, COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

THE WATER AND SANITATION CRISIS IS NOT MERELY A TECHNICAL CHALLENGE, IT IS A TEST OF OUR COLLECTIVE RESOLVE. WE MUST THEREFORE:

1. RECOGNISE ITS ROLE IN AGRICULTURE, ENERGY, INDUSTRY AND ECOSYSTEMS.
2. CREATE JOBS, IMPROVE HEALTH, AND BUILD RESILIENCE AGAINST CLIMATE AND HEALTH CRISES.
3. BLEND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FINANCING TO MATCH THE SCALE OF OUR NEEDS.
4. EMBED THEM IN NATIONAL BUDGETS, DEVELOPMENT PLANS, AND CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORKS.

WE OWE IT TO OUR YOUTH - WHO DEMAND DECENT LIVELIHOODS, TO THE WOMEN - WHO BEAR THE BURDEN OF WATER COLLECTION, AND TO OUR ENVIRONMENT - WHICH SUSTAINS US ALL.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

IN CLOSING, I CALL ON EVERY LEADER, EXPERT, AND PARTNER HERE TO INVEST YOUR WISDOM, INFLUENCE, AND RESOURCES IN PANAFCON-3'S SUCCESS. LET US ENSURE THAT AT THE END OF THE

CONFERENCE WE COME UP WITH UNWAVERING COMMITMENTS — POLITICAL, TECHNICAL, AND FINANCIAL - TO TRANSFORM WATER AND SANITATION ACROSS AFRICA.

TOGETHER, WE WILL BUILD AN AFRICA WHERE EVERY CHILD HAS ACCESS TO CLEAN AND SAFE WATER, EVERY FAMILY ENJOYS DIGNIFIED SANITATION, AND EVERY COMMUNITY THRIVES IN RESILIENCE AND PROSPERITY. THIS IS THE AFRICA WE WANT, AND WATER SECURITY IS ITS FOUNDATION.

MAY OUR DISCUSSIONS BE BOLD, OUR PARTNERSHIPS UNBREAKABLE, AND OUR ACTIONS TRANSFORMATIVE.

IT IS NOW MY HONOUR TO DECLARE PANAFCON-3 OFFICIALLY OPEN.

**I THANK YOU.**