

MY SPEECH ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF TAKABA WATER SUPPLY MASTER PLAN
ON TUESDAY, THE 30TH OF MAY 2023 AT SHAMIIM RESORT IN TAKABA TOWN.

Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim (In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful),

The Deputy Country Representative UNICEF Mr. Mahboob Ahmed Bajwa,

the Water Secretary in the Ministry of Water Sanitation and Irrigation Eng. S. A. O. Alima,

Chief Executive Officer, Water Services Regulatory Board Dr. Julius Itunga,

Chief Executive Officer Water Sector Trust Fund,

the Deputy Governor Dr. Ali Maalim,

Members of Parliament,

Member of County Assembly present,

The County Secretary,

County Executive Committee members,

County Chief Officers Present, Elders, Ladies and Gentlemen Asalamu Aleykum, Good Morning.

I stand before you today with a deep sense of gratitude and excitement as we gather to officially launch the Takaba Water Supply Master Plan. Allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the Deputy Country Representative of UNICEF, Mr. Mahboob Ahmed Bajwa, the Water Secretary in the Ministry of Water Sanitation and Irrigation, Eng. S. A. O. Alima, CEO of the Water Services Regulatory Board, Dr. Julius Itunga, and the CEO of the Water Sector Trust Fund, for gracing this occasion.

Today marks a significant milestone in our relentless efforts to address the water scarcity challenges faced by the people of Takaba town. I must express my profound gratitude to UNICEF for their deliberate support, without which the realization of this master plan would not have been possible. Takaba town has historically been plagued by water scarcity, often resorting to water trucking from Elwak, a distance of 120 km.

We are all aware of the adverse effects that extreme water shortages have on lives and livelihoods in Takaba. Additionally, the town experiences rapid run-off during the rainy season, leading to devastating floods and property damage. While groundwater in the area is generally poor, we have made some progress with the drilling of a few boreholes in the past decade.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Takaba town currently relies on three interconnected water pans, namely Tubadi, Sigenge, and Garralle, which feed into a collection sump, providing 500m³/day pumped to a 100m³ tank on raised grounds for gravity distribution. Furthermore, the county government recently drilled four boreholes at Darwed1, Darwed 2, Airstrip, and Polytechnic, supplying water to outlying villages with an estimated capacity of 560m³/day. However, considering the current water consumption pattern, there remains a deficit of approximately 19,992 M³/day, which is projected to increase to 43,608M³/day by 2049.

As an ASAL county, Mandera faces numerous challenges in providing adequate water services to our citizens. These challenges include low and unreliable rainfall, unknown groundwater development potential, high levels of poverty, poor water quality, the proliferation of new unplanned settlements, insecurity, recurrent droughts and floods, pastoral dropouts, and the high cost of maintaining water schemes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In November 2022, UNICEF engaged Tertiary Consulting Engineers Ltd as consultants to formulate a 25-year water master plan for Takaba town and its environs. The master plan encompasses an engineering feasibility study, costed design, and tender documents for the development of a sustainable water supply system that will meet the projected needs of the population over the next 25 years. Today, we gather to celebrate the official launch of this Master Plan, which is the result of tireless efforts and invaluable support from UNICEF. I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to UNICEF for their unwavering commitment to our county.

The output from the study is the Master Plan we are launching today. As you know UNICEF did not only support us in the repair and rehabilitation of 95 Boreholes water supply schemes to mitigate against the recent drought situation in the County but has also conducted satellite based groundwater mapping although the final findings of this exercise has not yet been shared with the County Government. I wish to once more thank UNICEF for this valuable support.

Moreover, I would like to highlight the opportunities for collaboration with the National Government and Donor Agencies, particularly through the Horn of Africa Groundwater for Resilience Programme (HoAGW4RP) and the National Water Supply and Sanitation Investment Programme (NAWASSIP). These partnerships present avenues for further support and resource mobilization to ensure the successful implementation of the Master Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My administration remains steadfast in our commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal No. 6, and I reaffirm our dedication to the following priorities in the water sector over the next five years:

1. Building at least six large-scale dams to improve water availability for human consumption, livestock, and irrigation purposes.
2. Increasing the proportion of people with access to potable water by 20% within the next five years.
3. Scaling up water harvesting techniques and implementing effective watershed management strategies across the county.
4. Ensuring that every learning institution in Mandera County has access to clean water for the well-being of our students.
5. Initiating an independent study on inter-basin water transfer and optimizing the utilization of the Laga Sure catchment area.
6. Ensuring that all sub-county headquarters have clean and accessible water for their residents.

To realize these goals, we recognize the need for resource mobilization and are committed to identifying potential financiers for the implementation of this Water Master Plan. The County Government of Mandera pledges to meet its share of financial contribution towards the realization of this plan. However, we appeal to the National Government, WASH partners, and Donors to join hands with us in mobilizing additional funds to fulfill our promise of increasing access to potable water for our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude, I would like to emphasize the significance of this project in light of the challenges we have faced. Mandera County has endured the longest and most severe drought on record, testing the resilience of our communities and straining our water resources to their limits. The impact of this prolonged drought has been deeply felt, with lives and livelihoods affected across the county.

Given this context, it is clear that the launch of the Takaba Water Supply Master Plan holds immense importance. By addressing the water scarcity issues in Takaba town and its surroundings, we are taking a significant step towards building resilience and ensuring the long-term water security of our

people. Access to clean and reliable water is not only a basic human right but also a fundamental necessity for sustainable development and the well-being of our communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is crucial to address the unnecessary destruction of our natural vegetation, particularly the issue of deforestation. The rampant cutting down of trees has had detrimental effects on our environment, intensifying the water scarcity and climate challenges we face. I take this his opportunity to urge our communities to recognize the importance of preserving our forests and actively participate in reforestation efforts. Let us come together and plant more trees, not only to restore the balance of our ecosystem but also to safeguard our water resources for future generations.

As we embark on this transformative journey, let us remember the hardships we have endured and draw inspiration from our collective determination to overcome them. The implementation of this master plan will not only alleviate the immediate water challenges but also lay the foundation for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

In conclusion, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all stakeholders, development partners, and individuals who have supported us in this endeavor. Together, we will overcome the water challenges facing Takaba town and other parts of Mandera County, and ensure a brighter and more prosperous future for our citizens.

Thank you, and may we continue to work tirelessly towards a water-secure Mandera County.

H.E. Mohamed A. Khalif

Governor

Mandera County

30th May 2023