

Statement delivered by
His Excellency Mtolo Phiri
Minister for Agriculture of Zambia
on the occasion of the 43rd Session of the FAO Conference (1-7 July 2023)
3 July

Madam Chairperson,
The Director-General of FAO,
Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen.

Madam Chairperson, first of all allow me to congratulate you for having been elected as the Chairperson of the Conference. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General on his re-election. My country, Zambia, stands ready to support the Director-General during his tenure, to achieve his very clear objectives for the Institution.

Chairperson, in Zambia we believe that war anywhere in the world is war everywhere. In the same vein we believe that the usage of water, be it wastage or inefficient in any part of the world, affects every other part of the world. Therefore, we take the issues of water very seriously. The theme of the Conference on Integrated Water Resource Management is timely and critical to our efforts of addressing the challenges of water shortages, scarcity, degradation of quality as well as floodings, which is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Zambia in the last planting season Madam Chairperson, lost well over 800 000 hectares of planted land, due to floods and then, later on, due to heavy drought that we experienced. This is a tragedy, Chairperson, that we must avoid in the future, and the solution for us is irrigation. The Development Madam Chairperson of a national policy that outlines the strategies and principles for sustainable water resource management, which aims to have policies to ensure equitable access to water, promote integrated water resource management, and the protection of water, are vital. Further, the government has established water resource management authority, a regulated body responsible for managing and regulating water resources in Zambia.

Zambia wishes to invest heavily Madam Chairperson, in water infrastructure development, including the construction of dams, reservoirs and water treatment plants. These projects will enhance water storage capacity, improve water supply and increase access to clean water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

Chairperson, billions of litres of water in Zambia every rainy season, just wash over into the oceans and we see it go in our case, into, in our case, the Indian Ocean. We need to harness this water. If there is any support that we need from other countries and FAO, it is in the direction of water harvesting so that we can utilize that flow of water which we see pass through our country.

The Government is promoting water conservation and efficiency practices to minimize wastages and to ensure sustainable water use. This includes raising awareness among communities about water saving techniques, promoting the use of water efficient technologies, and encouraging responsible cultural practices.

Madam Chairperson, at regional level Zambia is engaged in bilateral and regional agreements for transboundary water management. For instance, Zambia is a Member of the Southern African Development Community (SADEC) and participates in initiatives that the SADEC water sector tries to coordinate in order to have efficient use of water.

In conclusion Madam Chairperson, allow me to say that water is an indispensable input in agriculture, serving as a lifeline for crop production. Water is a common asset for all of us and it is an asset therefore that we need to manage - and manage well. Here is a country, Zambia, that is food secure; here is a country,

Zambia, that has very good weather and is able to produce and support southern parts of Zambia in terms of grain and food supply, the eastern part of Africa, and now the northern parts of Africa.

We are here to say we have the good weather, we have the water, help us harness it, help us gather it so that we can continue supporting food in Africa and supporting food at a global level.

I thank you.