

**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY H.E. ATO DAWIT YOHANNES SPEEKER
OF THE HOUSE OF PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE PAN-
AFRICAN IMPLEMENTATION & PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE
ON WATER.**

(December, 8-12, 2003)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives of Countries and International
Organizations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be given the opportunity to deliver the keynote address on the occasion of the opening plenary of the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership conference on water.

To begin with, I would like to welcome you all on behalf of the Government of the federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

As you are well aware this conference is entrusted to African Countries to demonstrate their determination to achieve results within the context of the targets, on water, embodied in the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

As clearly shown in the formulation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the establishment of African Union (AU), Africa is committed to ownership of the development process. African



Governments must however face several challenges if the desirable outcomes for the water sector are to be achieved. Today in Africa more than 300 million people do not have access to safe water, and an even larger number of people are food insecure and malnourished in spite of the availability of large underutilized natural resources.

On the other hand financing the interventions required to meet these goals is a huge challenge by itself. The huge financing requirement coupled with limitations on capacity tends to further compound the path to ensure successful outcomes.

It is however our conviction that, given clear policies and strategies and real commitments to implementation and with the support of our own partners the challenges of the Millennium Development Goal outcomes could be met, and I am confident that water would help eradicate poverty and help achieve sustainable development in Africa.

Given this conviction, it is encouraging to note the positive political developments we are undertaking on the continent as exemplified by the new partnership for Africa's Development and the formation of the Africa Ministers Council on water. The partnership provides a partnership between Africa and the international community based on mutual respect, dignity, mutual accountability, and designed to build balanced relationships in the trade and capital flows. The prime objective of this partnership is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries both individually and collectively at the path of sustainable growth and development.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Global interests in African issues is recently mounting high. The Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000, the international Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, which intensively discussed African Development, and the G8 summit in Canada, which adopted “G8 Africa action Plan” all illustrate these facts. This unique opportunity must be maintained and implementation of the various initiatives must proceed to our expectations.

It is in this context that we urge all stakeholders engaged in Africa’s development to take concrete action now; this is the time to act. In order to enhance Africa’s development, we must do so in a prompt and timely manner.

I would also like to extend my cordial appreciation to the organizers of the conference for showing diligent efforts and also for choosing Ethiopia to host this important conference.

Finally, I wish a pleasant stay to all participants in Addis Ababa and a complete success in your deliberations.

I thank you for your attention!