



ZAMBEZI WATERCOURSE COMMISSION



THE ZAMBEZI

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Zambezi Watercourse Commission to be fully operational in 2014

by Admire Ndhlovu

THE LONG-AWAITED policy organ of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM), the Council of Ministers, was constituted this year, thus completing all levels of the structure and enabling the full operations of the permanent commission in 2014.

ZAMCOM is a river basin organization established by the countries that share the Zambezi River Basin "to promote the equitable and reasonable utilization of the water resources of the Zambezi watercourse as well as the efficient management and sustainable development thereof", as stipulated in the 2004 ZAMCOM Agreement and in accordance with the revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses of 2000.

ZAMCOM is governed by three organs - the Council of Ministers, the ZAMTEC, and the Secretariat.

The Council of Ministers is the decision-making arm, while ZAMTEC is a technical advisory committee. The Secretariat (ZAMSEC) headed by an Executive Secretary provides overall management, supported by a Project Implementation Unit and working groups components.

The Zambezi River Basin stretches across part of eight SADC Member States - Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The ZAMCOM Council is the apex of the governing bodies of the Commission.

The Council's tasks include adopting policies and decisions, providing guidance, approving and overseeing the implementation of the Commission's plans, programmes and projects.

The Council is responsible for approving annual budgets and accounts of ZAMCOM, as well as determining the annual contribution of each Member State towards the budget.

The inaugural meeting of Council held on 29 May in Luanda elected Angola to serve as the first Chair, with Botswana as vice-chair until the next annual ordinary session in 2014.

In acceptance remarks, Angola's Minister of Energy and Water, Hon. João Baptista Borges, said among the many decisions that Council is expected to take is around key issues that affect more than 40 million people who live in the River Basin, particularly issues related to climate change and variability adaptation.

The inaugural meeting of the Council of Ministers was heightened with the announcement by Zambia, the only country that did not yet sign the ZAMCOM Agreement, that it is ready to accede to the agreement. The Malawian cabinet is reportedly considering to accede to the agreement accordingly. □





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The newsletter is published under the Zambezi Environment Outlook Project with the aim of informing people about the state of the environment in the Zambezi River Basin and promoting good environmental stewardship in the SADC region.

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EDITORIAL

EQUITABLE AND sustainable utilization and management of transboundary water resources depends on the existence of agreed institutional structures, sound policies, a legal framework, and awareness among the stakeholders.

The establishment of institutional structures for the permanent Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) Secretariat through the ZAMCOM Agreement, is therefore a great achievement in the history of the management of resources in the Zambezi River Basin.

The requisite ZAMCOM organs now in place are the Council of Ministers and the ZAMCOM Technical Committee (ZAMTEC), except for the ZAMCOM Secretariat which is to be established soon and replace the Interim ZAMCOM Secretariat.

The Council of Ministers was constituted in Luanda, Angola in May 2013, following formalization of the ZAMTEC in November 2012 in Gaborone, Botswana.

The Zambezi Watercourse Commission whose headquarters will be based in Zimbabwe, will execute more sustainable operations and greater stakeholder ownership over implementation of the river basin management functions, and strengthen effective integration with national systems, as well as implementation of the Zambezi strategy for Integrated Water Resources Management.

ZAMCOM was created to serve as the water management organization for the entire Zambezi River Basin, as specified in the ZAMCOM Agreement of July 2004.

The ZAMCOM Agreement entered into force in June 2011 after six of the eight Basin states completed their ratification processes and deposited their ratification instruments with the SADC Secretariat. The interim ZAMCOM secretariat has been hosted by Botswana since May 2011 until December 2013.

ZAMCOM was established in accordance with the revised SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses signed in 2000, which entered into force in 2003 and provides a framework for the negotiation of river basin agreements.

The ZAMCOM Agreement is based on solid principles and inclusivity, following comprehensive discussions at national and regional level with relevant stakeholders to meet its main objective "to promote the equitable and reasonable utilization of the water resources of the Zambezi watercourse as well as the efficient management and sustainable development thereof."

The sustainable utilization of the water resources of the Zambezi River Basin supports the communities within the Basin and impacts on the other natural resources that define the Basin's economic activities such as agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism.

The establishment of the permanent Zambezi Watercourse Commission in Zimbabwe from January 2014 is another major achievement in southern Africa and a significant step towards sustaining and protecting the resources to meet the needs of current and future generations, and the replenishment of the natural environment.

The Zambezi / O Zambeze

Volume 8.2 for July-December 2013, produced in English and Portuguese, highlights key issues in the basin, noting opportunities and challenges to the environment and humanity.

Reduced rainfall predicted for the Zambezi River Basin

by Neto Nengomasha

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated in 2007 that rainfall across the Zambezi River Basin will decrease by 10-15 percent over the next century.

The predicted decrease in rainfall is associated with a reduction in the number of rainy days and average intensity of rainfall.

The IPCC has categorized the Zambezi River Basin as exhibiting the “worst” potential effects of climate change among 11 major sub-Saharan African river basins and predicted that it will experience substantial reduction in rainfall.

With the increased frequency and severity of drought, an integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and modern technologies is required in national meteorological and hydrological services as well as strengthening the cooperation of these services with civil protection and disaster risk management units.

Assessments on hydropower development projects in the Basin indicate that none of them, current or proposed, has seriously incorporated considerations of climate change impacts into project design or operation, despite a history of economically devastating droughts and floods that are predicted to become more common in future.

The Southern Africa Environment Outlook 2008 indicated that water levels in Kariba Dam dropped by 11.6m between 1981 and 1992 due to a series of droughts, affecting the dam’s capacity to generate hydropower.

Drought-induced crop failures have been the most common disasters experienced in Zambia in the recent past, according to a 2010 report on climate change in the Zambezi Basin.

In Malawi, fish production has decreased over the years as a result of variations in water levels in natural water bodies, lake water temperatures, surface wind and rainfall.

The Namibian Meteorological Services reported that the 2012/2013 rainy season was among the driest on record, and in May 2013 it was reported that Angola and Namibia have been hit by one of the worst droughts in 30 years, with the associated threat of hunger, malnutrition, disease and loss of livelihoods.

Reduced rainfall in Angola has resulted in a gradual decline of the underground watertable and many rivers are slowly drying, hence an estimated 40-50 percent of water points are no longer functioning.

As projections are pointing to an increase in drought occurrences in the Basin, riparian states and communities need to be more prepared so as to reduce the impact on people and animals as well as the environment.

An improvement in the early warning systems on droughts is one practical method that can be used to monitor current weather systems using climate projections to detect occurrence of such drought events.

Most rural communities in the Zambezi River Basin have been using indigenous knowledge systems to predict drought.

For example, when the leaves of mupfuti (*brachystegiaboehmii*) trees begin to wither and peel off, it means that a dry spell is imminent.

The Zambezi Basin States have started putting in place measures to adapt to the impacts of drought, including key strategies such as the restoration of degraded lands, use of drought resistant varieties, water harvesting, use of irrigation and seasonal forecasts to optimise farm management. □

Women manage wetlands sustainably as primary users

WOMEN CONTRIBUTE significantly to the management of wetlands as the primary users and managers of aquatic ecosystems.

In many different communities across the Basin, women are responsible for water collection, cultivation and food gathering especially in rural and peri-urban settings.

During the dry periods when water is scarce, women and children usually cultivate in wetland ecosystems since the areas provide enough moisture and fertile soils for agricultural crops.

Local farmers from the Simlemba Wetlands in Malawi, of which the majority are women, have developed sustainable strategies that allow the community to use surrounding dambos and vleis without destroying the productive ecosystems, as manifested in many different wetland ecosystems throughout the Basin.

Various studies around the Basin have revealed that women gain access to these lands by entitlement rather than by right.

Although an often acceptable mode of management in traditional systems, there is a need for gender mainstreaming in water resources management, as women in the communities have valuable knowledge that should be incorporated into the management of wetlands and passed on to the next generation.

Combining policy instruments such as the Ramsar Convention that aims to promote the wise use of wetlands and the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) Gender and Water Strategy with local initiatives, would see more women in the Basin playing a recognized role in wetland ecosystem management.

Wetland ecosystems are a valuable resource in the Zambezi River Basin since they support a variety of activities such as fishing, agriculture, hunting and ecotourism, and provide unique habitats for a variety of wildlife species.

The Basin is endowed with many wetlands including the Barotse floodplains that regulate river flow, the East Caprivi floodplains of Namibia that support people and their livestock, the Kafue flats in Zambia, Muzarabani in Zimbabwe, Elephant Marsh in Malawi and Marromeu Complex in Mozambique, all vital to human livelihoods.

The wetlands act as sponges holding back some water that percolates into the ground and contributes to underground water. Vegetation and plants in marshes and swamps control erosion as roots hold the soil and trap sediments. □

¹ IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007

² Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS), *Responding to Climate Change Impacts: Adaptation and mitigation strategies as practiced in the Zambezi River Basin, 2010*

³ Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and Heinrich Boll Stiftung (HBS), *Responding to Climate Change Impacts: Adaptation and mitigation strategies as practiced in the Zambezi River Basin, 2010*

⁴ SARDC, SADC, ZAMCOM, GRID-Arendal and UNEP, *Zambezi River Basin Atlas of the Changing Environment, 2012*



Zimbabwe to host the ZAMCOM Headquarters

Harare, Zimbabwe is one of several cities located in the Zambezi River Basin.

THE COUNCIL of Ministers of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission has endorsed the recommendation of the ZAMCOM Technical Committee to accept Zimbabwe's bid to host the ZAMCOM Headquarters from January 2014.

The Interim ZAMCOM Secretariat has been based in Gaborone, Botswana since its inception in 2011.

The main objectives of the interim secretariat, established in May 2011, were to kickstart the operationalization of the ZAMCOM agreement, as well as to support the establishment of the Commission's requisite organs, that include the permanent Secretariat.

Bidding for the hosting of the ZAMCOM Headquarters commenced in mid-2012 and the recommendation to accept Zimbabwe's bid was made following discussion of an evaluation report by the second ZAMCOM Technical Committee (ZAMTEC) meeting held at end of March 2013 in Maputo, Mozambique.

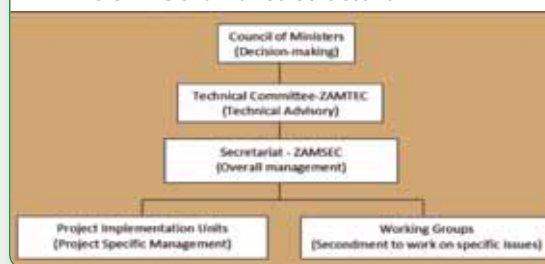
The establishment of the Headquarters will see ZAMCOM consolidating its governance bodies and strengthening its ability to deliver projects on the ground.

The ZAMCOM Secretariat will be headed by an Executive Secretary who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the commission, including facilitating, coordinating and implementing its activities as approved by Council.

The Executive Secretary must report annually to ZAMTEC on the activities of ZAMSEC as well as the programmes and projects planned, initiated or implemented; and must also report annually to the SADC Secretariat.

Shared management of the Zambezi Basin can bring immense benefits to its population. For example, communities that are frequently affected by floods can benefit from the sharing of hydrological data. □

ZAMCOM Governance Structure



Review process begins for *Zambezi Environment Outlook*

A NEW report on the Zambezi River Basin has been drafted for review early in 2014 after initial research was undertaken this year.

The *Zambezi Environment Outlook* covers a range of topics in the Basin from an environmental perspective, including agriculture, energy, tourism, water resources and human settlements, and emerging challenges such as climate change.

This initiative responds to the need to maintain the environmental state, trends and outlook under constant check as the Basin faces challenges due to climate change and variability, and other natural and human causes.

A stakeholder consultative process for the report was initiated at a conference where key issues were discussed, held in May 2013 in Windhoek and opened by the Namibian Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Hon. John Mutorwa.

Minister Mutorwa described the Zambezi Basin as a vital resource that holds potential for closer cooperation of the eight riparian states in areas of environmentally sustainable governance, agriculture, cultural heritage preservation, and socio-economic development, adding that such cooperation promotes peace, security and economic growth for all of the countries.

The Minister urged decision-makers at all levels and sectors to make use of factual and objective scientific research and analysis to address climate change and its impacts, and he called on all stakeholders to take positive action towards integrated development and management of the environment, water and other natural resources in the Basin.

Noting that the conference occurred at a time when Namibia was experiencing drought in some areas while floods in Caprivi near the Zambezi River have displaced communities and destroyed crops, Minister Mutorwa said, "We thus need to



Hon. John Mutorwa
Minister of Agriculture,
Water and Forestry of
Namibia

urgently find appropriate strategies, individually and collectively, to sustain and protect these resources so that they continue to meet the current needs as well as those of generations to come."

Speaking at the same conference, the Executive Secretary from the Interim ZAMCOM Secretariat, Michael Mutale, stressed the importance of stakeholder engagement through working together and sharing information, noting that stakeholder consultation and review are key to successful environmental assessment and reporting.

Mutale said the report will help to inform the process of developing the Zambezi Strategic Plan as well as contributing to the Zambezi Water Information System functional mandate.

The stakeholder review will include a conference during the first quarter of 2014, following production of the draft chapters prepared from contributions by experts in the Zambezi River Basin, under an initiative by ZAMCOM and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), implemented by the I Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa, an institute of the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, with support from development agencies listed on page 8 of this publication.

Zambezi Environment Outlook, to be launched in 2015, will provide various scenarios for the Zambezi River Basin with regard to the environment and related socio-economic issues, and aims to generate awareness among stakeholders about the need to take positive action towards addressing environmental challenges. r



Michael Mutale,
E S from Interim
ZAMCOM Secretariat

SARCOF

Outlook for rainfall season in Zambezi Basin

CLIMATE EXPERTS have forecast a good rainfall season in most parts of the Zambezi Basin during the 2013/2014 agricultural season.

The 17th Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF 17) that met in Zimbabwe in August this year, subdivided the coming rainfall season into four overlapping three-month periods.

These are October-November-December (OND), November-December-January (NDJ), December-January-February (DJF) and January-February-March (JFM).

According to the forecast, good (normal to above-normal) rains are expected in the OND outlook period.

Areas with increased chances of receiving such sufficient rains for the cropping season include northern, central and southern Mozambique, northern and southern Tanzania, northern and southern Malawi, south-western half and northern half of Zimbabwe, extreme south-western, northernmost and most of Zambia.

With this outlook report, it can be interpreted that much of the Basin will have a good planting season although the temporal and spatial distribution of these rains cannot be determined.

According to the Acting Director at the Zimbabwe Meteorological Services Department, Elliot Bungare, "the forecast does not indicate the date of the onset of the rainfall season."

Other areas with a likelihood of receiving enough rains for the agricultural season are the south-eastern, south-easternmost and north-western half of Angola, bulk of Namibia and Botswana.

Agronomists present at SARCOF 17 however advised farmers in areas likely to receive good rains that they still have to balance

crops between the late maturing seed varieties and the early maturing ones so as to cater for uncertainties in the weather patterns.

Planting both early and late maturing varieties is said to guarantee farmers a fair harvest in the event of a deficit in amount of rains in such areas.

Areas with increased chances of receiving less (normal to below-normal) amounts of rainfall are the south-westernmost Angola and western coastal areas of Namibia.

In such areas, the early maturing seed varieties will be the most ideal as they usually take shorter time periods to mature.

In the NDJ period, much of the Zambezi River Basin is likely to receive enough rains while the northernmost, the south-western Angola and western fringes of Namibia are likely to receive less rainfall than normally expected.

Much of the Zambezi River Basin is likely to receive good rains during December 2013 to February 2014.

However, south-western Angola, most of Namibia, and western half of Botswana, have a greater chance of receiving heavy (above-normal to normal) rainfall while the eastern half of Tanzania is likely to receive less rains in the same period.

For the period January to March 2014, areas with increased chances of receiving good rains include the northernmost of Tanzania, southern Zambia, southern Malawi, northern and southern half of Zimbabwe, southern and central parts of Mozambique, eastern half of Botswana, south-westernmost and northernmost of Angola, and western fringes of Namibia.

Judging from this outlook, there is a high possibility for a good harvest in much of the areas likely to receive normal to above-normal and above-normal to normal rains.

Areas with increased chances of receiving heavy rainfall such as northern Mozambique, bulk of Tanzania, northern Malawi, northern and western Zambia, bulk of Angola, most of Namibia, and western half of Botswana may have a bumper harvest if crop yields are not affected by floods.

Climate experts were quick to mention the high likelihood of floods in such areas as this has been the usual experience in the past. The low-lying areas of the Zambezi Basin usually suffer from floods in the event of the rains exceeding the normal.

The disaster management units in these areas were urged to come up with disaster plans in place as a way of preparing for any eventuality, as the cycle of flooding and droughts is ongoing with the latter often taking longer to be identified.

The scientists took into account that El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is going to be in neutral phase with a bias towards a weak La Niña during most of the rainy season.

Country specific outlooks will be issued by the respective National Meteorological and Hydrological Services departments in all the riparian states and users of weather information are strongly advised to contact them for interpretation of this outlook, additional guidance and updates.

The 17th SARCOF was held on 28-30 August to present a consensus outlook for the 2013/2014 rainfall season over the SADC region. □

Fig 1: Rainfall forecast for October-November-December 2013



Fig 2: Rainfall forecast for November-December 2013-January 2014



Fig 3: Rainfall forecast for December 2013-January-February 2014

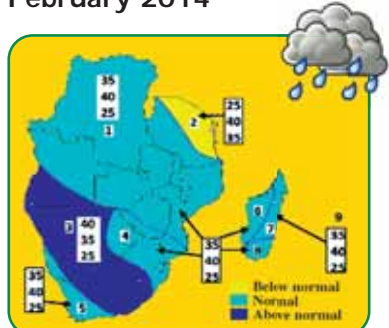


Fig 4: Rainfall forecast for January-February-March 2014



Three numbers for each zone indicate probability of rainfall. Top number is probability of rainfall normal-to-above-normal, middle number is normal rainfall and bottom number is below-normal rainfall.



Zambezi Basin tourism benefits from UNWTO assembly

by Neto Nengomasha

THE UNITED Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) General Assembly co-hosted by Zambia and Zimbabwe in August 2013 opened possibilities for tourism to contribute more to economic development and improve community livelihoods in the Zambezi River Basin.

Among the key outcomes from UNWTO is the elevation of Zimbabwe as chairperson of the UNWTO Africa Commission and election into the highest decision-making body, the Executive Council, at the same time as taking up the co-presidency of the organization together with Zambia.

UNWTO Secretary General, Taleb Rifai said that Zimbabwe and Zambia should use their new status to tap into the international tourist arrivals and transform their successful hosting gains to further develop tourism and promote their markets.

The delegates discussed various issues relevant to tourism development such as the visa facilitation and air connectivity which are essential to the revival of the tourism industry in the Basin.

The general assembly recognized the link between travel facilitation and tourism development as a tool for stimulating sustainable tourism demand.

UNWTO defines connectivity as one of its policy priorities alongside visa facilitation and fair taxation. It is working with the International Civil Aviation Organization in advancing these issues as well as those related to addressing climate change, the modernization of aviation regulations and the development of convergent rules for traveller and enterprise protection.

The Zambian Minister of Tourism and Arts, Sylvia Masebo said that efforts were already underway to ensure that benefits of tourism do cascade to all citizens.

The need to improve on domestic tourism is considered critical as research has shown that domestic tourism is the mainstay of economic activities in many countries.

"In this vein, I wish to call for increased support for sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity building that promote environmental awareness, ecosystems and cultural diversity, and improve the welfare and livelihoods of

local communities by supporting their local economies and the human and natural environment as a whole," President Michael Sata of Zambia said at the opening session.

Leaders in the Zambezi River Basin expressed their willingness to support the growth of tourism as the issues of visa regimes and the need for expanding the system of one-stop border posts gathers momentum.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, also speaking at the opening, underscored the need for open borders through regional block visas commonly known as the Univisa to promote intra-African travel as well as making it easier for investors and visitors.

Mugabe called for a seamless border between Livingstone and Victoria Falls beyond the general assembly as this will ultimately improve economic and social integration in the Basin.

SADC chairperson, President Joyce Banda of Malawi, promised to take the issue of the SADC Univisa to the next level during her tenure as the SADC chairperson.

Members approved a set of recommendations on youth tourism, providing an opportunity for the youths in the Basin to actively participate and engage in tourism activities.

This initiative is expected to contribute to a significant reduction in the high unemployment rates experienced by most riparian states.

Members also recommended that appropriate measures be undertaken to ensure that persons with disabilities have access on equal basis with others to all tourism services and infrastructure.

Apart from the revenue obtained from hosting the General Assembly and the sale of local products during the event, the Zambezi Basin has benefited from the construction and refurbishment of roads, hotels and lodges in Victoria Falls and Livingstone towns respectively.

In addition, the SADC region has received assistance through the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (Retosa) towards the establishment of a Tourism Satellite Accounting System that will help the region account for the full contribution by tourism to national and regional Gross Domestic Product. □





Youth involvement key to sustainable water resources management

by Danai Matwanyika

INVOLVING THE youth in water resources management is key to seeking innovative solutions to emerging and complex challenges of the Zambezi River Basin.

With a fast-changing environment, the Basin States are taking steps to involve the youth at local and national level since they are the future custodians of natural resources.

Young people in the Basin have participated in regional conferences and workshops during 2012/13 to strengthen water management skills.

The 3rd Regional Conference of the Southern African Young Water Professionals held in South Africa in July this year and attended by young professionals from Basin States provided a platform for young researchers and practitioners in the water sector to debate key issues on water resources management.

Later that month youth from the Basin took part in a Global Water Partnership (GWP) conference that was organized in Botswana by the Botswana Youth Water Action Team.

The conference was aimed at getting feedback from youths involved in local and national water initiatives as GWP is preparing its post-2014 Youth and Water Strategy.

The conference accepted the proposed Youth and Water Strategy draft, emphasising the need for clear implementation plans and mechanisms.

This strategy aims to “fully integrate young people in the organization, at all levels, and on a broader scale,” pro-

viding another platform for young people to engage in water management initiatives.

The African Ministers Council of Water (AMCOW) recognized the youth as a key stakeholder group during its 6th Ordinary Session in Brazzaville, Congo in May 2007 and declared that it would “include all stakeholders, especially women, youth and parliamentarians in decision-making at the local level in carrying forward AMCOW’s actions.”

The AMCOW Youth and Water strategy is to be presented later this year and looks to set a post-2015 agenda as a strategy that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Youth of the Zambezi Basin are part of this widespread post-2015 debate whose outcomes are expected to set the precedent for future water strategies locally and regionally.

ZAMTEC has approved the formation of a youth forum for the Zambezi River Basin to strengthen skills and perspectives of the youth as future custodians of the Basin.

Strengthening youth participation, through the formation of water clubs and youth water networks that address water challenges such as water pollution and water scarcity is vital for the advancement of water resources management within the Basin.

Involving the youth, together with other stakeholders in water initiatives will help to build mutual respect, understanding and trust among the Basin states thereby fostering development within the Zambezi Basin. This is supported by the Integrated Water Resources Management Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Zambezi River Basin that recognizes the importance of stakeholder participation, including the youth. □

UNCCD maps way forward on desertification

LAND DEGRADATION and desertification need to be urgently addressed if countries are to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

This was the key message at the 11th Session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held in Namibia in September this year.

Desertification was identified as the greatest environmental challenge facing humankind as it has implications on biodiversity, poverty eradication, socio-economic stability and sustainable development.

The Namibian Minister of Environment and Tourism, Uahekua Herunga who was elected as the new Conference of Parties (COP) president, stressed on the need for desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation to be pushed high on the global agenda and integrated into the post-2015 sustainable development goals framework.

Parties to the UNCCD were urged to take concrete steps to address land degradation and enhance performance in the implementation of the convention’s strategy.

New UNCCD Executive Secretary, Monique Barbut said the UNCCD needs to focus more on various indicators to determine how to approach climate change and land degradation more effectively.

Delegates emphasised the need for parties to develop national drought policies for drought mitigation to improve

long-term preparedness and resilience of farmers and communities to drought.

Such policies should reflect on how women participate in decision-making structures and how they benefit from natural environment resources.

The youth appealed to the leaders to make youth development the centrepiece of sustainable development goals.

Other issues discussed included the need for resources at local level to combat desertification, initiatives that finance community activities, the value of regional approaches in combating desertification, the financing and funding of civil society organizations, and the private sector role in combating desertification.

The summit was held at a time Namibia is experiencing its worst drought in over 30 years. Already, Namibia is making strides in addressing challenges associated with droughts and desertification. The country has since established the Namibian Conservation Parliamentary Caucus (NACO-PAC), comprising of Members of Parliament.

The role of parliaments in environmental conservation was recognized at the ninth Session of the UNCCD Round Table for Parliamentarians held in October 2011 in Changwon, South Korea. □



The Zambezi River

- Is the longest river in southern Africa and fourth longest in Africa after the Nile, the Congo and the Niger.
- Rises on the Central African Plateau in the Kalene Hills in northwestern Zambia and flows 3,000 km to its delta in Mozambique at the Indian Ocean.
- Drains an area of almost 1.4 million sq km, stretching across Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Supports the Victoria Falls, popularly identified as one of the seven natural wonders of the world, as well as Kariba and Cahora Bassa hydroelectric dams and their lakes.

The Zambezi Basin

- Is the largest and most shared river basin wholly within southern Africa.
- Covers about 25 percent of the total geographic area of the eight riparian states.
- Is home to more than 40 million people, projected to reach 51 million by 2025.
- Has many different ethnic groups and cultures with a proud history stretching back thousands of years.
- Hosts urban areas such as Luena in Angola, Kasane in Botswana, Tete in Mozambique, Katima Mulilo in Namibia and Mbeya in Tanzania, almost all urban centres in Zambia including the capital city of Lusaka, all urban areas in Malawi and most in Zimbabwe, including Harare.
- Contains Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa covering 28,000 sq km, Africa's third largest freshwater lake after Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, and the third deepest in the world.



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