



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**  
**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, WATER AND LAND REFORM**

**Remarks delivered at the World Water Forum,  
In Bali, Indonesia**

**by Hon. Carl Hermann Gustav Schlettwein**

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Your Excellencies,

Namibia is currently experiencing a serious drought with the lowest run-off recorded in the past 100 years. This is indicative that surface as well as groundwater resources will become less reliable with a negative impact on food security, health and hygiene, and prosperity. As predicted, this will be a recurring phenomenon, albeit more frequent and more severe in magnitude.

Overall under-development, debt overburdening, and resultant lack of fiscal space in developing and middle-income economies make required development of water and sanitation infrastructure in those countries more difficult, if not impossible. According to the latest UN World Water Development report (2024), about 3.6 billion people globally will remain without proper sanitation and around 2.2 billion will not have access to clean water. Most of these live in developing and middle-income countries.

To change these shocking statistics a significant change in priority setting for funding is required. Away from additional borrowing and debt towards more sustainable blending; away from war towards water and development; away from conflict towards managing common resources peacefully; away from harsh wealth disparities towards shared prosperity; A similar effort to what has been achieved in the energy transition should be made in transitioning clean water and sanitation for all from traditional methods to smart methods. Innovation and technologies for less costly

desalination, more efficient irrigation, reclamation, and better wastewater management are but a few of many examples.

Your Excellencies, water is life and with that access to it is indeed a human right and such right should be anchored in the Human Rights Charter. Excellences, Namibia relies heavily on water from shared watercourses and groundwater aquifers, and so do our neighbors. We therefore actively cooperate with basin States to jointly manage and develop these resources. Namibia believes that transboundary cooperation will lead to peace and prosperity among nations and lead to accruing of fairly shared benefits. For SADC and Africa, it is a must as we move towards regional and continental integration. Allow me to stress that our immediate future, but even more so the future of our children and future generations will depend on how we, TODAY, address the imminent water crisis and the enormous funding gap to solve it. The important role that women and youth should play in water management and diplomacy efforts must equally be recognized.

I thank you.