

# THE ZAMBEZI

October - November 2002

Volume 4 no 3

## AFRICAN WATER FACILITY LAUNCHED

By Miretsi Mchikufamba and Sirgy Hayora

The Zambezi river basin, home to more than 40 million people in southern Africa is set to benefit from the African Water Facility launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg recently.

The facility aims to increase access to existing and future financing sources for water sector programmes on the continent.

The launch of the facility is an indication that the continent is, for the first time, heading towards integration in the management of its water resources. Although there have been regional initiatives aimed at integrating water resources management, there has never been such an attempt at continental level.

"All regional groupings including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), SADC and the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS), have not taken water seriously and have not had water as a priority for a long time. They have talked about trade, markets and liberalisation but have neglected water,"

Professor Asante, a retired United Nations official said.

The facility is expected to provide support for developing shared river basin visions and activities, such as those of the Zambezi basin. The Zambezi basin is one of the most shared and third largest in Africa after the Congo and Nile basins. It drains a total area of over 1.32 million sq km, stretching across eight countries namely Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Several water initiatives are under way in southern Africa with various groups including government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities playing a leading role in promoting the importance of shared watercourses such as the Zambezi river basin. Initiatives in the Zambezi river basin include SADC's Zambezi Action Plan (ZACPLAN) adopted in 1987. Nineteen projects are expected to be implemented under ZACPLAN including the core project – the Zambezi Action



Former SA President, Nelson Mandela (left), former OAU Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim (centre) and Netherland's Crown Prince of Orange, Willem Alexander opening the Water Dome at the WSSD

D/WAF, South Africa

## El Nino haunts region

By Tafadzwa Sekas

According to weather experts, the region is expected to experience an erratic rainy season with the northern parts expected to receive good rains and even floods while the greater part of the southern areas is projected to receive insufficient rains.

Another drought could spell disaster for the region as it is struggling to deal

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## The Zambezi

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funded State of the Environment Zambezi Basin (SOE Zambezi) project. The aim is to inform people on the state of the environment in the basin and promote good environmental stewardship in the SADC region.

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## EDITORIAL

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSD) reinforced decisions taken by the southern African region to make poverty eradication the number one priority and to deal with issues related to water management in an integrated manner. The Water Dome, one of the major parallel events at the World Summit sought to put water high on the world agenda. And it did. Out of it came the launch of the African Water Facility and the signing of partnership agreements between various organisations and countries. Southern Africa was not to be outdone.

In the Water Dome the role of water at all levels and in every aspect of human endeavor and sustainable development was demonstrated - from safer drinking water and better hygiene to community management; water for food and energy production; water in the environment; and managing water in all sectors at the national and international levels.

The region continued to show its superiority in integrated water management and in strengthening partnerships in the implementation of water related projects, particularly on work in the Zambezi basin, the most shared river course in the region.

State of the Environment Zambezi Basin (SOE Zambezi) project partners took part in showcasing their work during the Summit when they put up displays and organised talks in the Water Dome. The talks focused around the theme 'no water no future' and were discussed within the framework of water and nature. The talks covered the following issues:

- water as an instrument of regional integration;
- water and the food challenge;
- partnerships for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in water resources management;
- water, health and poverty; and
- water and globalisation.

The SADC Environment and Land Management Sector (SADC EIMS), the SADC Water Sector, the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA), IUCN - the World Conservation Union Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) and the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa (IMERCSA) presented the work in the basin.

This partnership, led by SADC's two sectors scored a first for the region when they launched a technical report, the most comprehensive on water resources management to date entitled, *Defining and Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Water Resources Management in Southern Africa*. The report addresses a key SADC objective of achieving sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment.

Some SOE Zambezi project collaborating partners including the Environment Council of Zambia, the Forum for Sustainable Agriculture, Botswana and the Campfire Association, Zimbabwe joined their colleagues in showcasing their work. Apart from distributing their own materials and explaining what they do, the partners demonstrated the importance of partnerships when they displayed some of the SOE Zambezi project materials.

This show of unity in development work must be commended as it helps to achieve more positive results and makes the project more effective and efficient. Some of the results of the WSD, particularly on water issues, could be attributed to SADC's efforts to make water a topical issue and to make the world realise how important water is. Projects such as the SOE Zambezi are a result of the regional body's commitment to seeking ways of using natural resources sustainably and of recognising the importance of shared water courses. The greatest achievement of the WSD is the agreement by more than 100 leaders to eradicate poverty. The leaders pledged to:

- halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015;
- halve the number of people without clean water and adequate sanitation by 2015;
- curb the loss of biodiversity by 2010;
- ensure the safe use of chemicals by 2010;
- restore fish stocks by 2015; and
- increase the use of solar and wind energy.

While the Summit, through these pledges and commitments, fulfilled the expectations of the region's peoples, it remains to be seen if the vows will be converted into action. The children and youth who addressed the Summit talk about being tired of 'buckets and cones'. The children called for action. They correctly noted that very little action has taken place after the promises made 10 years ago.

The setting up of the African Water Facility to help fund projects related to water on the continent is putting words into action. The Facility was launched during the WSD in the Water Dome and its aim is to increase access to existing and future financing sources for water sector programmes on the continent. Projects being implemented in the Zambezi basin are some of the activities set to benefit from this fund.

# As The GMO Debate Continues, Hunger Takes Its Toll

By Leenissa Marjona

The saying that when elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers is proving true in southern Africa where the debate 'to choose' or 'not to choose' Genetically Modified (GM) foods is going on while more than 14 million people face starvation caused by the 2001/02 drought.

Southern African countries including Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe have had a serious drought that has left most of their people without harvests and facing starvation. An appeal for humanitarian assistance estimated at US\$611 million was launched by UN Agencies, particularly the World Food Programme (WFP) and SADC in July. A total of 1.2 million tonnes of cereals is required to avert the crisis.

The United States of America (USA), being WFP's major donor, has offered southern Africa the bulk of the food aid in the form of maize that contains Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). This has created problems for some countries in the region that have had a long-standing ban on GMO imports. Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe have accepted the GM maize from the US due to the gravity of the famine provided it is milled so it cannot be planted.

Zimbabwe cited health concerns and the impact on its beef exports to Europe and yet it has almost half the population that requires food aid in the region. Other SADC states have also been wary of the impact of GM food on food safety, the environment,



*Irrigation could be the answer to the region's food security situation considering the many rivers and dams southern Africa is endowed with.*

ethical issues, trade with non-GMO partners, and intellectual property rights and access to seeds by small-scale farmers.

The European Union has stated its position regarding GMOs and said that the importation of donated GM maize by some southern African countries from the US will not affect these countries' trade with the Union as long as those exports are not derived from GMOs.

"Rules of the Commission do not impede on beef fed with GM food to be exported to the EU. We do not place restrictions on food derived from animals fed on GM foods. This applies to products produced from GM material and not produced with GMOs because it is believed that the GMOs will not be in the end product," said Ambassador Francesca Mosca, Head of

Delegation of the European Commission in Zimbabwe.

The EU delegation in Zambia concurred with Ambassador Mosca and said in a press statement: "The fact that a country grows GM maize has no impact on its ability to export other agricultural products to the EU."

SADC Executive Secretary, Dr. Prega Ramsamy has pointed out that even the regional body does not have a clear

position on the issue of GMOs and this has contributed to the problems being faced by those that are having to take a decision on whether to accept the GM maize or not.

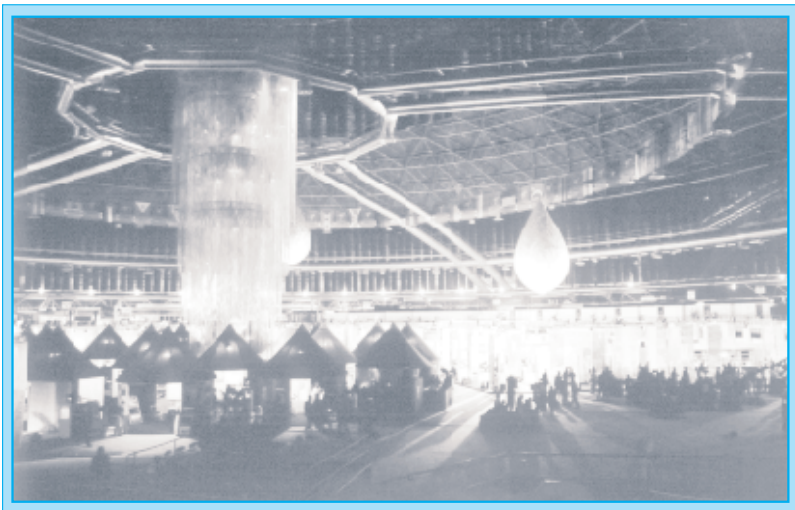
"The absence of a harmonised regional position on GMOs is creating operational problems with regard to movement of food and non-food items, which may contain GMOs. This is particularly serious given the current humanitarian crisis," Dr Ramsamy told journalists in Gaborone, Botswana.

A special meeting of the SADC Post Season Regional Forum held in Lusaka, Zambia in August noted the concerns on GMO maize and their effects and gave its member states the mandate to take individual decisions to either accept or reject GMO foods. In the event that a member state accepts this grain, the following

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## African Water Facility Launched

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The African Village in the Water Dome

Programme. The African Water Facility is expected to benefit such initiatives through financial support.

Launching the facility, Africa's water ambassador and former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Secretary General, Salim Ahmed Salim pointed out that Africa's goal of achieving integrated water resource management cannot be achieved without adequate financial support from the international community.

He said that the facility, launched in the Water Dome, one of the major parallel events at the 10-day WSSD, was an African initiative "meant for Africans".

The facility emanates from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which calls upon governments and donors to enter into partnerships that can effectively solve Africa's water supply and sanitation problems.

The facility has its origins in the need to meet water priorities as identified by NEPAD, the Africa Water Vision and the Accra Stakeholders' Conference of April 2002. The goals of the Africa Water Vision are to:

• reduce by 50 percent the number

of Africans who do not have access to safe drinking water by 2015; and reduce by half the number of Africans who do not have access to sanitation services by 2015.

The Accra Stake-holders' Conference deliberated on the final version of an African Position Paper and Declaration on Water in the continent under the framework of NEPAD and prepared a programme to ensure a high profile for water issues in Africa during the WSSD. The conference was also aimed at writing proposals for effective African participation at the 3rd World Water Forum (WWF) in Japan in 2003.

Africa Water Task Force Chairperson Professor Albert Wright described the

African Water Facility initiative as "an early attempt to translate the lofty NEPAD objectives into action on the ground" and pointed out that, "there is no country that does not share its waters with another."

By providing essential financial support, it is expected that the African Water Facility would promote innovative actions by both countries and donors to assist in building governance of water issues.

A programme of the Africa Water Task Force, the facility will be established next year with a funding requirement of US\$500 million. If successfully raised, this budget is expected to leverage the US\$20 billion per annum that the Africa Water Vision estimates will be needed to meet the continent's water targets for 2025.

The Netherlands, represented at the launch by Crown Prince of Orange, Willem Alexander who is also water advisor to the United Nations, has already provided funding for the formative stages estimated to cost US\$2 million while Canada has pledged US\$10 million to be chan-

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## Recent SADC book launches

Four publications, three of them with an environment bias were launched at the recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) meeting in Luanda, Angola. They are:

- Hirji, R., Johnson P., Maro, P. and Matiza Chiuta, T. (eds). *Defining and Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Water Resources Management in Southern Africa*. SADC, IUCN, SARDC, World Bank: Maseru/Harare/Washington DC, 2002
- The Portuguese version of the State of the Environment Zambezi Basin 2000. Chenje, M (ed). *Estado do Ambiente na Bacia Do Zambeze 2000*. SADC/IUCN/ZRA/SARDC: Maseru/Lusaka/Harare, 2000.
- SARDC-WIDSAA. *Beyond Inequalities: Women in Southern Africa*. SARDC. Harare, 2000. *Para Além Das Desigualdades: a Mulher na África Austral*.
- AMCEN/UNEP. *The Africa Environment Outlook. Past, present and future perspectives*. Earthprint. Hertfordshire, 2002.

# Water Research Fund for Southern Africa Phase II launched

By Jobo Daku

Water research projects in southern Africa are set to benefit from the recently launched US\$1.6 million second phase of the regional Water Research Fund for Southern Africa (WARFSA). The Fund was established to support research projects addressing sustainable utilisation of water resources in the region.

The WARFSA is managed by the Institute of Water and Sanitation Development (IWSD). The IWSD is a Zimbabwean based regional NGO geared to address issues of sustainable development and management of water resources, waste management and environmental integrity through capacity building of national, regional and international institutions.

The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) has made the funds available in response to an increase in demand for research grants covering Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the region.

This has come against a background where research activities in the water sector in most Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries are facing funding constraints. The launch took place in

Harare recently. The Fund will complement the African Water Facility, which was launched during WSSD with the aim of assisting water projects source funding.

The WARFSA second phase launch ceremony was attended by officials from Sida, the Zimbabwean government, SADC Water Sector, Ambassadors and High Commissioners from SADC countries and key water stakeholders.

The first phase of WARFSA was launched in 1999 and was funded to the tune of US\$1.2 million by Sida.

The purpose of the Fund is to build research capacity among institutions and individuals through:

- F promoting and facilitating the implementation of multi-disciplinary research projects in IWRM;
- F encouraging research that leads to

better use of precipitation to increase land productivity or availability of water for domestic use; and

- F promoting the utilisation of research results for decision making aimed at ensuring sustainable development of water resources and management.

The Fund supports research projects in IWRM that fall into any of the following priority research areas:

- F Water use, conservation and technologies.
- F Social, political and economic issues.
- F Policy and legal issues.
- F Promotion of better use of precipitation.

Thirty-five research project proposals from Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe were funded under the first phase. □

## El Nino haunts region

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with a food crisis. More than one million tonnes of cereals are required to feed more than 14 million people affected by the famine. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has launched a joint appeal with the United Nations for international assistance to avert the humanitarian crisis affecting mainly Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

At least US\$611 million is being sought of which about US\$195 million has been secured for food aid and

non-food requirements. Southern African leaders renewed their appeal for international aid during the September SADC Summit.

Experts at the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum which was held in Zimbabwe's capital Harare in September, said the first half of the season - from October to December - will be good for the north while the rest of the region will likely range from normal rainfall to below normal, a factor which may affect plant growth in the early stages of planting.

The second half, from January to March 2003, is expected to be largely normal, with notable exceptions.

"The northern part of the SADC region - much of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Malawi, northern Mozambique, Tanzania and the Island States - are expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall for the period October to December 2002 while the rest of the region is likely to experience normal to below normal rainfall," said a statement from the forum.

"During the period January to March 2003, there are high probabilities of normal conditions across much of southern Africa," the statement said.

The meeting reviewed the state of the global climate system and its impli-

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# A new SADC publication calls for sustainable

By Leonissh Marjona and Miretsi Madakufaita

**S**ustainable water resources management should strike a balance between meeting needs now and protection of the resource base for future needs, says a book recently launched by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The book entitled *Defining and Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Water Resources Management in Southern Africa* points out that effective development and management of water resources are essential for sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

The book, a technical report compiled by water experts from the

region in collaboration with SADC and its partners, addresses a key SADC objective of achieving "sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment" and is one of the materials the regional body showcased at the WSSD.

The main goal of the technical report, is to inform policy and decision makers about the complex biophysical, social

and economic dimensions of environmental sustainability in the water sector and to underscore the fact that sustainable management of water resources must incorporate, at an operational level, the ecological, economic and social considerations into water resources planning and management.

It is the most comprehensive book on water resources management in

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## World Summit commits to environmentally sustainable poverty reduction

**T**he 10-day World Summit on Sustainable Development ended in Johannesburg with a lot of optimism for the future as world leaders reaffirmed their commitments to improving the lives of millions living in poverty while protecting the environment that sustains humanity.

"This Summit will put us on a path that reduces poverty while protecting the environment, a path that works for all peoples, rich and poor, today and tomorrow," said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa was equally optimistic and felt the Summit had met Africa's expectations. He however called for action that will lead to concrete results.

"The agreements reached at this summit should not be a ceiling. A firm platform has been set for action by all stakeholders, from governments to the private sector to the civil society," he said.

Governments agreed on a range of commitments, targets and actions that

directly affect people in southern Africa, as they do millions of others around the world. The Implementation Plan, which is the outcome document the Summit produced, contains a set of targets and the means and ways of achieving them.

Among the targets, says the UN, " is the reduction by half, the proportion of people who lack access to proper sanitation by 2015, restoring depleted fisheries and preserving biodiversity by 2015, phasing out toxic chemicals by 2005, adherence to good governance, promoting corporate responsibility, and reaffirmation to the Rio Principles."

While committing to the increased use of renewable energy, the leaders however, could not set a target for achieving a certain level of renewable energy use and whether countries should establish programmes to improve access to reliable and affordable energy services.

Over 100 world leaders attended the Summit along with more than 60,000 representatives from govern-

ments, NGOs, business, civil society and the media.

Several parallel events were held alongside the Summit, including the Water Dome, which sought to put water high on the world agenda, and the NGO-organised People's Global Forum.

To help achieve the set goals, the Summit agreed to establish a voluntary world solidarity fund, which will see a stronger partnership between governments, civil society groups and business. Several such partnerships signed during the Summit mobilised resources to the tune of US\$235 million while many more were announced outside the formal proceedings of the Summit.

While the Johannesburg Summit was admittedly not a fund-raising forum, the amount secured is only a drop in the ocean considering the billions of dollars needed to reverse and reduce by more than half world poverty while protecting the environment within the stipulated times.

Summit Secretary-General Nitin

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# Sustainable water resources management

southern Africa by SADC and is spearheaded by the two sectors of Environment and Land Management, and Water. It is the outcome of inputs by the regional body's partnership with IUCN - the World Conservation Union Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA), the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa (IMERCSA), the Africa Water Resources Management Initiative (AWRMI) and the Environment Department of the World Bank, with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Lesotho's Natural Resources Minister, Honorable Monyane Moleleki and Honorable Lebohang Nts'inyi, that country's Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, launched the report in their capacities as chairpersons of their respective ministerial committees of SADC. The two hailed the successful partnership noting that the technical report was a SADC contribution to the World Summit and the New Partnership

for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The key messages in the report are that:

- F effective development and management of water resources are essential for sustainable growth and poverty reduction in SADC; and
- F sustainable water resources management must balance between the short-term needs of the people for their social and economic development and the protection of the natural resource base.

The report supports the integration of environmental quality objectives into the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses and the Regional Strategic Action Plan for Integrated Water Resources Development and

Management in the region and demonstrates the linkages between water, environment and poverty.

Management in the region and demonstrates the linkages between water, environment and poverty.

"First, strategies to reduce poverty should not lead to further degradation of water resources or ecological functions and services, and secondly, sustainable water use and improved environmental quality should contribute to reducing poverty," the report says.

The report provides policy guidance, practical approaches and operational tools for developing and managing water, the region's basic and vital resource, in an environmentally sustainable manner. It has brought to fore the importance of downstream communities whose voices are often not heard during the planning and operations of major hydraulic infrastructure. It highlights the importance of community-based water management if sustainable water resources management is to be achieved. It also highlights the importance of considering environmental flow requirements for water, as well as the need to value the resource in economic terms, when planning or operating any hydraulic infrastructure.

The book notes that southern Africa is ahead of other developing regions in the search for environmentally sustainable solutions for managing its limited and fragile water resources.



The Water Dome hosted organisations working to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water by the year 2015.

## Angolan Minister salutes regional partnerships

New chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers, Angola's Minister of Planning, Ana Dias Lourenço has hailed the partnership between the organisation's Sectors of Environment and Water and a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). She was speaking at the regional launch of a technical report, *Defining and Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Water Resources Management in Southern Africa* in Luanda, Angola recently.

"This joint initiative by SADC Sectors of Environment and Water in partnership with ... IUCN – the World Conservation Union and the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), will go a long way towards contributing to our goal of poverty reduction," Lourenço said.

The report was launched during the SADC Summit following the initial launch at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in September in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"The report ... is a significant contribution to the current debate on the search for environmentally sustainable solutions to water resources management problems," said Lourenço, who took over, from Malawian Foreign Affairs Minister Lilian Patel, as chairperson of the Council of Ministers.

Lourenço noted that WSSD put water and sanitation issues at the centre of sustainable development and that world leaders had made firm commitments to seeing more people have access to clean water and sanitation. - SARDC

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## GMO Debate Continues Amid Hunger

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measures were suggested:

- F awareness campaigns should be undertaken to ensure that GMO maize is not planted;
- F member states should ensure that all GMO maize is milled into flour before any distribution to beneficiaries; and
- F member states should develop capacity to deal with the GMO issues particularly for testing and monitoring.

The recent SADC Summit in Luanda, Angola endorsed this decision.

Much as the decision taken by some of the countries in the region to accept

GM maize will help avert a humanitarian crisis, the debate on the safety of GM foods to developing countries continues.

There are suspicions that the US government could be taking advantage of the current food crisis to "dump" GM maize, unwanted by the US market in southern Africa. Although these worries have been dismissed, they should be taken seriously and the governments that have accepted the GM maize would do well to ensure thorough tests are carried out to avoid a worse crisis.

GM technology involves taking genes from one organism and inserting them into another to improve yields by endowing them with specific characteristics, such as resistance to pests and herbicides. It is widely in use in the United States, Canada, and increasingly in Argentina and China. Critics point to concerns over its safety, and the potential impact on the environment. □

## SADC Publication on water management

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However, much needs to be done to have effective policy and an institutional framework and practices that reflect effective integration of sustainable management principles.

The 318-page full colour book is divided into four parts and has 11 chapters that discuss the principal areas of environmental management in relation to the water sector and presents methodologies and approaches to address the major challenges in each of the key areas. It draws lessons and best practice information and recommends specific actions for effectively integrating environmental sustainability. □

## El Nino haunts region

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cations for the region. The meeting took into account principal factors such as sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

Southern Africa has over the years been experiencing the El Nino phenomenon, which has often resulted in extreme weather conditions, causing either drought or floods in some parts of the region, particularly during the second half of the season.

El Nino conditions make it difficult for weather forecasts, prompting experts to be more cautious with their predictions. The El Nino weather pattern takes its name from 'little boy' in Spanish and it results from a warming of ocean waters in the eastern Pacific that occurs every four to five years. It has sparked droughts and floods worldwide.

Southern Africa has not been spared by its negative effects. The 1999/2000 rainy season saw the worst El Nino effects as floods ravaged parts of Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"The region should approach the season with caution since the El Nino climatic condition is present but still weak at this stage," said Siphon Dlamini, Senior Policy Officer of Communications and Meteorology in the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC).

He advised that regular weather updates are necessary in mid-season to better prepare people. Other international experts who attended the forum backed this cautious approach.

The meeting explored ways of providing reliable, relevant and

useful information for disaster management, agricultural production and flood forecasting, among other important issues.

Although last year's rainfall outlook had predicted normal to above normal rainfall for much of the region, the reality on the ground was the reverse with no rain for most of January to March 2002, resulting in a severe drought which affected countries such as Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Close to 14 million people are currently in need of food aid in southern Africa.

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) has confirmed the fears for an El Nino phenomenon but say its effects may be milder than previously.

"The season as a whole is not very favourable. It is not going to be a good rainfall season. It has everything to do with El Nino ... what we are seeing is a typical El Nino relationship with our rainfall," Reuters quoted the SAWS's Emsie Klopper as saying. □

# Zambezi Valley, potential NEPAD project

By Bonifacio Antonio

The Zambezi valley, which forms a major part of the Zambezi river basin is a potential NEPAD project aimed at poverty reduction beyond national borders.

Mozambique's Minister of Industry and Trade, Carlos Morgado pointed out recently that the valley's natural resources offered prospects for sustainable development.

"The agricultural, energy and mineral potential of the Zambezi valley, creates opportunities for sustainable development not only in Mozambique, but in the entire southern African region," he told business leaders at a conference to present the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative to the business community in Mozambique.

With an area of about 1.32 m sq kms, the Zambezi is the most shared basin in southern Africa covering territories of eight states of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi,

Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – with an estimated population of 40 million.

Most of the agricultural practices in the basin are rain-fed but there is potential for irrigation. It is hoped that the newly launched African Water Facility will help finance irrigation ventures in the basin.

In his address to the business forum, the Mozambican minister told the business leaders that "NEPAD is an African initiative, by Africans for Africans" and as such, there was need for a common understanding on its strategies as this was the only way for an effective African integration.

NEPAD was adopted at the last summit of leaders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Zambia in 2001 and launched at the first summit

of the Africa Union in South Africa this year.

The initiative is guided by an implementation committee of Heads of State chaired by President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, supported by a steering committee and secretariat, which have been charged with developing and guiding the implementation of a strategic plan to ensure domestic support in African countries and facilitate public-private sector partnership and international commitment.

NEPAD's objective is: "To consolidate democracy and sound economic management on the continent. Through the programme, Africa's leaders are making a commitment to the African people and the world to work together in rebuilding the continent. It is a pledge to promote peace and stability, democracy, sound economic management and people-centred development, and to hold each other accountable in terms of the agreements outlined in the programme." □

## Zambezi basin under threat from gold panning as drought takes its toll

By Leo Wanzwaka

As the drought that hit southern Africa last year takes its toll, people are resorting to illegal alluvial gold panning to supplement their incomes to buy food. This is posing a serious environmental threat to the Zambezi river basin, the region's most shared water resource.

Large numbers of people crowd along major streams and river banks of the basin in search of the scarce mineral. This has created concern in communities where the activity has been outlawed as environmentally damaging.

Zimbabwe and Mozambique have registered the largest number of gold panners along some of the tributaries to the Zambezi river.

The sudden influx of gold panning activities in the Zambezi basin has been largely attributed to the current drought affecting the southern African region, with six countries of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe being affected and requiring food aid. The situation has been exacerbated by poor macro-economic performance of basin countries.

According to Mr. Donald Rwasoka of EY2k, a youth environment association for University students in Zimbabwe, "one of the results of the current drought is the intensification of illegal alluvial gold panning, which has resulted in serious damage of fauna and riverine ecosystems".

The illegal panning causes soil erosion, diversion of watercourses and deforestation. Some of the prospectors use chemicals as they process the gold and this has fuelled fears of water contamination.

Eight countries namely, Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe share the Zambezi river basin. Gold panning is also prevalent in the other countries, posing a serious threat to the basin.

## African Water Facility Launched

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nelled through the African Development Bank. The European Commission has pledged to support the facility's shared watercourses programme.

The facility recognises the fact that water is a resource that is rarely owned exclusively by one country, and that it is a resource that runs across boundaries, posing potential for conflict. The

Africa Water Task Force in general, and southern Africa in particular, are determined to exploit the trans-boundary nature of the resource and use it as an instrument for regional integration.

As water activist Kunda Chimambo from Zambia points out, it is pointless to have effective water reforms and regulations without proper financial backing. Chimambo who is

Chairperson of Chalimbana River Catchment Conservation Committee in Zambia emphasised the need for change saying: "You cannot go on privatising water in the name of making profits, when poor people cannot afford to pay for the services. We must be careful the way we handle these issues, because issues of water touch on human rights."□

## Africa Environment Outlook Highlights

The *Africa Environment Outlook* (AEO) is one of four publications launched at the recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit in Luanda, Angola. Ana Dias Lourenço, the chairperson of the SADC Council of Ministers and Angola's Minister of Planning launched the report.

The AEO is a continent-wide state of the environment report that is of great importance to the SADC region. The following are some major highlights of the report:

- Sharp increases in air and water pollution and degradation, droughts and wildlife losses which Africa faces unless urgent action is taken to deliver environmentally friendly development.
- Growing populations, wars, high levels of national debt, natural disasters and diseases have all taken their toll on the people and the rich natural environment of Africa over the past 30 years.
- Over the next three decades new and emerging threats, including climate change, the unchecked spread of alien species, uncontrolled expansion of cities and pollution from cars and industry are likely to aggravate levels of poverty, environmental decline and ill-health.
- Many African countries are now attempting to address some of the root causes of environmental degradation through initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). But a far bigger effort, by countries within and outside the continent, is needed to steer Africa on a prosperous, environmentally sustainable, course.
- Action required includes deeper cuts in Africa's debt burden, enforcing environmental agreements, introducing green and clean technologies and allowing African countries fair access to international markets for their goods and services.
- Without this, Africa is unlikely to develop in a way that benefits its people, its landscapes and its wildlife and ultimately the world, the report says.

The *Africa Environment Outlook*, compiled by the United Nations Environment Programme for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), involved hundreds of experts. It is the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of Africa's environment ever produced. Four centres helped to prepare the report. They are:

- The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), southern Africa;
- the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), north Africa;
- the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development (NESDA), west Africa;
- Indian Ocean Commission Regional Environment Programme (IOC-REP), Indian Ocean Islands.

Association pour le Développement de l'Information Environnementale (ADIE) and a consortium of experts coordinated by National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Uganda covered central and east Africa respectively.

## Sustainable Utilisation – Another Way That Works

The belief that sustainable development is pragmatic and good business sense was confirmed during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) when eight small enterprises from southern Africa demonstrated that there are other ways of doing things, apart from polluting and exploiting natural resources.

The businesses, owned by little known entrepreneurs who have often been left out of global forums on trade and economics, were part of an IUCN's initiative that profiled eight entrepreneurs in the hope of showing the world that there are alternatives in running viable businesses, particularly when it comes to sustainable development.

The entrepreneurs have taken it upon themselves to create their own livelihoods.

On a global scale, this "other way" may be far less powerful than the mainstream and less well known. But it works, IUCN – the World Conservation Union, says.

Entire communities find themselves with jobs to go to, incomes to enjoy and a way to pay school fees. They have livelihoods and a sense of purpose. These entrepreneurs have offered the world proof that sustainable development can work. The enterprises featured at the WSSD were from Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Malambe Fruit Juice Company from Malawi is one of the enterprises that took the limelight at the Summit. Carrying the label of the most deforested country in southern Africa, Malawi's resources are under heavy pressure. Indigenous trees are chopped down, turned into charcoal and sold for low prices.

But Malambe Fruit Juice is focusing on the sustainable use of trees, especially the Baobab, and providing economic benefits to the local community. Malambe Fruit Juice enterprise produces a fresh baobab juice - high in calcium and iron, with eight times the Vitamin C of oranges.

Producing over 4, 000 bottles a month, and supplying major stores and hotel chains in Malawi with a fresh and healthy juice, the project provides a sustainable alternative to charcoal as a source of livelihood.

In a country where an estimated 3.2 million people are at risk of starvation due to drought, Malambe Fruit Juice is offering hope and an important source of income to local communities.

In Zambia, besides selling the world's purest honey to some of Europe's finest stores, North Western Bee Products are helping to protect Zambia's dwindling forests and to alleviate poverty in that country.

Last year, 200 tonnes of honey and 50 tonnes of beeswax were produced, 80 percent of which was exported to Europe.

In a country where more than two million people will require food aid to carry them through to the harvest in May next year, enterprises like this are a beacon.

With few other alternatives, people turn to forests for fuel and a small source of income. However, their unsustainable practices merely compound deforestation. Now over 6,000 beekeepers have become guardians of the forests as they follow the traditional methods of beekeeping, hoisting hives high into the trees, which are later climbed to harvest the honey. - IUCN

## World Summit commits to environmentally sustainable poverty reduction

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Desai said, "Many of the new resources (mobilised at the Summit) will attract additional resources that will greatly enhance our efforts to take sustainable development to the next level."

Despite all the optimism, questions were still asked whether countries would now be more determined to shake off the Rio shadow, characterised by lack of implementation of a number of commitments made at the 1992 Earth Summit.

"The issue now is making it happen," said Jacob Nkate, Botswana's Minister of Lands, Housing and Environment.

Civil society groups, which thronged the streets of Johannesburg, made their

feelings known on the lack of commitment by governments to agreed targets. They staged protests, urging governments to be more practical. The activists were sceptic about the new partnerships between governments and business, saying this would offer the latter a back door opportunity to profiteer from the environment.

"This is tantamount to selling off the resources of Planet Earth to big business," said one environmentalist.

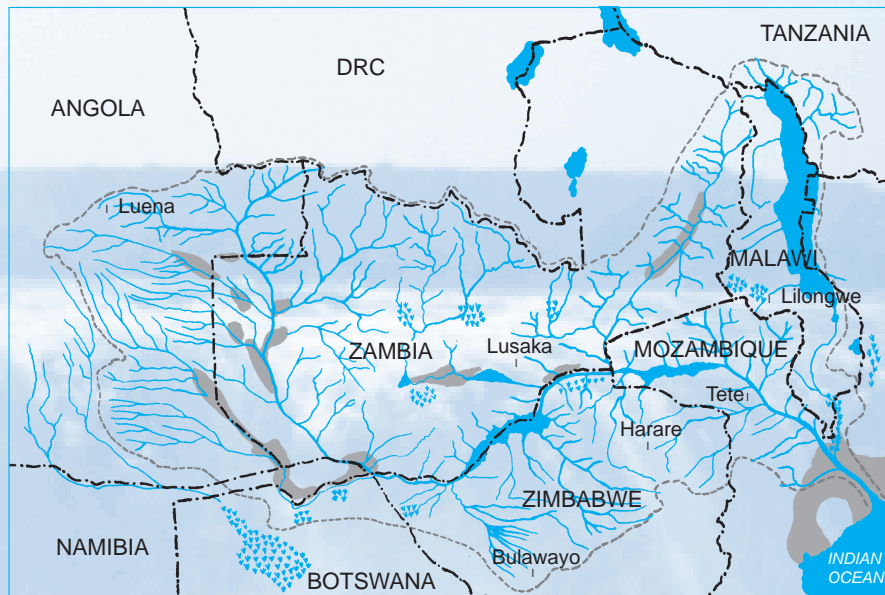
But the leaders would argue that their declaration on strict corporate governance would put a check on irresponsible behaviour from corporate entities.

Mbeki, who is well-known for his demand for more action than words said, "We are ready and prepared to be judged not by the number and eloquence of the resolutions we adopt, but by the speed and commitment with which we implement our agreements that must serve the peoples of the world."

And as he said, millions around the world will be hoping, "for a practical and visible global development process that brings about poverty eradication and human advancement within the context of the protection of the ecology of the Planet Earth."

To emphasise the need for action, Margot Wallström member of the European Commission responsible for Environment wrapped it up when he said: "We have the words. It is now the duty of all of us to turn these words into effective deeds." □

# THE ZAMBEZI



## THE ZAMBEZI BASIN AT A GLANCE

- The Zambezi basin is the most shared in southern Africa and third largest in Africa after the Congo and the Nile.
- The Zambezi drains a total area of over 1.32 million sq kms., stretching across eight countries - Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- The Zambezi river rises on the Central African Plateau in the Kalene Hills in north-western Zambia to its delta in Mozambique before flowing into the Indian Ocean.
- The basin takes up approximately 25 percent of the total geographic area of the riparian countries, estimated at 5.6 million sq kms.
- At least 38.4 million of SADC's estimated 200 million people live within the basin.
- Some of the major urban areas in the basin include Luena in Angola, Kasane in Botswana, all urban centres in Malawi, Tete in Mozambique, Katima Mulilo in Namibia, virtually all urban areas in Zambia including the capital Lusaka, and most of the cities in Zimbabwe, including Harare.
- Victoria Falls, popularly referred to as one of the seven natural wonders of the world, along with lakes such as Kariba and Cahora Bassa which supply electricity to some of the countries in the region, are all located on the Zambezi river.
- The largest natural freshwater lake in the basin is Lake Malawi/Nyasa that covers 28,000 sq kms and is Africa's third largest freshwater lake after Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika.

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