**Speaker Notes**

**Remo Moyo – Head Public Sector**

**CIGFARO Break Away Session 2019**

***Welcome Sponsor Address***

Good day ladies and gentlemen. It’s once again my privilege to welcome you, on behalf of Nedbank as sponsor of this event, to the 2019 conference of the Chartered Institute of Government Finance, Audit and Risk Officers.

As a provider of primary transactional banking and finance services to the eThekwini, Ekurhuleni, and City of Cape Town local authorities, Nedbank has first-hand experience and insight into the immense value that can be unlocked when public and private sector entities partner together to achieve shared objectives, goals and visions.

And there are few objectives today that are more important than ensuring our country and its people enjoy a water secure future.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am absolutely sure that there is no one in this room that doesn't have a clear understanding of the fact that water is, arguably, the world's most precious resource in that it is essential not only for human survival, but for public health, food supply and sustained economic growth and development.

As far back as 2012, the World Economic Forum highlighted water security as the second most significant risk to the planet and its people. As a water scarce country, South Africa is especially exposed to the potentially devastating risks of water shortages, as has been clearly demonstrated by the water shortage crises that have crippled many cities and regions across our country in recent times.

However, while we all know that water is so absolutely essential, the problem seems to be, that most of us get so caught up in all our day-to-day tasks and challenges that we continually fall into the trap of forgetting that all the water that will ever exist on our planet already does, and that we have a massive responsibility to protect it in order to ensure the very survival of our societies.

The US scientist, Dr. Nathan W. Snyder, summed it up simply, but perfectly, when he said"Water is the most basic of all resources. Civilizations grow or wither depending on its availability."

If that brief quote doesn't adequately set the tone for, and importance of, what we are here to discuss today, then nothing will.

As the theme of this year's conference implies, access to clean, life-giving water is the constitutional right of every South African. But while that word 'constitutional' implies that such water access is primarily a government responsibility, we at Nedbank believe that we all share the responsibility of making sure that individuals, families, and communities in our country are never faced with either a life threatening shortage of drinking water, or a situation in which water has become so expensive that only the wealthy are able to afford it anymore.

And this shared responsibility becomes even more important during difficult economic times such as South Africa and, indeed, many other parts of the world are currently experience. It's a sad reality that poor economic growth most often creates the greatest challenges for the poorest members of society. But, however difficult it is to accept, it is a reality in our society - and that places even more of a responsibility on us all to ensure that we make every effort, and every investment, we can to protect all members of South African society from the hardships that will almost certainly accompany a severely water constrained future, should that become the reality in our country.

We at Nedbank have long embraced this responsibility that we share to help secure our country's water future. Over the past two decades, water stewardship and investment has been a key element of our commitment to contributing to the sustainable futures of all South Africans. And since, 2016, when we formalised our purpose as a bank to use our financial expertise to do good for individuals, families, businesses and society, we have constantly stepped up our water stewardship commitment.

Just some of our efforts, commitments and investments in this regard have included:

* Our long-standing partnership with, and financial support of, the WWF-SA Water Balance Programme. Since 2011 we have partnered with WWF-SA on this essential programme, and provided more than R12m in funding support to enable the clearing of alien invasive flora in vital water catchment areas.
* Our support of the WWF Nedbank Green Trust through which more than R47m has been invested in 23 national water stewardship and conservation projects over the past five years.
* Our Corporate Social Investment support of a variety of water access projects, including the donation of water filters to water-stressed communities to ensure access to safe, clean drinking water.
* And of course, our own ongoing commitment to reducing water usage in our Nedbank operations through staff awareness and investment in water saving technologies.

But while Nedbank is investing increasing amounts of human, intellectual and financial resources into a more water secure future, we recognise that the positive results of all these efforts are compounded when we work with like-minded organisations and entities, and particularly our country's public sector bodies.

Ladies and gentlemen, the bottom line is that a water secure future starts with such a commitment from all of us.

There is an African proverb that says: "Water that has been begged for does not quench the thirst."

It is our shared responsibility to safeguard access to water for all South Africans and to make sure that our country never finds itself in a situation where any of its people are forced to 'beg' for the water that is rightfully theirs.

As a caring bank with a purpose to do good, Nedbank is ready to partner with our national, provincial and local governments, and to invest in the policies, plans, infrastructure and capacity development needed to ensure that this is never the case.

Thank you.