Young Africans should beat Ghana to advance

Tanzania representatives in the Confederation Cup, Young Africans, today play Medeama FC of Ghana in Group A encounter at the National Stadium in the city.

The match is important for Young Africans to qualify for semifinals of the tournament. Young Africans are yet to win a single match since the start of the group stage matches on June 19. They lost 1-0 in the hands of Mo Bejaia of Algeria and lost 2-0 at the Uhuru Stadium by Stella Abidjan. Since then, none of our clubs had reached that stage. Young Africans will be playing at a time when their fans are disappointed following a series of defeats. However, we call upon fans to forget the past and focus on the future. They should cheer their players. Fans are the 11th player in the team. As for the players, they should not be discouraged by previous luckluster show. They should play hard and enthusiastically to win, bring honour to themselves and the nation. We believe that their morale is also high. We wish them good luck.

Young Africans should realise that all Tanzanians are behind them and expect the best results.

The players should revive the hope of featuring in semifinals for the first time in history. Tanzania is yet to win the Confederation Cup in history. Only Simba SC qualified to finals when the tournament was known as Caf Cup in 1993 and lost 2-0 at the Uhuru Stadium by Stelea Abidjan. Since then, none of our clubs had reached that stage. Young Africans will be playing at a time when their fans are disappointed following a series of defeats. However, we call upon fans to forget the past and focus on the future. They should cheer their players. Fans are the 11th player in the team. As for the players, they should not be discouraged by previous luckluster show. They should play hard and enthusiastically to win, bring honour to themselves and the nation. We believe that their morale is also high. We wish them good luck.

Protect heritage sites

Tanzania is among countries which have enough heritage resources to provide a clear insight into the past and help people learn about human history.

There are numerous cultural sites showing masterpieces of human creativity and natural sites presenting major stages in the earth's history. Much as these historical places give people a clear picture about our ancient cultures, stone tools, and our ancestors' art works, we are responsible for conserving them.

Seven such sites are so far recognised and taken care by the UNESCO. These are the Kondoa Rock Sites; the ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara; the Stone Town of Zanzibar; Kilimanjaro and Serengeti national parks as well as Ngornogoro Conservation Area. But Tanzania also boasts having many other similar historical sites, natural features and structures which are worth recognising, protecting and preserving.

The commitment to protect heritage the seven sites which the government recently made during the 40th World Heritage Committee meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey, should also cover the likes of Kunduchi and Kaoe ruins; Bagamoyo, Mikindani and Kivinje historical towns; Kalengi and Bweranyange traditional settlements in Iringa and Kagera regions, respectively; Mbozi Meteorite; Amboni Caves and Kondoa Rock Art shelters, to name just a few.

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Water resources at the heart of SDGs

Next week, Dar es Salaam will play host to the 6th Africa Water Week. It will attract government leaders and other stakeholders from across the continent to increase political commitment and develop solutions to the continent’s water and sanitation challenges.

This year, the Africa Water Week will focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This United Nations-sponsored effort aims to create a common set of development targets for all countries. It is reassuring to see that water and sanitation feature prominently as SDG6. Furthermore, when we compare the SDGs to the UN’s previous Millennium Development Goals, initiated in 2000 to rally the world around a 15-year agenda to tackle poverty, we also see a notable shift towards issues of water resources and water security. This is in addition to the continued, critical focus on increasing basic access to water and sanitation services.

This is a welcome and important shift. Population growth, economic growth and climate change are placing a growing strain on water resources not just in Africa but across the world. Globally, we face an estimated 40 percent gap between water supply and water demand by 2030. Our agriculture, our industry, our energy, our tourism, all rely on water resources, which too often are taken for granted. As American statesman Benjamin Franklin said over 200 years ago, it is only when the well is dry that we know the worth of water. Hence, the SDGs provide a welcome reminder of the importance of water for all aspects of our economic development.

With 2.3 billion cubic metres of water per capita, Tanzania does not lack water. What we lack are the systems and infrastructure to store and efficiently utilise water. Over 80 percent of the rain that falls in Tanzania is never touched for any productive or social purposes. In areas where economic activity – and particularly agriculture – has developed more intensively, the challenges of low storage and inefficiency are resulting in water resources being stretched to their environmental limits.

This creates risks for a diverse mix of water-using stakeholders, including commercial agricbusinesses, smallholder farmers, hydro-power providers, industries, pastoralists, wildlife reserves, municipal water providers and communities. Yet, as the risks grow, so does the understanding of the need to work together, across sectors and stakeholder groups, to find common solutions to the water challenge.

One important recent effort to address this challenge is through the Tanzania 2030 Water Resources Group (2030 WRG) partnership, which brings together stakeholders to find joint solutions to the country’s water challenges. As chairman of this partnership, I have observed the alignment of interest between government, the private sector and civil society on the issue of water resource management. This alignment creates opportunities for innovative joint solutions.

To give one example, in the north of Tanzania we recently launched a Kilimanjaro Water Stewardship Platform. This initiative is uniting the Pangani Basin Water Office together with actors from the horticulture and sugar industries, development partners, NGOs and others, to develop, coordinate and scale up solutions to tackle the growing water resource challenges in the Pangani basin.

More than 95 percent of smallholder farmers in Tanzania do not have access to irrigation

Dar es Salaam, Saturday, 16 July 2016

The author is chairman of the National Water Board and the Tanzania 2030 Water Resources Group partnership.