



## REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### REMARKS

BY

THE HONOURABLE INGE I. ZAAMWANI: MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,  
FISHERIES, WATER AND LAND REFORM

ON THE OCCASION OF THE SIGNING OF THE  
GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATION (GWPO)  
SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT

*Windhoek, 11 February 2026*

Hon. Pablo Bereciartua, GWP Global Chair and Minister of Infrastructure, Buenos Aires, of the Republic of Argentina;

Esteemed Representatives of the Global Water Partnership Organisation;

Amb. Abdoulaye Sene, GWP Chair of Regional Chairs;

The Chief Executive Officer of the Global Water Partnership;

Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Namibia;

Ambassador of the European Union;

Development Partners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Today's event is more than a formal signing ceremony. It is a **strategic commitment**, a **shared vision**, and a **decisive step forward in global water governance**, anchored firmly in the Global South.
2. The Government of the Republic of Namibia is honoured to formally host the Secretariat of the Global Water Partnership Organisation here in Windhoek. This decision reflects confidence not only in Namibia as a country, but also in Africa's capacity to lead, convene, and deliver on one of the most pressing development challenges of our time: **water security**.
3. Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Water scarcity is not an abstract concept for us, it is a lived reality that shapes our development choices, our infrastructure investments, and our diplomacy. Precisely because of this reality, Namibia has long understood that **water is the foundation for economic growth, human dignity, peace, and resilience**.

4. It is this understanding that has guided Namibia's sustained engagement in **integrated water resources management**, climate adaptation, groundwater development, desalination, water reuse, and early-warning systems. It is also what has shaped our strong commitment to **transboundary water cooperation**, as a country that shares five major river basins with our neighbours across Southern Africa.
5. Namibia is a founding and active member of all SADC river basin organisations, including ORASECOM, OKACOM, CUVECOM, the Kunene Permanent Joint Technical Commission, and ZAMCOM. Our geographic position, both upstream and downstream across different basins, has instilled in us a firm commitment to **equitable and reasonable utilisation, benefit-sharing, and basin-wide planning**.
6. Against this backdrop, the decision to host the GWPO Secretariat is not incidental. It is a natural extension of Namibia's long-standing role as a **reliable partner** in regional and global water cooperation.

### **Distinguished guests,**

7. Namibia's hosting of the GWPO Secretariat also builds on our **proven record of accomplishment** as a host country for international and regional institutions. We currently host, among others, the SACU Secretariat, the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the Benguela Current Commission, the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organisation, the SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and SASSCAL to mention but a few. These institutions operate under Headquarters Agreements that guarantee legal personality, privileges, immunities, and operational independence.

8. This experience has equipped Namibia with the **institutional readiness, administrative capacity, and political commitment** needed to support the GWP, which is an organisation of global standing.
9. Through the Headquarters Agreement being signed today, Namibia commits to providing an enabling environment for the Secretariat, including appropriate office infrastructure, administrative and logistical support, visa and residency facilitation, tax and customs exemptions for official operations, and a stable legal framework aligned with international hosting standards. These commitments reflect our understanding that effective global institutions require not only vision, but also **predictable and supportive operating conditions**.
10. The hosting of the GWPO Secretariat in Namibia carries significance far beyond our borders. It forms part of an **innovative dual-headquarters model**, making it the world's first Global South-anchored intergovernmental organisation dedicated to water.
11. This is a powerful signal of change in global governance. It shows that solutions to global challenges can and must be shaped from the perspectives of those most affected. It affirms Africa's role not only as a recipient of solutions, but as a **co-architect of global policy, investment, and delivery platforms**.
12. Importantly, the presence of the GWPO Secretariat in Namibia strengthens the continent's ability to **translate political commitments into bankable, implementable water investments**. As we approach the 2026 United Nations Water Conference and the final stretch of the Water Action Decade, the emphasis must shift decisively from declarations to delivery.

13. In this regard, GWPO's strategic focus on scaling climate-resilient water investments, strengthening governance and transboundary cooperation, and expanding knowledge, data, and digital solutions are aligned with Namibia's national priorities and Africa's continental ambitions.
14. Namibia stands ready to work closely with GWPO to operationalise its 2026–2030 Strategy by hosting high-level policy dialogues, ministerial roundtables, and technical consultations that feed into global processes such as the Global Outlook Council on Water Investments, the G20 legacy initiatives, and the African Union's forthcoming African Water Vision.
15. We are particularly committed to ensuring that the GWPO Secretariat serves as a **practical delivery platform**, one that supports countries and river basin organisations to develop credible investment pipelines, mobilise finance, and implement projects that improve lives on the ground.
16. The success of the GWPO Secretariat will be underpinned by strong national and regional partnerships. The Ministry will work closely with the Ministry of International Relations and Trade, NamWater, the Environment Investment Fund, national academic institutions, and regional bodies across SADC to ensure that GWPO's work is well integrated and impactful.
17. We also recognise the critical role of our development partners, including the African Development Bank, KfW, the European Union, UNDP, UNECE, and others, whose continued collaboration will be essential in scaling water investments across Africa and beyond.
18. In closing, let me emphasise that today's signing of the GWP Host Agreement is the beginning of a shared journey. A journey toward a future

where water is managed cooperatively, investment and governance in critical water infrastructure is guided by the needs of the people and decisions are inclusive.

19. Once again, Namibia is proud to host the GWPO Secretariat, and we do so with a deep sense of responsibility, to Africa, to the Global South, and to the global community. We look forward to working hand in hand with GWPO member states and partners to ensure that this headquarters becomes a hub of innovation, cooperation, and tangible results.
20. On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia, I thank the Global Water Partnership Organisation for the trust placed in our country. We reaffirm our full commitment to supporting GWPO in fulfilling its global mandate.

**I thank you.**