



Could inter-basin water transfers be an alternative to the water level challenges in the Zambezi River Basin?

by Neto Nengomasha

As climate change takes its toll on southern Africa, questions are being asked on whether inter-basin water transfers could be an alternative to address water level challenges in the Zambezi River Basin.

Of particular note is the Congo-Zambezi inter-basin water transfer concept which was discussed during a SADC Joint Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Energy and Water, held from 30 June to 4 July 2025 in Harare, Zimbabwe.

According to the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) Executive Secretary Felix Ngamlagosi, the Zambezi Basin is actively exploring the concept of transferring water from the Congo River to address climate change impacts and improve regional water security.

"ZAMCOM views the Congo-Zambezi inter-basin water transfer as a promising but complex mega project involving multiple countries beyond the basin, requiring consensus and comprehensive studies," he said.

Despite the complexity of a project of this nature, the Executive Secretary highlighted that strong support exists among riparian states and the Southern Africa Development Community has created

a dialogue platform to include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a key participant beyond the Zambezi region.

Information from Engineer Christopher Chisense from Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) indicates that the project concept involves transfer of 16 billion cubic meters of water annually (500m³/s) from the Congo River to Lake Kariba by gravity using 18mm diameter concrete lined tunnels alternating with 40-metre-wide concrete lined canals over a distance approximately 1,000 km long. Completion of this project is estimated at around US\$30 billion.

When asked on the potential benefits of the project, Engineer Chisense hinted that though benefits will vary, "it is generally

agreed that such proposals should be anchored on benefits that accrue to the water-energy-food- environment/ecosystem (WEFE) nexus and thereby offer regional benefits to the member states as well as the whole of southern Africa and ZAMCOM member states."

For instance, in terms of agriculture, "availability and increased water volumes in water scarce basins would have a direct positive impact on farming through expanded irrigation and water supply potentially increasing farming output," said Chisense.

While presenting the concept to the Joint Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Energy and Water, Engineer Elijah Chifamba who is the Lead Consultant for the Pre-Feasibility Study conducted for this initiative highlighted the importance of this mega project to the region.

He said that the project stands to significantly enhance the reliability of water supplies for existing hydropower stations, including Kariba South, Kariba North and Cahora Bassa, during periods of drought and low rainfall.

It is also expected to address a long-standing challenge, namely the high costs of pumping water across vast distances with previous efforts to implement the transfer failing due to enormous energy and operational expenses required for pumping.

"This is a selling point of this project, the water flows by gravity. There are no operating costs, no pumping stations, and it creates opportunities for hydropower generation at Lake Kariba and Lake Cahora Bassa," said Chifamba

As a way forward, the SADC Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat to develop a comprehensive programme for this project and the Grand Inga Hydropower Project, integrating these initiatives with the new SADC Regional Water Policy to enhance water security and manage shared resources.

Regional experts are expected to conduct comprehensive technical assessments, environmental and social impact studies, and an economic and financial viability analysis.

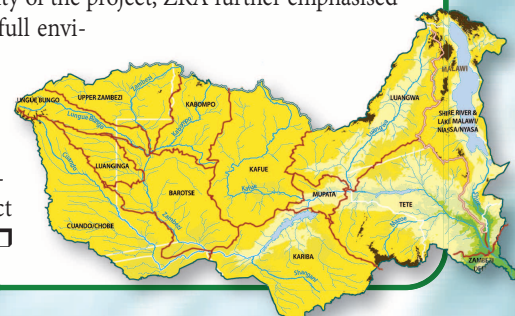
To ensure acceptability of the project, ZRA further emphasised the need to undertake full environmental, social and economic studies to adequately inform on the respective risks, impacts and mitigation during and after project implementation stages. □



Kariba Dam is a major source of electricity for both Zambia and Zimbabwe



Communities using innovative drip irrigation from solar powered boreholes in Kariba.





ZAMBEZI Today is published by the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) in partnership with the National Multi-Sectoral Stakeholders Coordination Committees (NAMSCs) in the Zambezi Riparian States. The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) is contracted to produce the Newsletter.

ZAMCOM
Executive Secretary
Mr. Felix M. Ngamlagosi

Programme Manager
Information, Communication
and Partnerships
Ms. Leonissah Abwino-Munjoma

Partners
National Multi-Sectoral Stakeholders
Coordination Committees (NAMSCs)

SARDC/ZAMCOM
Editorial Team
Neto Nengomasha, Clarkson Mambo,
Leonissah Munjoma, Fauny Mawere

Design
Tonely Ngwenya SARDC

Photos and Illustrations
P1 ZRA, World Vision;
P2 ZAMCOM; P3 ZAMCOM; P4 ZAMCOM;
P5 Agrimonitor, ZRA, Crop pro Zambia limited,
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Correspondence should be addressed to:
ZAMBEZI Today
Zambezi Watercourse Commission
128 Samora Machel Avenue
P O Box CY118
Harare, Zimbabwe
Website www.zambezicommission.org

Tel +263-4-253361/2/3
E-mail zamcom@zambezicommission.org



ZAMCOM Executive Secretary
Mr Felix Ngamlagosi

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY DESK

The Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) is guided by its Strategic Plan (2018–2040), which seeks to foster infrastructure investments that drive economic growth and enhance resilience across the Zambezi basin. The plan identifies 282 priority projects, including hydropower and irrigation initiatives, designed to strengthen regional integration and deliver shared benefits among riparian states. To realize this vision, ZAMCOM continues to collaborate with strategic partners, including the private sector, to accelerate the development of essential infrastructure.

To ensure inclusivity and broad participation, ZAMCOM works through its National Multi-Sectoral Stakeholders Coordination Committees (NAMSCs) and the Watercourse-wide Multi-Sectoral Stakeholders Coordination Committee (WMSC), which coordinate activities at all levels. These mechanisms help link basin-level initiatives with national governments and local communities, ensuring that projects respond to local priorities while building resilience to climate shocks. In parallel, ZAMCOM is implementing several initiatives to strengthen institutional capacity, promote climate resilience, and develop integrative planning tools for managing the interlinked water, energy, food, and environmental systems.

Recognizing the increasing impacts of droughts and the need to stabilizing hydropower generation, ZAMCOM and its partners view inter-basin water transfers as a key strategy to address water scarcity. Riparian States have expressed strong support for this initiative, with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) standing ready to facilitate inclusive dialogue among stakeholders. While preliminary or pre-feasibility studies have been undertaken, ZAMCOM is eager to work with partners on comprehensive feasibility studies to inform the design and implementation of these transformative projects.

A central focus for ZAMCOM remains the promotion of integrated approaches to balance the complex interdependencies among water, energy, food, and ecosystems within the Zambezi Basin. Experience has shown that stakeholder-driven approaches yield the most effective and sustainable outcomes in relation to collaboration and sustainable resource management. For example, initiatives such as GoNEXUS have demonstrated the value of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) nexus approach in enhancing resource diversification, improving natural resource management, and building resilience to climate change.

To complement these efforts, ZAMCOM is collaborating with development agencies to formulate a Groundwater Strategy that optimizes the use of groundwater resources. This initiative is both timely and necessary, given the Basin's growing investment gap in groundwater development and management, exacerbated by climate change, population growth, and unsustainable practices. These pressures threaten not only groundwater availability but also hydropower generation and agricultural productivity, sectors that are vital to the region's economic and social well-being.

ZAMCOM therefore recognizes that investments grounded in Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles are essential to bridging this gap. Such investments promote equitable access to water, enhance economic productivity, and strengthen ecosystem resilience, ultimately ensuring that groundwater becomes a cornerstone of long-term regional security, sustainability, and prosperity. □



GEF Grant Marks New Chapter for Zambezi Watercourse Management

by Clarkson Mambo

THE ZAMBEZI River Basin straddles over eight Southern African countries, hosting very important and valuable natural resources and is a lifeline for over 51 million people (2025), providing water, food, energy and biodiversity.

The basin is however vulnerable to climate-induced droughts and floods, pollution, and land degradation, which threaten its capacity to provide sustainable water, food, energy and ecological services.

To address these challenges, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has allocated US\$10.6 million grant which will be complemented by additional funding from the eight Zambezi riparian states, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other partners, to undertake a transformative project through the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) to help the river and its people not just survive but thrive.

ZAMCOM Executive Secretary, Felix Ngamagosi said the grant will fund a project “to enhance multi-sectoral planning, data sharing, and institutional capacity across water, energy, food and environment sectors.”

“The project targets institutional strengthening of ZAMCOM and partners like the Zambezi River Authority to improve coordinated basin management,” he said.

“It will develop integrative business planning tools that incorporate data from hydrology, energy, agriculture, and environmental monitoring.”

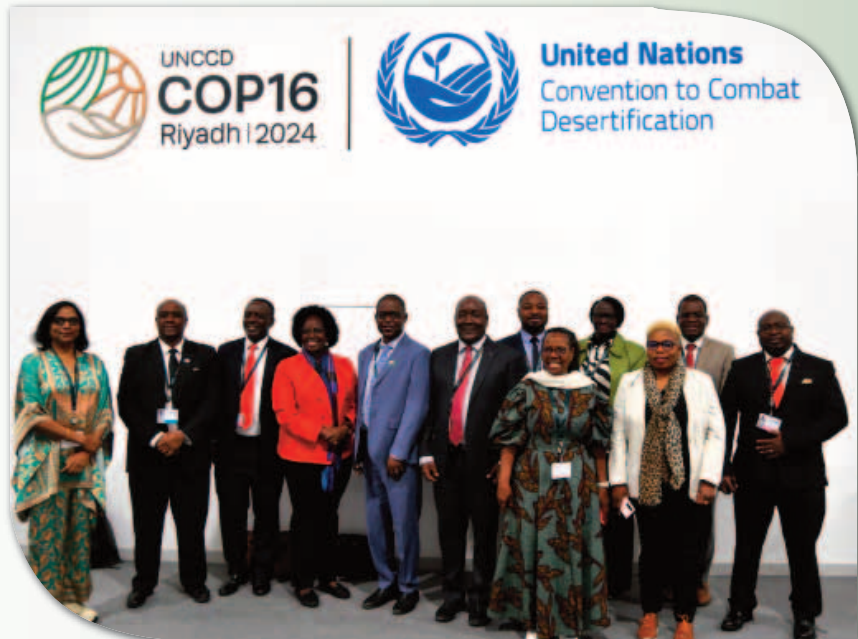
Ngamagosi said the initiative will also address financing mechanisms for regional infrastructure, focusing on risk-sharing and clarity on cost and benefit allocation among riparian countries.

The Programme Manager for Zambezi Strategic Planning, Mwasiti Rashid said “this is a transformative project designed to enhance how water, ecosystem, climate and social resilience challenges are governed, financed, and managed across the Zambezi River Basin.”

“The innovation lies not just in tools or technologies, but in changing institutional and social behaviour, planning norms, and financing pathways—across water, environment, agriculture, and energy (WEFE) sectors.”

Rashid says at least five interlinked components will be implemented under the GEF grant and these are:

- i) Institutional capacity-building for multi-sectoral water governance;
- ii) Development of basin-wide planning tools, including a climate-risk-informed decision support system;
- iii) Enhancing transboundary environmental health and climate risk monitoring;



ZAMCOM participants at UNCCD COP 16 in Riyadh Saudi Arabia

iv) Exploring alternative and innovative financing mechanisms for ZAMCOM core functions and basin investment planning; and

v) Knowledge management and information sharing.

“Through implementation of interventions for the proposed components, the project will deliver global environmental benefits by strengthening cooperative management of freshwater ecosystems and improving biodiversity protection,” said Rashid.

“It will also enhance adaptation benefits by increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities and critical riverine ecosystems.”

Part of the benefits that the eight riparian states stand to benefit from the implementation of the GEF funded project include enhanced coordination and policy alignment, strengthened ecosystem resilience through pollution control and environmental flow restoration and having an operational basin-wide climate and water planning tool in the form of an updated Zambezi

Water Resources Information System (ZAMWIS).

ZAMWIS is an interactive, web-based data and information portal based on contemporary and historical spatial data, hydrological time series, earth observation information and other related information.

Other benefits for the riparian states include the launch of pilot implementation of sustainable financing models and ecosystem-based adaptation measures as well as institutionalisation of stakeholder and gender-responsive participation.

The support under the GEF grant is focused on scaling up implementation of the Programme for Integrated Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Zambezi Basin (PIDACC Zambezi).

Financed by AfDB and other Strategic Partners, PIDACC Zambezi is a five-year programme running from 2023 – 2028, whose development objective is to build strong communities that are resilient to climatic and economic shocks, through promoting inclusive, transformative investments, job creation, and ecosystem-based solutions.

Its implementation is part of the overall Strategic Plan for the Zambezi (2018-2040) aimed at enhancing water resources management and development within the Zambezi Watercourse.

At the announcement of the award of the GEF grant in December 2024, Ngamagosi said: “By tackling critical challenges in the basin, the GEF grant highlights a pivotal opportunity for advancing regional collaboration and sustainable development in the Zambezi River Basin.” □



ZAMCOM Executive Secretary and team networking at UNCCD COP 16

Tanzania takes over as ZAMCOM Chair for 2025-26 term



Proceedings of the 12th ZAMCOM Council of Ministers meeting



At the 12th ZAMCOM council of Ministers meeting



THE UNITED Republic of Tanzania has officially assumed the role of Chairperson of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) for the 2025-2026 term.

The Chairpersonship of ZAMCOM is rotational and takes place annually. The former Chair for 2024-2025, the Republic of Namibia, handed over instruments of power to the United Republic of Tanzania at the end of the 12th Ordinary ZAMCOM Council of Ministers meeting which took place on 15 May 2025 in Windhoek, Namibia.

The 12th Council of Ministers meeting brought together representatives from member states to discuss critical issues regarding transboundary water resources management in the Zambezi watercourse and some organisational governance matters.

Tanzanian Minister for Water, Honourable Jumaa Hamidu Aweso, who could not attend due to prior commitments, was represented at the meeting.

Tanzania previously held the chairship of ZAMCOM during the 2018-2019 cycle, a tenure marked by the launch of the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse (ZSP) (2018-2040).

In his acceptance speech which was read for him by United Republic of Tanzania High Commissioner to Namibia, His Excellency Caesar Chacha Waitara, Tanzania's Minister for Water, Hon. Jumaa Aweso pledged that Tanzania will continue the momentum of its predecessor in the implementation of the ZSP.

Hon. Aweso highlighted the urgent need for member states to fulfil their annual financial commitments to ensure ZAMCOM's sustainability.

"It is equally important that, while we mobilize external finances, we, Member States have a noble duty to pay our country contributions in full and in time for smooth operationalization of ZAMCOM functions.

"Falling short will lead to a greater risk to sustainability and independence of the commission," he said.

The out-going Chair also highlighted ZAMCOM's alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6, which promotes water security and transboundary cooperation. □



Innovative policy strategies addressing the nexus challenges in the Zambezi Watercourse

By Fauny Mawere

THE ZAMBEZI Watercourse is addressing the interconnected water, energy, food nexus challenges through innovative policy strategies to promote sustainable development.

One such initiative is the GoNEXUS Project which received support from the European Union (EU) and sought to improve system efficiency and achieve sustainability through an integrated understanding and management of the water-energy-food-environment (WEFE) nexus resources.

Through this initiative, detailed studies were carried out in many regions and in Africa, the Zambezi and Senegal rivers were chosen for this exercise.

In the Zambezi Watercourse, a set of three GoNEXUS dialogues were conducted to assess the nexus issues for the Zambezi with the help of watercourse-wide experts and stakeholders.

The issues discussed during the dialogues ranged from modelling activities such as hydro-power development and co-ordinated water resources management to agricultural development for food security and environmental protection and ecosystem services provision.

Stakeholders also evaluated the impacts of human activities like mining and changing land use patterns, considering the pressures of future climate and population changes.

The initial dialogue identified critical WEFE (Water, Energy, Food, and Environment) nexus issues impacting the Zambezi basin, highlighting key areas needing immediate attention. It then evaluated the current state of development in the context of environmental degradation and gathered information on future plans from the water, agriculture, energy, and environment sectors.

The second dialogue used data and information from stakeholders to fine-tune models during the modelling exercise. The third dialogue validated the model results and gathered feedback from the stakeholders.

The three dialogues formulated development scenarios designed to aid in-

formed decision-making by the Zambezi Watercourse. These scenarios will help address future population and climate challenges facing the Zambezi Watercourse.

Gerald Mundondwa, Programme Manager for the Zambezi Water Resources Information System (ZAMWIS) at the ZAMCOM Secretariat, emphasized the importance of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus approach.

He stated that this integrated thinking is crucial for balancing the complex water, energy, food, and ecosystem challenges within the Zambezi Basin. A key lesson from this project, as highlighted by Mundondwa, is that stakeholder-driven approaches are most effective in fostering collaboration and sustainable resource management within the Zambezi Basin.

He further stated that enhanced collaboration among various stakeholders has facilitated the creation of an integrated, solution-oriented project implementation design. This design specifically addresses emerging challenges like climate change and variability in the Zambezi Watercourse.

The GoNEXUS project highlighted the effectiveness of the WEFE nexus approach in promoting diversification, which in turn improves natural resource management and builds resilience to climate change.

For example, combining hydropower with solar energy, such as floating solar panels on Lake Kariba, can enhance energy security by reducing reliance on fluctuating water levels. Such management practices have demonstrably achieved a transparent balance across sectors like irrigation expansion, hydropower operations, and environmental flows, facilitated by shared scenarios and open dialogue among stakeholders. Open dialogue is essential for co-ordinated and informed decision-making.

It has been demonstrated that dialogues play an important role in translating basin-wide insights into country-level priorities, hence making it possible to integrate the nexus approach into political processes and national institutions.

The Go-Nexus project has been highly beneficial to the Zambezi basin be-



Kariba Dam a source of livelihood for many.



Maize field in Zambia



UNDP climate smart agriculture Namibia

cause it brought to light the importance of evidence-based policy making.

Additionally, the project will help to empower policymakers to evaluate various future development scenarios, enabling informed decisions before significant financial commitments.

The GoNEXUS project successfully fostered trust, transparency, and shared understanding of basin challenges and opportunities by creating structured spaces for strengthened stakeholder dialogue. This demonstrated that informed decision-making is a direct result of combining evidence with dialogue. In other words: evidence + dialogue = informed decision-making.

By integrating the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (WEFE) nexus approach into planning, the Zambezi Basin can enhance its resilience to climate risks while simultaneously improving water, energy, food, and ecosystem security. □

ZAMCOM undertakes new initiative for gender equity in the Zambezi Watercourse

By Clarkson Mambo

IMAGINE MEN and women living along the Zambezi watercourse developing joint business plans for climate-resilient crops and strengthening the entire community's adaptive capacity to climate change.

This is the ultimate vision of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) as it works towards achieving gender equality and social justice across the eight riparian states that share the Zambezi River Basin.

In realisation of the fact that achieving gender equality is not an overnight process, the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) has taken a further step to weave into its programmes, the transformative method of Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) as part of efforts to mainstreaming gender in the implementation of the Programme for Integrated Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Zambezi Basin (PIDACC Zambezi).

Through this process, ZAMCOM has recognized that addressing challenges that the over 51 million people living in the basin face requires more than just physical infrastructure, but a transformation in social fabric that ensures that men and women work together to come up with sustainable solutions to their challenges.

Funded by a grant from the African Development Bank (AfDB), PIDACC Zambezi is a five-year programme running from 2023-2028, whose development objective is to ensure that people living in the watercourse are resilient to climatic and economic shocks, through promoting inclusive, transformative investments, job creation and ecosystem-based solutions.

PIDACC Zambezi is targeting at least 65 percent of the Zambezi Watercourse's mainly rural population which is largely dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture that is extremely vulnerable to climate change and lack of investment in the development of resilient water infrastructure.

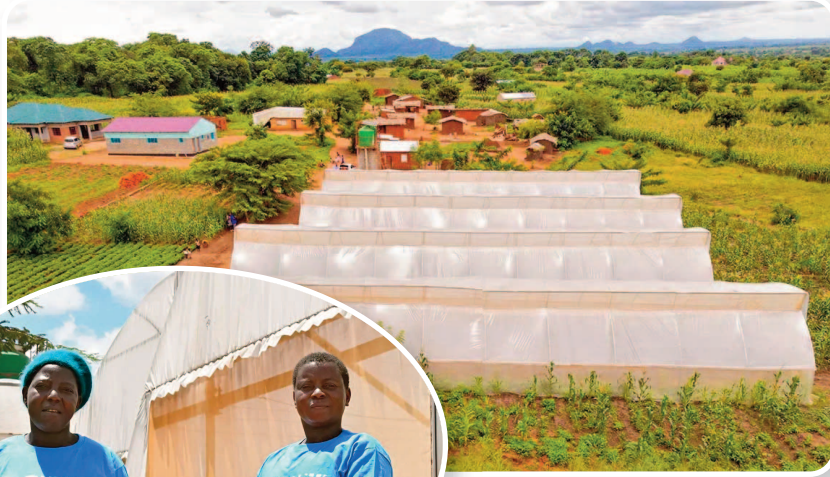
Most of this population is made up of socially disadvantaged groups such as women, the youth and physically challenged.

According to the National Director for Gender and Media Connect in Zimbabwe Patience Zirima, "GALS is a critical methodology that foregrounds the needs of communities in development. It breaks the normative, top-down approaches and creates space for communities to analyse their own realities and envision change."

As countries make efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), its key to note that,

"SDGs cannot be achieved without gender equality but gender equality cannot be imposed, it needs to be initiated and grown in a culturally responsive way hence why we are emphasising on the GALS approach," she said.

In April this year, ZAMCOM announced its intention to "apply part of the PIDACC Zambezi grant towards payments



Women projects in Malawi_kambuku greenhouses



Ruth Kampatura (left) and Prose Mgundamavu are seen harvesting tomatoes in the Kambuku greenhouses in Lilongwe

for consultancy services towards adaptation and implementation of Gender Action Learning Systems in the PIDACC Zambezi programme as well as support ZAMCOM in Gender Mainstreaming Strategy."

"The objective of this assignment is to provide optimal integration of gender equality and social inclusion at all stages of the PIDACC Zambezi implementation pursuant to ZAMCOM's commitment of systematically analysing and addressing the differentiated impacts and seeking contribution of women and men and vulnerable groups in the Zambezi Watercourse policies, programmes and projects and other development processes," said ZAMCOM Project Coordinator-PIDACC Zambezi Regional Programme Dr Rowen Jani.

As part of the implementation of the GALS in the watercourse, a technical study on the relationship between gender, social inclusion and climate change along the Zambezi watercourse will be carried out in all the eight riparian states.

The ZAMCOM Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and the Revised Gender Action Plan will also be updated, while training materials for Gender Sensitive Climate Resilience and Low Carbon Emissions Strategic Investment Action Plan for Zambezi watercourse riparian states will be developed.

With five strategic objectives, the gender mainstreaming strategy, which was revised in 2018, expresses ZAMCOM's commitment to promoting the goal of gender equality in the planning, development, management and utilisation of the basin's resources by systematically analysing and addressing the differentiated impacts of policies, processes, programmes and projects on women and men and in particular vulnerable groups in the Basin.

As part of the process, GALS tools will be developed and translated into local languages for use in the riparian states, with stakeholders expected to receive training on how to use the tools. □



Beneath the Surface: A Groundwater Strategy for the Zambezi Riparian States

by Neto Nengomasha

IN THE heart of southern Africa, where the mighty Zambezi River winds its way through lush landscapes and arid plains, a silent yet powerful force lies beneath the surface—groundwater.

This precious resource has long been the lifeline of the region, sustaining agriculture, providing clean drinking water and supporting burgeoning urban populations.

Groundwater normally refers to water stored beneath the earth's surface in the pores and fractures of soil, sand, and rock formations, known as aquifers.

However, as the demand for water continues to rise, the Zambezi Riparian States have recognized the urgent need for a unified approach to manage this vital resource sustainably.

To this end, the Zambezi Watercourse Commission has engaged the Southern Africa Development Community Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI) to lead in the development of a comprehensive ground water strategy for the Zambezi Basin.

The main objectives of the strategy are to guide joint groundwater resources development and management, harmonize current and planned groundwater initiatives by ZAMCOM with national plans of the Riparian States, prioritize groundwater-related projects and foster a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach to the management and development of national and transboundary groundwater resources in the Zambezi Watercourse.

As such, the strategy will serve as a roadmap for joint groundwater management in the Zambezi Watercourse.

ZAMCOM Executive Secretary Felix Ngamagosi highlighted that the “strategy aims to map, quantify, and monitor groundwater resources systematically across the Zambezi Basin, recognizing their critical role as a climate-resilient water source.”

He said the development of the strategy was initiated after a realization that the current groundwater information is sparse and fragmented, necessitating a holistic regional approach rather than ad hoc development.

As such the strategy “reflects a shift toward integrated water resource management that includes both surface and groundwater to ensure long-term water security. This means our collaboration with SADC-GMI will leverage regional expertise and institutional capacity for strategy implementation,” he said.

Asked on whether the private sector will play a role in supporting groundwater infrastructure, the Executive Secretary said “private sector involvement is a key consideration, given that 90–95 percent of boreholes drilled in many parts of the basin are as a result of private sector investments.”

The process to effectively manage ground water resources was initiated in March 2021 when the Groundwater Subgroup was incorporated into the Sub-Technical Committee on Hydrology of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission Technical Committee (ZAMSCOH-G).

The sub-committee serves as a platform for dialogue and knowledge sharing among experts and stakeholders from the riparian countries of the Zambezi River Basin.

It provides a dedicated space for discussing and addressing groundwater-related issues, including data collection, monitoring, assessment, sustainable development and management.



In addition, the ZAMSCOH-G facilitates the development of joint strategies and plans for the sustainable use and protection of groundwater resources.

This development marked a significant milestone in implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ZAMCOM and SADC-GMI in February 2019.

The MoU laid the groundwork for collaboration between the two institutions in promoting sustainable groundwater management practices and address transboundary groundwater challenges within the Zambezi Watercourse.

A situation analysis already conducted shows that ground water aquifers exist in the basin, necessitating the need for transboundary cooperation in management of this precious resource.

Some of the aquifers identified include the Shire Transboundary Aquifer shared between Malawi and Mozambique, the Sand and Gravel Transboundary Aquifer shared between Malawi and Zambia, the Middle Zambezi Transboundary Aquifer shared between Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the Arangua Alluvial Transboundary Aquifer, shared between Mozambique and Zambia.

The eastern Kalahari Karoo Aquifer, shared between Botswana and Zimbabwe, is particularly interesting. This aquifer is unique because it straddles two major watercourses, the Okavango and the Zambezi.

Stakeholder engagements conducted reveal that groundwater can advance climate resilience and watercourse-wide cooperation, but the resource is also impacted by climate change, necessitating robust data and knowledge and ongoing monitoring to ensure that optimal decisions are made in managing groundwater for climate resilience.

In addition, the studies highlight the importance of knowledge generation, dissemination and uptake in promoting evidence-based groundwater management.

It emphasizes the importance of resource assessments, aquifer mapping methodologies, assessments to underpin managed aquifer recharge, and cost benefit analysis across groundwater user sectors as among the tools required to ensure that high quality evidence is generated to inform cooperative management and investment decisions, and to promote climate resilience. □





Planned infrastructure projects to spur economic development in the Zambezi Basin

by Neto Nengomasha

IN THE next few years, infrastructure projects will begin to take shape within and along the Zambezi watercourse which are expected to spur development for local communities and for the riparian member states.

These developments are born out of the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse (ZSP) (2018-2040), which identifies investment in water related infrastructure as a prerequisite that underpins economic and social development and contribute towards achieving the national development goals and aspirations of the Member States.

According to the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) Executive Secretary Felix Ngamlagosi, "the Strategic Plan prioritizes infrastructure investment as the foundation for economic growth, community resilience, and transboundary cooperation. The plan thus identifies a total of 282 priority infrastructure projects across eight riparian states, including 26 hydropower projects, 116 multipurpose dams, 120 agricultural irrigation schemes"

The Zambezi River Basin is one of the largest river basins in Africa, and considered as the fourth after the Nile, Niger and Congo River Basins.

The investment plans included in the Strategic Plan are based on the priorities and national plans determined by Member States within the parameters of the agreed investment scenarios and these include infrastructure for hydropower; agricultural water; water supply services; and catchment and natural asset management.

To realise this vision, a number of feasibility studies are being undertaken for the eventual development of key infrastructure projects in the Zambezi basin.

Some of the key investments being spearheaded by the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA) for the section of the Zambezi River that forms the common border between Zambia and Zimbabwe and which falls under the ZRA mandate include the Batoka Gorge Hydroelectric project; Devil's Gorge Hydroelectric project; and Floating Solar PV Projects on Lake Kariba.

The planned hydroelectric projects are set to increase water storage thus boosting country and regional power generation capacity.

"This will contribute to the energy security efforts of Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as the SADC region. Reservoirs that shall be created will have spin off benefits for the local communities including in agriculture, fisheries, hospitality, boating," said Engineer Chisense from ZRA.

The private sector continues to be a key partner for ZAMCOM and is engaged from project feasibility stages and during project construction stages, including under issues of financing arrangements for the projects.

Resource Mobilisation Committees have been created with a view to mobilise resources including from the private sector.

This is currently the case for the more advanced Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme.

While working on some of these key infrastructure projects, local communities have not been left out in decision making as they are always consulted for their views.

Communities have been engaged from inception during project feasibility, construction and operation stages. Consultations are ongoing with the project area communities through deliberate focus group discussions and invitations to join any project group meetings.

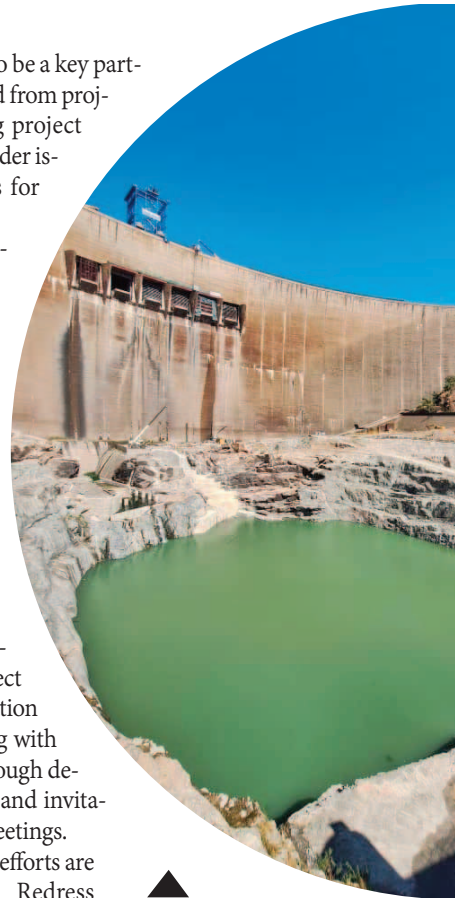
According to ZRA, deliberate efforts are made to establish Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM) and the GRM Committees include local communities so that their concerns are captured and addressed during the planning and implementation of projects as well as during operations.

Through its flagship programme known as the Programme for Integrated Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Zambezi Watercourse (PIDACC-Zambezi), ZAMCOM is making key investments in irrigation and the agricultural sector to significantly boost agricultural productivity and enhance food security and livelihoods in the basin. Collaborative irrigation schemes are expected to benefit multiple countries and promote shared water resource management.

In addition, ZAMCOM is targeting to improve its digital infrastructure and data platforms to establish comprehensive data management and sharing platforms for hydrological monitoring and management so as to improve decision-making regarding water use and quality at transboundary level.

The Zambezi Water Resources Information System (ZAMWIS) for instance, plays an important role in providing the overarching information management system for the Zambezi River Basin that is necessary for the cooperative and coordinated management and development of the Zambezi Basin.

As such, these planned infrastructure projects not only aim to stimulate economic growth in the Zambezi Basin but also emphasize the importance of cooperation and collaboration among the riparian countries, ensuring sustainable development and mutual benefits through shared resources. □



Plunge pool refilling in progress



The Kariba dam Rehabilitation project underway. Plunge pool refilling almost complete