

ZAMCOM offices commissioned in Harare

by Leonissah Munjoma

The Zambezi Watercourse Commission Secretariat officially commissioned its offices on 2 July 2015.

The opening ceremony was attended by officials from the majority of the riparian states who had gathered in Harare to attend the ZAMCOM Council of Ministers held back-to-back with the SADC Water Ministers meeting.

The ZAMCOM Chairperson, Botswana's Minister of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources, Hon. Onkokame Kitso Mokaila, opened the offices jointly with the host minister, Hon. Saviour Kasukuwere, then Minister of Environment, Water and Climate of Zimbabwe.

Hon. Mokaila was represented by His Excellency Kenny Kapinga, the Ambassador of Botswana to Zimbabwe.

A Zimbabwean cultural group Mbira Dze Nharira entertained the guests.

In his speech, Hon. Kasukuwere said that the Zimbabwean Government will do all it can to ensure that the ZAMCOM Secretariat (ZAMSEC) is well hosted and that all that is accorded to its foreign staff will be facilitated.



"I will leave no stone unturned to ensure all that is required is achieved for the Secretariat," he said.

ZAMCOM Executive Secretary, Professor Zebediah Phiri, took the opportunity to thank the Government of Zimbabwe for availing such offices to provide an enabling environment for the Secretariat staff to work comfortably and freely.

He extended appreciation to all the Zambezi Riparian States for their financial sup-

port and the cooperating partners, including DANIDA, the World Bank and GIZ.

Prof. Phiri acknowledged the unwavering support the Zambezi River Basin process has received from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), an organization which he said has held ZAMCOM by hand from its early years to date.

He expressed hope that ZAMCOM will in future continue to seek guidance from SADC whenever it is required. □

Development of the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse Progresses

by Evans Kaseke

Following the coming into force of the Agreement in 2004 and the establishment of a permanent Secretariat, ZAMCOM has since been operationalizing some of the key provisions of the Agreement. One of these relates to the development of the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse (ZSP) which is a basis for basin-wide cooperation in the management and development of the water resources.

The ZAMCOM Agreement states that Member States shall conduct their management and development plans, projects and programmes relating to the resources of the Zambezi Watercourse in accordance with the ZSP.

As a first step in the development process of the ZSP, a concept note was developed and adopted by the Council of Ministers in mid-2015 and subsequently shared with ZAMCOM's cooperating partners. It outlines the process that is being followed in developing the plan; the expected outputs and the key next steps going forward.

The second phase being implemented involves the procurement of expert consulting services to assist with the formulation of the ZSP as a stakeholder driven process. It is anticipated that the actual formulation process will commence in mid-2016. □

ZAMTEC the engine for implementation of the Zambezi Strategic Plan

by Admire Ndhlovu

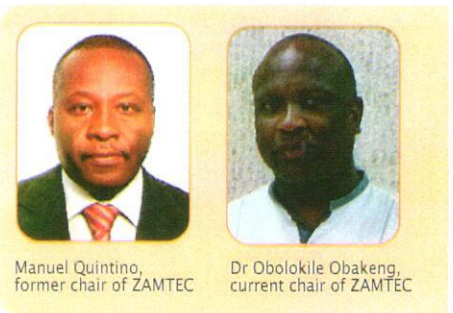
The Technical Committee of the Zambezi Watercourse Commission plays a critical role in providing specialist guidance in implementation of the Zambezi Strategic Plan.

According to Manuel Quintino, the former chair, the Zambezi Technical Committee (ZAMTEC) gets political and strategic guidance from the Council of Ministers and translates this into technical thinking for the implementation of the Zambezi Strategic Plan by the Secretariat.

Quintino noted that the second Council of Ministers meeting held in July approved the ZAMCOM workplan and budget for the period July 2015 to March 2018, procurement and asset disposal guidelines, human resources management and procedures manual, financial stability, and appointed external auditors.

He says, ZAMTEC is tasked to develop and establish early warning systems against extreme events such as floods and droughts in the basin.

To this end, it works in close collaboration with SADC Climate Unit in convening the Southern Africa Climate Outlook Forums through which a seasonal weather is debated and forecasted.



Manuel Quintino, former chair of ZAMTEC

Dr Obolokile Obakeng, current chair of ZAMTEC

Through this exercise ZAMCOM Member States are able to predict an El Nino Weather forecast, make an overview of the hydro-meteorological pattern and take appropriate measures regarding the agricultural season in the year concerned.

Quintino recognises the need for more engagement by Member States to ensure a successful implementation of 2015-2018 ZAMCOM work plan.

"They should be more proactive to ensure financial stability of ZAMCOM and take ownership and leadership in implementation of basin projects," he says.

Quintino adds that ZAMTEC members must be more efficient in responding to issues posed by the Secretariat for it to deliver and achieve envisaged results.

ZAMTEC is one of the organs of the Zambezi Water Commission. Others are Council of Ministers and the Secretariat, supported by a Project Implementation Unit and Working Groups. The current chair of ZAMTEC is Dr Obolokile Thothi Obakeng from Botswana. He took over from Manuel Quintino from Angola. □

ZAMCOM Council of Ministers Meeting

The 3rd ZAMCOM Council of Ministers meeting will be held on 25 February 2016 in Gaborone, Botswana. Botswana is the current ZAMCOM Chair, a position that is rotated among the eight Zambezi riparian countries. A ZAMTEC meeting will be held on a back-to-back basis with the ZAMCOM Council on 23 February 2016. The objective of the meeting for the Council of Ministers is to receive updates; consider and approve the ZAMCOM work plan and budget for 2016/17; and adopt or approve other recommendations from ZAMTEC.