



Remarks By

Mr. Robert Goodwin

Chief Technical Advisor

Water, Sanitation and Infrastructure Branch, UN-HABITAT

During the Official Opening of the New Customs Intake, Bukoba

by

H.E. Dr. Mohamed Shein, Vice-President of the United Republic
of Tanzania

Your Excellency Dr. Mohamed Shein, Vice-President of the
United Republic of Tanzania,

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament,

Regional Commissioner for Kagera,

District Commissioner for Bukoba,

The Chairman of the Bukoba District Council,

District Executive Director of the Bukoba District Council

The Chairman of the Bukoba Urban Water and Sewerage
Authority

Managing Director of the Bukoba Urban Water and Sewerage
Authority

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here today as the Representative of UN-HABITAT on this important occasion. Before starting my remarks, however, I would like to convey the best wishes of our Executive Director, Dr. Anna Tibaujuka, who, of course is well known to all of you, and who would have loved to be here with you today. But, unfortunately, with the UN-HABITAT Governing Council Meeting

only a few weeks away, she found it impossible to leave Nairobi at this time. Your Excellency, before I say anything more, I would also like to express the appreciation of UN-HABITAT for the continuing political support and commitment of your Government to facilitate UN-HABITAT initiatives in Tanzania.

Water and sanitation is at the forefront of UN-HABITAT's Agenda to improve the lives of poor people in the expanding urban and peri-urban settlements of the developing world. For a long time, we have noted that more and more people are moving from the rural areas to live in cities and towns where the infrastructure is completely inadequate to provide basic services, including housing, water, sanitation and garbage collection. Small towns, many of which were just villages a few years ago, have become growth centres and are absorbing a large proportion of the urbanization that we are witnessing today.

At UN-HABITAT we are equally concerned over the fact that most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are making slow progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation and, I regret to say, that the United Republic of Tanzania is one of these countries where progress continues to be less than satisfactory. The official statistics reveal that only about 55% of the population of the country enjoy access to safe drinking water and only 33% to basic sanitation. Considering that access to water and sanitation is so crucial to public health, economic development and the reduction of poverty, it is clear that much needs to be done.

Mr. Vice-President, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, UN-HABITAT has been working with you for a long time now to try and improve the water and sanitation conditions in Tanzania. Our assistance has been provided under two regional programmes – the Water for African Cities Programme and the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative.

Under the Water for African Cities Programme, we have been able to assist in a number of pilot projects as well as training and capacity building aimed at improving the operation of water and sewerage infrastructure in Dar es Salaam. More recently, we have been working in partnership with the African Development Bank to develop a major water and sanitation programme in Zanzibar. Funding for this project has already been approved by the African Development Bank and implementation is due to begin in the coming months.

The Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative is a concrete step taken by UN-HABITAT in association with the Governments of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, and the Secretariat of the East African Community to support small towns in the Lake Victoria region to attain the water and sanitation target of the Millennium Development Goals.

The key objectives of this Initiative are twofold: first, to improve the water supply and sanitation coverage of the urban poor in these towns; and secondly, to arrest the increasing pollution of Lake Victoria.

In Tanzania, Phase I of the Initiative is currently ongoing in Bukoba, Muleba and Mutukula. Work is also due to start very soon in the town of Bunda and consultations are now ongoing with a view to select another 3 towns to be included the next phase.

Mr. Vice-President, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to inform you that considerable progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative in Tanzania. We are here today to inaugurate the project which has resulted in a complete rehabilitation of the Customs Intake facility. This has enabled BUWASA to almost double the water production of the town to about 7,000 cubic meters of water per day. The programme has also assisted BUWASA in purchasing meters and basic tools and equipment including computers and water quality

testing equipment. In addition, over 25 water kiosks have been constructed to improve access to water for those without pipe connections. In the area of sanitation, we have assisted in the construction of sanitation facilities at schools and the Prison. UN-HABITAT has so far contributed over 1 billion shillings for water and sanitation improvements in Bukoba.

The Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative is also supporting a major water supply project in Muleba which is now nearing completion. In Mutukula, boreholes have already been drilled and work to construct the water infrastructure is expected to begin in the next few months.

The Programme is now moving to another phase of activity that will focus on sanitation, waste management and further improvements in the water system. In this regard, your Excellency, I am happy to report that just within the past two weeks another project was launched in partnership with a local NGO that will provide a microfinance facility to enable women headed households to access credit to improve their household sanitation.

We are also in the process of assisting the Bukoba District Council in improving solid waste management services. In the next 2 months, we expect to complete the supply of tractors, trailers and containers which will be used to improve the collection and disposal of solid waste in the town.

Over the next few months, we will be working with BUWASA to further improve the water supply services in the town through extensions to the distribution network as well as capacity building and training.

In line with the mandate we have been given by the 5 East African Ministers of Water, we are also working very closely with other development partners, including the African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank to further expand the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative to additional

towns in Tanzania and the other East African Countries. The vision that we share with you is to see a significant reduction of poverty in the towns within the Lake Basin.

Your Excellency, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me close by thanking you for allowing UN-HABITAT to assist you in improving the lives of your people. I can assure you that UN-HABITAT will remain a faithful partner of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and we will continue to provide concrete support in the years ahead to enable you to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation.

Thank You