

**“ROLE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER
COOPERATION IN ACCELERATING THE
ATTAINMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS.”**

ARTICLE BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE NILE BASIN
DEVELOPMENT FORUM HELD AT KAMPALA,
UGANDA, ON MONDAY THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER,
2023.**

*“It is clear that we must find an African solution to our problems, and that this
can only be found in African unity. Divided we are weak; united, Africa could
become one of the greatest forces for good in the world.”*

-Kwame Nkrumah

*Theme: Deepening Nile Cooperation: Accelerating the Achievement of SDGs in a
Changing Climate.*

(Kampala, Uganda)

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A. Introduction

In our rapidly evolving world, where every drop of water holds the promise of life and the potential for prosperity, we must acknowledge that the pursuit of these vital objectives requires collective effort, shared responsibilities, and a deep commitment to the global good.

The world has woken up to the realization that the resources are not only to be found in what may be described as *terra firma*, but in the waters of Africa. Africa boasts of nearly nineteen (19) lake/river basins including Congo, Niger, Nile, the Senegal, Juba Shebelle, Lake Chad, Lake Turkana, Limpopo, Ogoague, Okavango, Orange, Volta, and Zambezi, all of which account for nearly sixty-four percent (64%) of Africa's renewable freshwater resources.

Extant evidence demonstrates that these basins, if properly exploited, can offer the continent great riches and liberate her from the clutches of sorrow and want. The resources offer opportunity for a generation, of hydroelectric power, fisheries, and transboundary transport among many other opportunities.

Our rivers, lakes, and aquifers know no boundaries, and the waters that sustain us transcend political and geographical demarcations. In this context, it becomes evident that the challenges we face in ensuring access to clean water, sanitation, and sustainable management of this precious resource are best addressed through transboundary water cooperation.

The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, serve as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and

ensure prosperity for all. Among these goals, Goal 6 specifically calls for "clean water and sanitation for all." But, my friends, this noble aspiration cannot be achieved in isolation. It demands a holistic, collaborative approach, recognizing that water knows no borders, and that the management and equitable sharing of transboundary water resources are central to our mission.

Transboundary water cooperation is more than just a diplomatic endeavour; it is the linchpin for achieving multiple SDGs simultaneously. Through the responsible and sustainable management of shared water resources, we can advance not only Goal 6 but also Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 14 (life below water), among others.

Water is the thread that weaves through the fabric of our world, touching every facet of our lives, from agriculture to industry, from health to energy, from human survival to the health of our ecosystems. It is therefore essential that we harness this resource for the benefit and development of our world.

B. History of the Management of Transboundary Water Resources in Africa

Looking back, in the vast and diverse continent of Africa, where the rhythm of life has often been dictated by the flow of rivers and the bounty of lakes, the management of transboundary water resources has been a complex and evolving challenge.

From the mighty Nile River coursing through several countries to the intricate web of river systems in the Niger and Zambezi basins, Africa's waterways have

long been at the heart of civilization, sustaining communities and shaping their destinies. However, the history of transboundary water resource management in Africa is marked by a journey of cooperation, conflict, and the pursuit of sustainable development.

Throughout antiquity, the African continent witnessed the rise and fall of ancient civilizations that thrived along its waterways. The Nile River, for instance, was a cradle of ancient Egyptian civilization, providing fertile lands for agriculture and transportation routes for trade.¹

Yet, the Nile also presented a challenge as it traversed different territories, giving rise to competing claims over its waters. Historical records reveal occasional conflicts and disputes between Egypt and its upstream neighbors, such as Sudan and Ethiopia, over water allocation and control.² These early instances demonstrate the inherent complexities of managing shared water resources across political boundaries.

With the advent of colonialism in the late 19th century, European powers imposed new political boundaries across Africa, further complicating transboundary water management. The arbitrary division of the continent's river systems among different colonial territories disregarded centuries-old water usage patterns and traditional resource management practices.

¹ JA Shoup, *The Nile: An Encyclopedia of Geography, History, and Culture* (ABC-CLIO 2017) <<https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=ZXCrdgAAQBAJ>>.

² Swain Ashok, 'Ethiopia, the Sudan, and Egypt: The Nile River Dispute' (1997) 35.

Particularly, the 1929 treaty between the British colonial government and Egypt disregarded local knowledge and cooperation, and exacerbated tensions and sowed the seeds of future water-related conflicts.³

The 1959 Egyptian-Sudanese Agreement was praised as being the most comprehensive agreement regarding the Nile by its proponents, yet it did not address the needs of other riparian countries, and did not include them in the Agreement.⁴ This was another source of great conflict and tension between countries along the Nile.

Following the wave of decolonization that swept across Africa in the mid-20th century, newly independent nations grappled with the inherited challenges of transboundary water management. The years that followed saw a mix of cooperative efforts and disagreements as countries sought to assert their rights and negotiate shared solutions.⁵

In the late 20th century, awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to transboundary water management began to gain traction. Regional organizations, such as the African Union and the African Development Bank, emerged as platforms for fostering cooperation and dialogue among African nations. These institutions facilitated the development of frameworks and policies aimed at promoting equitable and sustainable management of transboundary water resources.

³ PLO Lumumba, 'The Interpretation of the 1929 Treaty and Its Legal Relevance to and Implications for the Stability of the Region' <<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/55162>> accessed 9 June 2023.

⁴ Lumumba (n 5).

⁵ Claudious Chikozho, 'Pathways for Building Capacity and Ensuring Effective Transboundary Water Resources Management in Africa: Revisiting the Key Issues, Opportunities and Challenges' (2014) 76–78 *Physics and Chemistry of the Earth, Parts A/B/C* 72.

One notable example of successful transboundary water cooperation is the Orange-Senqu River Basin Commission, established in 2000. Comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa, the commission has worked towards joint management of the shared water resources of the Orange River Basin. Additionally, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), a collaborative project between Lesotho and South Africa, has served to facilitate the generation of electricity in the Highlands of Lesotho, and provide electricity to the Gauteng region of South Africa. Through collaborative efforts, the countries have navigated challenges, such as water scarcity and hydropower development, while addressing social, economic, and environmental aspects of water resource management.

Similarly, the Niger Basin Authority, established in 1963, has fostered cooperation among the nine riparian countries sharing the Niger River. By promoting dialogue, data sharing, and joint projects, the authority has aimed to improve water management, mitigate floods, and enhance agricultural productivity across the basin.

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) which was established in 2008, plays a central role in the governance of the Great Lakes region basin, which region encompasses countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The ICGLR serves as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and coordination among member states, with the aim of promoting peace, security, and sustainable development in the region.

The Nile Basin Initiative of 1999 involving DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, The Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi was

established to give the Basin States a venue for discussion and collaboration regarding the responsible ownership and use of the shared water resources in the Nile Basin and other related resources for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Born out of this initiative was the Cooperative Framework Agreement which entered into force in 2011, a treaty aimed at coordinating the management and use of Nile Basin waters. It was ratified by Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and later on by Burundi in 2011. However, this treaty was opposed by Egypt and Sudan, owing to their historical rights and domination of the Nile.

The history of transboundary water resource management in Africa is a testament to the complexities and challenges of balancing competing interests.

C. Opportunities Presented by Transboundary Water Resource Cooperation

The opportunities available to Africa through harnessing her water resources are innumerable and span different sectors such as the energy sector, the transport sector, fisheries, industry, urban development among others.

In Kinshasa, the Great Inga Dam has the potential to power Africa in its entirety if it is well developed and collaboratively managed. In Niger, the Kainji dam also holds great potential with regard to the amount of hydroelectric power it can generate and supply.

These opportunities are made visible through the different initiatives Africa has taken such as the Africa Water Vision 2025, Africa Agenda 2063 and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

The Africa Water Vision 2025, developed by the African Union (AU) and its member states, provides a comprehensive roadmap for water resources management in Africa. It recognizes the importance of transboundary water cooperation and emphasizes the need for integrated approaches to water management. The vision aims to ensure equitable access to water resources, enhance water governance, and promote sustainable development.

By fostering collaboration among African nations, the Africa Water Vision 2025 seeks to address challenges related to water scarcity, pollution, and climate change impacts, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and socio-economic development across the continent. As it comes to an end, the Africa Vision 2025 should be interrogated to establish whether the Vision was instrumental in developing our water resources throughout its period of application, and to decide whether Africa should develop something similar for the years to come.

Africa Agenda 2063, another key strategic framework of the AU, envisions a prosperous, united, and integrated Africa. Water resources management is identified as a critical component in achieving this vision. The agenda emphasizes the sustainable use and management of water resources as a catalyst for socio-economic transformation under aspiration 1. It recognizes the importance of transboundary water cooperation in fostering regional integration, peace, and stability.

By promoting cross-border collaboration, Africa Agenda 2063 seeks to unlock the potential of transboundary water resources for agriculture, energy, industrial development, and environmental sustainability, aligning with the AU's aspirations for a prosperous and united Africa.

Furthermore, SDG 6 of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses specifically on water and sanitation. This global goal aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. In the African context, SDG 6 provides a framework for addressing water-related challenges, including transboundary water management issues.

It calls for cooperation among countries sharing water resources, highlighting the importance of integrated water resources management and the protection of water ecosystems. By working towards SDG 6, African countries can enhance their capacity for transboundary water governance, strengthen water infrastructure, and improve access to safe water and sanitation services, contributing to overall development and well-being.

Collectively, these frameworks have a significant impact on transboundary water resources management in Africa. They provide a shared vision, a lighthouse guiding countries towards sustainable development and cooperation. They promote the adoption of integrated water management approaches, the conservation of water ecosystems, and the equitable allocation of water resources among riparian countries. They also underscore the importance of addressing climate change impacts, improving water infrastructure, and ensuring access to clean water and sanitation services for all.

By aligning their policies, strategies, and actions with the Africa Water Vision 2025, Africa Agenda 2063, and SDG 6, African countries can foster dialogue, enhance knowledge sharing, and strengthen institutional frameworks for transboundary water governance.

D. Challenges to effective Water Resource Management and Cooperation

The effective use of transnational water resources in Africa is accompanied by numerous challenges that hinder sustainable management and equitable utilization. These challenges, rooted in a complex web of political, social, economic, and environmental factors, pose significant obstacles to achieving cooperation and ensuring the long-term viability of shared water resources.

Population growth, climate change, and increasing demands for water pose additional pressures on already strained water resources. These resources remain strained not because of a lack of resources, but due to improper utilization of these resources. The potential for conflict over water rights remains a concern in certain regions, necessitating ongoing diplomatic efforts and the strengthening of institutional frameworks.

At present, we have only utilized seven percent (7%) of the hydroelectric potential, and only twenty percent (20%) of the irrigation potential. A huge barrier towards the attainment of this potential is the lack of financial resources. Most riparian states in Sub-Saharan Africa are financially inept and therefore direct the available funds towards projects that deliver immediate results.

Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and limited access to financing hinder the development and utilization of transboundary water resources. The construction of dams, reservoirs, irrigation systems, and water treatment facilities requires significant investments and technical expertise.

This ties in with the challenge of limited financial viability of water resource projects. Projects relating to water resources require quite some time to yield a tangible benefit and it is this patience that is not our forte, as there are a million other pressing needs that require addressing which makes them non-viable projects for many developing and least developed riparian states.

A lack of willingness to invest in projects that take quite some time leads to very little development of river basin water resources, resulting in a butterfly effect of underdevelopment in certain sectors such as energy, agriculture and fisheries.

Another challenge is the issue of unequal power dynamics and competing national interests. In many cases, upstream countries have a geographical advantage as they control the headwaters of rivers, giving them the ability to influence the quantity and quality of water downstream.

This power asymmetry can lead to conflicts and disputes over water allocation, with downstream countries feeling marginalized and vulnerable. An example is the conflict over the Nile Basin which is multi-faceted and has involved not only Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia but also other riparian states, such as Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan, who have their own water development and access concerns. Resolving these power imbalances and fostering a sense of equity among riparian nations is crucial for effective transnational water resource management.

Furthermore, socio-political factors, including governance issues, historical conflicts, and geopolitical tensions, present challenges to transboundary water management. Lack of trust, political instability, and competing national

interests can impede cooperation and hinder the establishment of collaborative frameworks. The Manu River Basin is an example of how governance issues hinder the effective management of transboundary water resources.

Historical disputes and territorial conflicts may exacerbate tensions and make it challenging to achieve consensus on water sharing and management arrangements. Addressing these socio-political challenges requires diplomatic negotiations, trust-building measures, and a commitment to dialogue and cooperation among riparian countries.

A good example is the longstanding disputes and negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over water rights, equitable allocation, and potential impacts on downstream water flow relating to the Nile Waters which have created a politically charged environment. This has particularly been evident in the impact of the development of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), which has exacerbated the conflict in the region, and has faced great resistance by downstream countries, particularly Egypt.

Furthermore, the limited availability of reliable data and information hinders the understanding of water resources and impedes informed decision-making. Many African countries face challenges in collecting and sharing data on water availability, quality, and usage, resulting in a lack of comprehensive knowledge about transboundary water resources.

Insufficient data and inadequate monitoring systems hinder the assessment of water availability, environmental impacts, and the identification of potential risks. The establishment of robust data collection networks and information-

sharing mechanisms is essential for enhancing transparency, fostering trust, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making.

Another significant challenge is the impact of climate change on water resources. Africa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with changing rainfall patterns, increased frequency of droughts and floods, and rising temperatures. An example is Lake Chad, which has shrunk by 90% from 1966, due to reduced precipitation as a result of climate change. Akosombo dam on the other hand has experienced spillage due to the fluctuating rainfall patterns as a result of climate change which has caused flooding in downstream communities.

These changes have direct implications for transboundary water resources, affecting water availability, ecosystems, and livelihoods. Adapting to these climate-related challenges requires proactive planning, investing in resilience measures, and incorporating climate change considerations into transnational water management strategies.

Environmental degradation, including pollution, deforestation, and degradation of ecosystems, poses significant challenges to transboundary water management in Africa. Unregulated industrial activities, agricultural runoff, and improper waste disposal contribute to water pollution, jeopardizing both water quality and ecosystems.

The degradation of river basins and wetlands affects the ecological balance and reduces the ability of water resources to sustain livelihoods and biodiversity. Implementing effective environmental regulations, promoting sustainable practices, and investing in conservation measures are essential to

mitigate these environmental challenges and ensure the long-term health of transboundary water resources.

E. What can be done to foster Cooperation?

The African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and Regional Economic Committees (RECs) play a crucial role in promoting cooperation, fostering dialogue, and facilitating the development of transboundary water resources in Africa. The solutions to the problems facing transboundary resources should be dealt with internally, and should not be externalized as the external solutions will be fronted with other actors in mind, seeking to benefit. The Arab Summit that was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on the 19th of May 2023 provides an example of such externalization, as it touched on the resolution of the conflict surrounding the GERD.

The RECs, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC), play a pivotal role in dealing with the challenges faced in the development of transboundary water resources and driving regional integration and cooperation.

They have the mandate to promote economic development, harmonize policies, and coordinate regional initiatives. Transboundary water resources, with their potential to enhance agricultural productivity, generate hydropower, and ensure access to safe drinking water, align perfectly with the objectives of these regional bodies.

By fostering dialogue, knowledge exchange, and joint decision-making processes, AMCOW and RECs enable African nations to collectively address the challenges associated with transboundary water resources. They facilitate the development of shared frameworks, principles, and agreements that promote equitable water allocation, sustainable management practices, and the resolution of conflicts and disputes.

Moreover, these institutions serve as catalysts for mobilizing financial resources, technical expertise, and capacity-building initiatives. They provide a platform for international cooperation, attracting the attention and support of development partners, international organizations, and donors. Through effective advocacy and strategic partnerships, AMCOW and regional economic committees can mobilize the resources needed to implement projects and initiatives that unlock the full potential of our transboundary water resources.

However, let us be mindful that the success of these institutions and initiatives lies in the commitment and dedication of African governments, as well as the active participation of civil society, local communities, and all stakeholders. We must ensure that water management decisions are transparent, inclusive, and guided by the principles of equity, sustainability, and social justice. By empowering local communities and integrating their traditional knowledge and practices, we can guarantee the long-term success of our efforts.

Over the years, there have been a number of transboundary Lake/River Basin Organizations (L/RBOs) that were born out of efforts to effectively utilize this resource. These include the Niger Basin Authority (NBA), Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Gambie (The Gambia

River Basin Development Organization) (OMVG), Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Senegal (Senegal River Basin Development Authority) (OMVS), Limpopo Watercourse Commission (LIMCOM), Okavango River Basin Commission (OKACOM), Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) and the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM).

In the intricate tapestry of transboundary water management, L/RBOs emerge as vital actors in tackling the multifaceted challenges associated with the utilization of shared water resources. As water knows no political boundaries, L/RBOs provide a platform for riparian countries to come together, collaborate, and navigate the complexities of transboundary water management. These organizations play a pivotal role in fostering cooperation, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring equitable sharing of water resources within a river basin.

One of the primary functions of L/RBOs is to facilitate dialogue and negotiation among riparian countries. By bringing together stakeholders with diverse interests, L/RBOs provide a neutral ground where nations can engage in constructive discussions, exchange knowledge, and build trust.

Through this inclusive approach, L/RBOs help bridge political, social, and cultural divides, fostering an environment conducive to cooperation and collective decision-making. By encouraging open dialogue and the exchange of information, L/RBOs can help overcome potential conflicts and misunderstandings that may arise from competing water demands.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH facilitates such cooperation within different regions, by providing organization and policy advice, and enables sharing of knowledge and experience. It has done this in the SADC, where it provides assistance in sustainable development of the transboundary water resources. This enhances the significance that water plays in integrating and fostering peace among the 15 SADC member states. SADC has significantly advanced in this area over the past few years as a result of such assistance.

Moreover, L/RBOs serve as platforms for data collection, analysis, and information sharing. Access to accurate and reliable data on water availability, quality, and usage is crucial for making informed decisions and formulating effective water management strategies.

L/RBOs can coordinate data collection efforts, harmonize methodologies, and establish common databases, enabling riparian countries to have a comprehensive understanding of the hydrological dynamics within the river basin. This shared knowledge forms the basis for evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that water resources are utilized sustainably and equitably.

In addition to data sharing, L/RBOs facilitate the development of technical expertise and capacity building among member countries. By organizing training workshops, seminars, and knowledge exchange programs, L/RBOs empower riparian countries to enhance their skills in various aspects of water management, such as hydrology, water governance, and infrastructure development. Strengthening the technical capabilities of member countries not only improves their ability to manage transboundary water resources

effectively but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility over the shared waters.

Another crucial role played by L/RBOs is the formulation and implementation of cooperative frameworks and agreements. These frameworks provide a legal and institutional framework for addressing transboundary water challenges and ensuring the equitable utilization of resources.

L/RBOs facilitate the negotiation and adoption of agreements that establish principles of water allocation, environmental protection, and conflict resolution mechanisms. By providing a platform for riparian countries to define common goals and obligations, L/RBOs lay the foundation for sustainable and harmonious water management within the river basin.

Furthermore, L/RBOs can spearhead joint initiatives and projects that promote the sustainable development of shared water resources. By pooling resources and expertise, member countries can collaborate on infrastructure development, water conservation measures, ecosystem restoration, and the promotion of efficient water use practices.

L/RBOs provide a mechanism for resource mobilization, attracting financial support from international donors, development banks, and other stakeholders who recognize the value of transboundary water cooperation. These joint projects not only address water-related challenges but also contribute to economic growth, poverty alleviation, and regional integration.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that the effectiveness of L/RBOs relies on political will, commitment, and active participation from member countries. Cooperation within L/RBOs requires a willingness to transcend

national interests and prioritize the collective good. Building trust and fostering a shared vision may take time, particularly in regions where historical conflicts and disputes over water resources exist. Nevertheless, with persistence, dialogue, and the recognition of the interdependence of riparian countries, L/RBOs can facilitate meaningful collaboration and contribute to the sustainable utilization of transboundary water resources.

F. The Connection between Transboundary Water Resource Cooperation and the Attainment of the SDGs

First and foremost, water is life. It is a precious and finite resource that transcends political boundaries. Many communities, regions, and even nations rely on shared rivers, lakes, and aquifers for their water supply, agriculture, and industry. When nations collaborate to manage these shared resources, they facilitate economic development and alleviate the plight of those in dire need. This cooperation can help reduce poverty and hunger, which are fundamental to the first two SDGs.

Secondly, sustainable water management is pivotal in the fight against climate change. As we combat the adverse impacts of global warming, water is both a victim and a cause of environmental degradation. Transboundary water cooperation enables nations to adapt to climate change through the development of resilient infrastructure, flood management, and sustainable water use. Achieving the SDGs related to climate action, life below water, and life on land becomes more feasible when water resources are managed collectively.

Moreover, the benefits of transboundary water cooperation extend to peace and security. History bears witness to countless conflicts arising from disputes over shared water resources. By fostering collaboration and joint governance, nations can build trust, promote regional stability, and prevent potential conflicts. This is especially pertinent to the SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions, as well as the overarching theme of peace and prosperity engrained in the SDGs.

It is imperative that we recognize the importance of inclusive and equitable participation in water management. This approach must respect the rights and needs of all stakeholders, including marginalized communities, women, and indigenous people. In doing so, we can align transboundary water cooperation with the principles of equality and social justice underpinning the SDGs.

G. Conclusion

In closing, let me underscore the profound significance of transboundary water cooperation in propelling us toward the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. As I stand before you today, I am reminded of the vital importance of water - the lifeblood of our existence. It is the substance that knows no borders, that flows freely across our shared planet, and that sustains not only our lives but the very future of our global community.

Transboundary water cooperation is not a mere recommendation; it is a moral imperative and a strategic necessity. We find ourselves at a critical

junction, a juncture where the fate of our world, our communities, and our future generations hangs in the balance. It is a juncture where the realization of the *SDGs*, with their profound promise of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and preserving our planet, depends on our collective actions and the wise stewardship of our shared water resources.

As we reflect upon the profound interconnectivity of the *SDGs*, we must acknowledge that water is the unifying thread that weaves through each goal, each aspiration, and each dream. The essence of life, of health, of sustenance, of economic growth, and of environmental preservation is entwined in the flow of transboundary waters. And in this realization, we must embrace the fundamental truth that no nation, no community, and no individual can achieve these goals in isolation.

We must recognize that transboundary water cooperation is not merely about quenching our immediate thirst or ensuring the vitality of our crops; it is about sowing the seeds of peace, cooperation, and sustainable development. It is about forging bonds of mutual understanding, shared responsibility, and harmonious coexistence among nations.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we navigate the complex waters of our world, let us keep in mind that the *SDGs* are not a distant mirage, but a tangible reality within our grasp. Together, through the power of transboundary water cooperation, we can accelerate the attainment of these goals. By forging partnerships, sharing knowledge, and fostering a spirit of goodwill and collaboration, we can harness the potential of our shared water resources to drive progress and prosperity for all.

Julius Nyerere rightly notes that;

"Cooperation and conflict are two sides of the same coin; both arise out of man's relationship with his fellows. The larger the group, the greater the possibility of development through cooperation, and the greater the possibility of conflict."

As we come together to work towards the achievement of our goals, we must be aware that conflict will arise. Yet this will be an opportunity to rise above anything that seeks to divide us and forge our way onwards.

Transboundary water cooperation is not just about achieving the SDGs; it is about safeguarding life itself. It is about safeguarding the health of our planet, our communities, and our future generations.

As we depart today, let us remember that we are the custodians of our shared future, the architects of a world where the waters of cooperation flow freely, nourishing the roots of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Let us embrace the call of history and rise to the occasion. Together, we can accelerate the attainment of the SDGs and ensure a future where water is a source of life, of peace, and of prosperity for all.

Thank you.

APPENDIX

Lake Basins:

1. Lake Victoria
2. Lake Tanganyika
3. Lake Malawi
4. Lake Turkana
5. Lake Chad
6. Lake Albert (Uganda-Congo)
7. Lake Kivu
8. Lake Edward (Uganda-Congo)
9. Lake Mweru
10. Lake Rukwa
11. Lake Kariba (Zambezi River)

River Basins:

1. Nile River Basin
2. Congo River Basin
3. Niger River Basin
4. Senegal River Basin
5. Volta River Basin
6. Orange River Basin
7. Limpopo River Basin
8. Zambezi River Basin
9. Nile-Congo Divide
10. Okavango River Basin
11. Ruvuma River Basin
12. Rufiji River Basin
13. Tana River Basin
14. Juba and Shabelle River Basins (Somalia)
15. Rufiji and Wami River Basins (Tanzania)
16. Kagera River Basin
17. Pungwe River Basin
18. Lualaba River Basin (Upper Congo River)
19. Blue Nile River Basin