



ZAMCOM

## PRESS STATEMENT

### **Botswana Now Chair of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM)**

Botswana is now the Chair of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM). This follows the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting for the organisation's Council of Ministers (CoM) held recently.

Hosted by Angola on Thursday, 28<sup>h</sup> April, 2022, this was the second virtual meeting for the CoM. Angola's Minister of Energy and Water, Hon. Joao Baptista Borges, out-going ZAMCOM Chair, presided over the meeting. The holding of the virtual meetings is in line with the new normal of hosting high level meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged the whole world.

Hon. Borges later handed over the Chairship to Botswana represented by Hon. Kefentse Mzwinila, the Minister of Lands and Water Affairs. ZAMCOM Chairship is rotational and takes place alphabetically annually at an ordinary session of the Council of Ministers meeting. This is the second time that Botswana takes over as Chair of ZAMCOM. The first time was from 2014 to 2015.

In his acceptance speech, Hon. Mzwinila said without losing sight of the fact that ZAMCOM consists of sovereign states, who are committed to working together towards the management of the Zambezi watercourse, it is his intension to work hard to promote cooperation amongst the Riparian States for their benefit.

He thanked Member States for showing their confidence in Botswana, and him in particular, by entrusting the country with the "onerous but honourable and noble task of taking the lead in strengthening our organization for the next 12 months and lifting it to higher levels".

He paid tribute to his counterpart, the out-going ZAMCOM Council of Ministers Chair, Hon. Borges saying: "I wish to thank Honorable Minister of Energy and Water, Angola, Mr. João Baptista Borges, for your notable and very able leadership in the past 12 months."

Hon. Mzwinila noted areas that would help define his tenure as Chair and called on his counterparts to undertake some introspection.

"We all need to do some introspection or self- reflection as it allows us to look deep into our innermost and enable us to redefine our path and find solutions to what we aim to achieve (Vision) and how to deal with challenges at hand. Based on our progress, we need to continue to advise on equitable and reasonable utilisation as well as efficient management and sustainability of the shared waters of Zambezi watercourse for the benefit of all communities within the basin. This calls for mind-set change and deliberate effort to optimise our operations," he said.

The new ZAMCOM Chair commended the Member States for their financial contributions to the organization saying this showed the level of commitment to sustaining the institution. He noted the outstanding contributions and further encouraged countries to make efforts to fulfill their obligations.

On the issue of accession to the ZAMCOM Agreement by Malawi, the Minister and ZAMCOM Chair urged the Republic of Malawi to expedite and complete the process in interest of *“leaving no one behind”*. He noted that having everyone on board would further enhance cooperation by the Member States adding that Malawi is key in the implementation of Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse (ZSP).

Hon. Mzwinila assured the Zambezi Member States of Botswana’s commitment to the sustainable management of the shared watercourse.

The meeting also took stock of what the watercourse organization, shared by eight Southern African countries has achieved, seven years after the establishment of its permanent Secretariat in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The Ministers’ meeting was preceded by that of the ZAMCOM Technical Committee (ZAMTEC) on 20-21 April, 2022. The ZAMCOM Council of Ministers meeting is an annual event held mainly to, among other things, adopt and provide policy guidance or approve recommendations from ZAMTEC as well as assess progress.

ZAMCOM is a watercourse organization set up through the ZAMCOM Agreement by the eight Riparian States that share the Zambezi. ZAMCOM promotes and coordinates the cooperative management and development of the Zambezi Watercourse in a sustainable, climate resilient manner. The eight Riparian States are **Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe**.

Other items that came under the spotlight during the Council of Ministers include progress of implementation of the ZAMCOM activities; the ZAMCOM 2022/23 Work Plan and Budget; and review of the implementation of Council decisions of the meeting held in 2021.

The ZAMCOM Council of Ministers is the supreme body of the organization while the ZAMTEC is tasked with implementing policies and decisions of the Council. The ZAMCOM Secretariat (ZAMSEC) provides technical and administrative services to Council under the supervision of ZAMTEC.

Apart from the contributions from Member States for its operations, current support for ZAMCOM, mainly for the implementation of the ZSP under the Programme for Integrated Development for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Zambezi Watercourse (PIDACC Zambezi), is from ZAMCOM’s Strategic Partner Organisations, the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility (CRIDF) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

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